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BROKEN NEWS:
MARKET SEGMENTATION AND SELECTIVE EXPOSURE IN ONLINE NEWS

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
Virginia Commonwealth University
By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures

List of Tables

Abstract

BROKEN NEWS: MARKET SEGMENTATION AND SELECTIVE EXPOSURE

IN ONLINE NEWS

By Deidra J. Lee, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2013

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Research has revealed that more Americans than ever are turning to the World Wide Web as their primary source for news and information instead of legacy media outlets such as printed newspapers and magazines and broadcast news. As more and more people rely on the Internet as a primary source for news, it is important to analyze the characteristics and content of online news to expose and correct problems associated with the practices that inform its production and presentation. There are several longstanding practices in the American journalistic tradition that have been adapted to the online news environment. The practices of market segmentation and gatekeeping are two such practices. To date, few studies have explored how internet news coverage differs when the same story is altered to address the perceived interests of specific target audiences.

This goal of this study was to collect and examine the characteristics of news stories presented on the homepages of three news websites—the *Huffington Post, Huffington Post Black Voices* and *News One*—to arrive at conclusions about the similarities and differences in how news content is reported to a general audience and to an African-American audience. This exploratory study used both Web sphere analysis and qualitative analysis to examine the collected homepage news stories. It used the results of the analyses to explore the possible effects continued market segmentation and selective exposure online could have on discourse in the public sphere.

The study found that the legacy media practice of market segmentation was evident when online news reporting on targeted and untargeted news website homepages was compared. The study also revealed that the traditional role of the Black Press in legacy media has been resurrected in new media and is evident on news websites produced by African-Americans, for an African-American audience. Additionally, a qualitative examination of online news coverage of President Barack Obama's 2012 State of the Union address and the death of Trayvon Martin revealed that the targeted audience influences the editorial slant through which news websites report stories.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The emergence of the World Wide Web in the early 1990's brought with it utopian

visions of a homogenous global community as researchers began to hypothesize that the platform

was the key to uniting the world. By the 2000's, Bar-Ilan and Peritz (2002) wrote that "the World

Wide Web is quickly becoming one of our main information sources" (p.371). As a digital

medium that allowed easy access to information and that offered everyone with access the

opportunity to create a webpage or start a blog, the new medium continued to grow and content

on the new medium began to challenge the distinction "between a rumour [sic] or a fad, and

real, hard news" (Lee, Fielding & Blank, 2008, p. 4). The utopian views of the Internet's

potential to ignite global unity through the free-flow of information were quickly overshadowed

by the reality of the platform's tendency to separate all users based on their personal interests.

Additionally, ideas about the globalized knowledge and shared information in the new digital

medium did not consider the ways that traditional socio-economic, political, and cultural factors

would affect why and how users accessed information online (James, 2000, p. 17).

A 2007 study revealed that 77% of 18 to 29-year- old Americans obtained their news

primarily from digital outlets because most others in that age group "embrace web-based media

and news" (Engdahl, 2008, p. 128). The Pew Center for the People and the Press's 2010 *State of

the Media* survey found that 46% of all Americans obtained their news online. That survey

revealed that online news surpassed printed newspapers as the preferred source for national and

international news and that 35% of African- Americans turned to the Internet for news during the

same period. Similarly, by 2010 online news consumption had outpaced newspapers in both circulation and advertisers (Barnhurst, 2012). Byerly and Wilson (2009) found that many teens and young adults increasingly view legacy media—defined as printed newspapers, magazines, radio and news broadcasts—as personally irrelevant (p. 217). This finding is reflected in the results of the 2012 State of the Media survey, which found that 79% of American adults under the age of 35, utilized the Internet for local as well as national news and information (Pew Center for the People and the Press, 2012).

As more people in the United States and around the world turn to the Internet as their primary source for news, it is important to analyze the characteristics and content of online news to expose and correct latent problems associated with the practices that inform its production and presentation. Such analysis is important because the growing number of online news consumers selectively exposing themselves to the news platform of their choice may be unwittingly contributing to the continued proliferation of inconsistent news reporting online. There are a number of general problems associated with online news consumption that warrant study. In an early study, Bignell (2000) repeatedly found that generally Internet consumers in developed countries are information-rich, employed, predominately white males "living in the most highly developed societies" (p. 194). These findings were reinforced by a study performed six years later in which a survey of 3,747 American bloggers revealed that "77% were males, 89% were white and 93% were college educated" (Tremayne, 2007, p. 265). Perry (2002) suggested that "an almost infinite number of potential factors are likely to influence the attitudes and behaviors of media audiences including: gender, physical size, personality, socioeconomic status, and intelligence" (p. 30). Melican & Dixon (2008) have asserted that the Internet as a platform for news reporting offers "a means for people to limit their exposure to information that verifies

their existing ideologies" (p. 163). Additionally, the personal filtering associated with selective exposure could result in an increasingly fragmented society and a decreased ability to understand and participate in public discourse (Melican & Dixon 2008).

In addition to the aforementioned socio-economic and cultural issues associated with the consumption of online news and information, some of the journalistic practices of legacy media, have been adopted by the new medium. Two of these journalistic practices are market segmentation. In fact, Nakamura (2002) found that market segmentation and selective exposure are both prevalent issues in new media production and consumption particularly where race and racism are concerned (p.14). Such segmentation is the result of the presence of the legacy media news editor who has evolved into the online content producer. Much like the traditional print and broadcast news editors of legacy media, the online news editors of news websites continue to serve as the gatekeepers that keep site traffic, viewership and sponsorship in mind when making decisions about what stories will be reported and where (Entman, 2007). These website content producers conscientiously make decisions to parse coverage of news events to their target audiences via segmented websites in order to personalize the topics and depth of news coverage to the satisfaction of their site visitors and sponsors. Selber (2004) has suggested that a critical look at the reasons why online news deems some issues and topics to be more important than others could illustrate the point that the Internet does not supersede current social conditions, but "merely replicates [the] current structure" of society (p. 85). Burnett and Marshall (2003) predicted that the segmentation of the abundance of information on the Internet would make it difficult for content-producers to select "the right news stories from the enormous flood of information in order to deliver personalized news" (p. 153). This difficulty, coupled with people selecting the news they consume online means that more and more Americans are not necessarily

viewing or reading the same news with any degree of regularity. Because online news consumers are not always accessing objective and complete presentations of news and information, they are not privy to all sides of any news story. This translates into an inconsistent presentation of news online. To alleviate the pitfalls of legacy segmentation and individual selective exposure, Glasser, Awad, and Kim (2009) have called for the onset of pluralism in the press to end segmentation based on race or culture.

In addition to suggesting studies of the underlying effects of market segmentation in online news, scholars have also suggested that studying online news content itself could provide important insight into the social effects of online news consumption. Best and Brugger (2004) have suggested that the possibility of examining the interrelated context and medium of information conveyed on the Internet would offer much potential for drawing conclusions about the social, economic, and cultural effects of the consumption of online information. Melican and Dixon (2008) have suggested that the relevance and importance of a "systematic content analysis of Internet news" (p. 164) presented from traditional and nontraditional sources could serve as a basis for determining existing patterns of how perceptions in online news content.

To date, few studies have explored how internet news coverage intersects with the personal or political agendas of minority groups or how the same news content is altered to address targeted groups. While several studies of racial disparities in traditional news coverage of polarizing events such as responses to the victims of Hurricane Katrina have folded in brief references to new media news coverage, no major studies have focused on the analysis of stories on targeted and untargeted websites to compare their content and coverage.

In light of the research suggestions of Perry (2002), Selber (2004), and Melican and Dixon (2008), the overall goal of this study is to examine how the practices of segmentation and

4

selective exposure influence the presentation of news stories online to arrive at conclusions about the ways apportioned news coverage on targeted websites can influence the general knowledge of the populace. Web sphere analysis of three news websites was conducted for this study to determine how the identity of targeted site visitors influenced online editorial choices for coverage, to uncover similarities and differences in how common stories are framed on the different websites, and to ascertain the potential problems inconsistent or disproportionate online news coverage can pose to the public-at-large. The study examined news coverage on The *Huffington Post*, an untargeted news website that presents news to a general audience, *Huffington Post Black Voices,* an offshoot of the *Huffington Post* that targets an African-American audience, and *News One*, a news website produced by and for African-Americans. These three sites were selected because of they presented not only an opportunity to compare content and coverage, but also the opportunity to evaluate the relationship between the race of the content producer and the race of the target audience effected the editorial slant of news reports and influenced the news agenda of each website. The concept of news as it related to this study refers to coverage of political, economic, social/cultural, health-related, and celebrity stories.

The concept of a targeted website as the term is used in this study refers to a site whose objective is to provide news to a specified audience based on its cultural or racial background. In contrast, the concept of an untargeted or mainstream website as the terms are used in this study, refers to a site whose objective is to provide news to a pluralistic general audience regardless of cultural or racial background.

This study used quantitative and qualitative content analysis to make determinations about the discrepancies in existing online news production and consumption that result from

market segmentation. It also used the results of the analyses to arrive at conclusions about the degree to which the combination of market segmentation and selective exposure online could affect the general discourse and decisions of the general population as more and more Americans turn to the World Wide Web as a primary source for news.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Legacy Media Practices

The practices of market segmentation, gatekeeping and selective exposure are longstanding practices in American journalism. The practice of market segmentation prevalent in the coverage of news stories online has its origins in the reporting practices of legacy print and broadcast news and programming. Previous studies have revealed that legacy media catered to the majority. This means that "certain segments of the population, such as racial and ethnic minorities were often either left out of mainstream content or portrayed through Anglo eyes" (Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003, pp. 306-307). Wilson, Gutierrez, and Chao (2003) also explain that the phenomenon of market segmentation, widely used in the advertising profession, was adopted by legacy media as a means of defining audiences based on their demographic characteristics so that the media could "zero in on content that would attract members of those segments" (pp. 304-305). Zeroing in on particular audiences was of benefit to media outlets, but such practice also meant that "minorities became further separated and possibly distanced from the rest of society" (Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003, p. 304).

As legacy print and broadcast media converge with the Internet and new media, the conundrum of new media continues to be whether content should be tailored to specific elite or marginalized groups or if content should be generalized to encourage a homogenous cultural ideology. McCombs (2003) noted that media set the public's agenda: "What we know about the world is largely what the media tells us" (p. 2). However, Maier (2010) found that although the

agenda-setting role still exists, it is "tenuous" (p. 558) because new media news is becoming increasingly fragmented.

Market Segmentation and Editorial Gatekeeping

Legacy media—broadcast news and printed newspapers and magazines—sought to reinforce the idea of a shared culture by providing the same news and covering the same issues or events across news platforms—to focus the pluralistic public's attention on common threats to foster consensus (Maier, 2010). This practice afforded all Americans with access to the same mainstream news stories, theoretically supporting a collective idea about what was important to the American way of life. However, once media producers found that they could tailor entertainment and news content to audiences based on demographics and preferences, they began to employ an advertising practice of market segmentation—a practice used to attract certain audiences to certain products or services. Tailoring this content meant that media producers could attract and maintain a steady audience which translated into an ability to maintain steady revenue through sponsors who could more productively target their products to an attentive audience.

In addition to the increased practice of segmentation, these media outlets also often ignored the news events relevant to minority groups by practicing journalistic Gatekeeping to determine which stories would be presented and which stories would be ignored. Very few, if any, legacy media tailored content to its minority audiences. Legacy media was largely engrossed in personalizing its content to the preferences of its mainstream white audience and sponsors and in doing so often stereotyped minority groups. Until the late 1960's blatantly

negative statements about "black intelligence, ambition, honesty, and other stereotyped characteristics, as well as support for segregation and support for acts of open discrimination" (Entman, 1992, p. 342) were openly expressed in mainstream press and in public discourse.

Researchers have noted that whenever the press ignores the news and events concerning a minority group, it sends "a powerful social psychological message delivered to whites and non-whites alike" (Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003, p. 117) that reinforces ideas of minority groups' inferiority and lower social status. Often times, when the majority ignores minority needs, that minority compensates by creating the products and services that will meet its respective needs (Kellner, 1995). One such minority group—African-Americans—embraced a reversed market segmentation, which led to the successful rise of America's Black Press (Nelson, 1998; Entman, 1990; Doreski 2001; Washburn, 2006). Beleaguered by political and social isolation, exclusion, and mistreatment, the Black Press used words to retaliate against exclusion, race baiting, political isolation and social misrepresentation through the printed word in newspapers that provided the community with a strong social and political voice (Nelson, 1998). These newspapers practiced segmentation by providing a platform for news for, about and from Black Americans from the Black American perspective.

Entman (1992) observed that "news personnel shape reports in accordance with professional norms and conventions" (p. 345). Affording all Americans with equal access to the same news stories allowed the media to homogenize the common man's ideas about the ideal American way of life. But providing equal access to the same news did not prove to provide equal coverage of news stories relevant to all members of American society (Nelson, 1998). Largely ignoring the social and political issues affecting African-Americans and other minority

groups, media gatekeepers set the news agenda and influenced the way news stories were perceived by the public. Media gatekeepers decide which news stories or issues should be reported and which news stories or issues should be ignored, thus setting the agenda. Researchers have noted that these gatekeepers historically have been white (Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003).

Janowitz (1975) observed that gatekeeping in legacy journalism was a result of space limitations. Along similar lines, Gans (1979) also indicated that space limitations invoke necessary selection practices. But other factors could have played a role as well. Wilson, Gutierrez, and Chao (2003) highlighted two actions regarding decisions media gatekeepers make about news coverage that govern "the social role of media." The first action is making decisions about covering news events based on the degree to which the events will be perceived as important by the target audience. The second action is determining depth of coverage based on the social impact of the news event and the possibility of pre-emptive or retrospective reaction to that impact (Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao 2003).

Some researchers have also studied the relationship between gatekeeping and agenda setting. In their exploratory study, Pingree, Quenette, Tchernev & Dickinson, 2013) found that when making editorial decisions, "news workers primarily assess newsworthiness in their daily work in terms of specific to individual news events such as timeliness, public interest, and conflict instead of any underlying social problems"(p. 351). The editorial decisions associated with gatekeeping and agenda setting, are not usually based on the importance of social problems but on characteristics such as timeliness of the story, public interest, and the presence of conflict (Price & Tewksbury, 1997). In their study of media trust, Pingree et al (2013) found that the

study participants took "cues from the news about problem importance" (p. 366) based on what appeared on news broadcasts or what was printed in local newspapers.

All research related to media agenda-setting agrees that "exposure to news can affect citizens' perceptions of the most important problems facing the nation" (Pingree, et al, 2013, p. 352). Early on, agenda setting was defined as the transformation of the media's agenda to the public's agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Messner & Distaso, 2008). Pingree, et al. (2013) further specified the practice of agenda-setting by dividing the practice into two conceptual parts: agenda cueing and agenda reasoning. In their study, they found that audiences take cues from news reporting on the importance of certain issues but asserted that more research was necessary to determine how the media influences the way news consumers "prioritize problems" (p. 369) presented in the news. According to Wilson, Gutierrez, and Chao (2003), these gatekeepers set the agenda for society by filtering information, "letting [a news event] pass through the system" (p. 115) or ignoring the news event to stop knowledge of it from spreading. These findings imply that by ignoring the social and political condition of African-Americans and other minorities at the time, editors and journalists in legacy media sent a message to white viewers and readers that issues important to blacks and minorities were not important to them.

A Brief Overview of the Black Press

Kellner (1995) has noted that "when members of oppressed groups gain access to media culture, their representations often articulate visions of society and give voice to more radical perspectives" (p.157). As a result, minority groups who were either ignored or vilified and stereotypically characterized in the mainstream press began to develop content of their own, especially in print media. According to the documentary, *The Black Press: Soldiers Without*

Swords, the Black Press emerged as a direct result of the adverse social treatment African-Americans received by society that was reinforced in the mainstream press (Nelson, 1998). African-Americans used printed media to report, promote, and engage African-American constituents in such a successful way that the Black Press became a powerful force within both the African-American and mainstream journalistic communities:

> [The Black Press] represented [the] separate world in which black people lived, where they could be liberated from images, inferiorities…that were reinforced by what was taught in schools or shown in mainstream news papers or in the movies, and they also gave them the opportunity to establish their own image, their own identity, and to the each other what they thought of themselves separate from the mainstream. (*Soldiers Without Swords,* 1998)

From the onset, freed blacks in America felt that the press played a prominent role in their advancement. According to Vogel, (2001) during the 1847 meeting of the National Convention of Colored People and Their Friends, it was declared that "the first step which will mark our certain advancement as a People, will be our Declaration of Independence from all aid except God and our souls…And such conviction can only be produced through a Press…[which] will tell the world of our position in the path of human progress…" (p. 56).

According to Washburn (2006), the first black newspaper was a weekly, *Freedom's Journal*, published in 1827 by a group of free blacks, including Samuel Cornish and John B. Russwurm to oppose the racist, anti-black and pro-slavery views published by the editor of the *New York Enquirer.* Washburn (2006) noted that the group chose to begin a newspaper because "other avenues of communication were largely closed to blacks" (p. 17). With a similar purpose in mind, revered abolitionist Frederick Douglass began to publish the *North Star* in 1848. "In the African-American political culture that Douglass joined when he became an editor, the press organ was valued on this basis—as the bulwark of a free people—in accordance with the tradition of Anglo-American libertarianism" (Fanuzzi, 2001, p. 56). The American Black Press

was very successful from the American post-Reconstruction era through the American Civil Rights era, with more than 500 newspaper outlets between 1865 and 1889 alone (Rooks, 2004).

Even though the mainstream press was supposed to be objective, that was never the intention of the Black Press. The Black Press operated from a platform of reversed market segmentation where the goal was to specifically cover the news of concern to African-Americans that was being ignored by mainstream news outlets. Regarding objectivity, "the Black Press never pretended to be objective because it didn't see the white press being objective and it often took a position, it had an attitude. This was a press of advocacy. There was news, but the news had an admitted and deliberate slant" (Garland, 1982, p. 48). Black papers published stories about the positive, if mundane aspects of black life that the white press did not—births, marriages, educational milestones. In a 1921 letter to an editor of a black newspaper, a black Kentuckian wrote:

> I feel that this [black newspapers] is the only source from which we can learn of what good Negroes are doing. The white press just will not publish anything good of us. All we can see from their papers is the bad side. (Washburn, 2006, p. 123)

In addition to serving as a report on the positive, yet mundane aspects of life, the Black Press served a larger role of empowerment and protest for African-Americans as well (Poindexter & Stroman, 1980). The Black Press served as an advocate for blacks with an intended and obvious subjectivity informed by the goal of protecting blacks and their well-being in America. These publications discussed issues of concern to black Americans such as the plague of lynching, disenfranchisement, Jim Crow laws, as well as the plight of African-American soldiers and veterans (Wormser, 2002; Washburn, 2006). Three prominent African-American social justice campaigns were launched by the Black Press—Ida B. Wells' anti-

lynching campaign, Robert Abbot's northern migration campaign, and the World War II double victory campaign (Washburn, 2006).

According to Nelson (1998), black newspapers steadied black communities, spoke about their positive and political and economic interests, and employed quality African-American reporters, photojournalists, and press operators denied employment by mainstream newspapers. The voices of the black publications were important because they reflected the opinions many African-Americans held but could not openly articulate for fear of retaliation from whites. In describing the value of black newspapers, an editorial in the Arkansas' *Baptist Vanguard* asserted:

> We are generally there with the goods and usually furnish the whistle for the race to keep up its courage. They contend for that which is right for the race and their voice is usually heard whether everybody says it or not. The influence of the Negro newspaper is saying something and doing something for the most ignorant Negro in the fartherest [sic] off backwoods… (Washburn, 2006, p. 124).

Newspapers such as the *Chicago Defender* were credited with influencing not only black thought, but also black action (Doreski, 2001; Vogel, 2001; Washburn, 2006). In fact, historians have noted that the *Chicago Defender* played a prominent role in attracting African-Americans to the Midwest during the Great Migration of the early 1900s by encouraging blacks to move North at every turn—presenting editorials and editorial cartoons whose outspoken tones lambasted southern whites for blacks' lack of social and economic freedoms and touted a better way of life awaiting blacks in the North (Washburn, 2006). Many journalism historians view the *Chicago Defender* as instrumental in changing the character and pattern of the Midwest and "an instigator of black America's migration from the rural South to northern industrial cities, in the wake of the Great War…" (Doreski, 2001, p. 162).

By World War I, as more and more Black weeklies began to speak of the social inequities of blacks and whites in America, the federal government deemed all black publications to be "radical" and launched investigations to monitor the "dangerous nature of black publications" (Washburn, 2006, pp.136-137). At the same time, because Communists unsuccessfully attempted to gain support from the Black Press, the federal government labeled some black journalists as either "Communists, Communist sympathizers, or radicals" (Vogel, 2001, p.163) and investigated black reporters and their stories. Between the first and second world wars, seven federal agencies investigated the Black Press: the Justice Department, the FBI, the Post Office, the Office of Facts and Figures, the Office of War Information, the Office of Censorship, and the Army (Washburn, 2006). In 1942, in light of a compromise with federal investigators that would secure their access to federal officials and their protection from federal prosecution, black newspapers resolved to criticize the federal government less while criticizing local officials—governors, assemblymen, mayors, and business owners—more for the duration of World War II (Washburn, 2006).

By the late 1940s, most black-owned newspapers were unable to sustain themselves on advertising income. Black businesses could not afford to buy ad space on a regular basis and white businesses either had no interest in marketing to blacks or were unaware of the Black Press (Washburn, 2006). In fact, it was not until blacks' mobilization for civil rights became a national news event that advertisers began to realize the potential financial gain that could come from reaching out to the constituents of black newspapers. This realization was to the detriment of black newspapers because it meant that black newspapers had to adjust their editorial policies to satisfy mainstream advertisers.

For all of its unabridged, unabashed social criticism, the subjectivity of the Black Press is what ultimately led to the demise of its prominence (Nelson, 1998). By the 1950s, the mainstream press and scholars alike were criticizing the inability of the Black Press to become objective. In some instances they asserted that the sensationalism and emotional slant of its reporting had the potential to incite reverse racism (Washburn, 2006). Even prominent black publishers began to criticize the Black Press for not changing with the times, remaining focused on its original goals of reinforcing racial pride and venting the racial frustrations of the black community, instead of growing and reporting seriously on black issues and black life. The emerging black middle class, deeming itself more educated, began to consume news "from white-owned papers and television stations" (Washburn, 2006, p. 190).

Eventually, the Black Press "became a casualty of the integration it had long championed" (Newkirk, 2011, p. 40). According to Washburn (2006), "The civil rights movement, a natural follow-up to, and beneficiary of, almost fifty years of militancy in the Black Press, started, and slowly, over more than a decade, it grew into the country's top domestic news story" (p.190). Researchers, including Newkirk (2011), also credit the widespread coverage of the American Civil Rights Movement and the publication of a report by the *National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (NACCD) in 1968 for introducing opportunities for African-Americans to enter mainstream media. *The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (1968) detailed the results of an investigation by a commission appointed by President Lyndon Johnson and headed by Governor Otto Kerner, to determine the causes of the urban riots of 1967 that had occurred in the United States and to provide recommendations to avoid further racial unrest.

Among the many findings, the commission found that the nation was becoming more racially divided and surmised that in order to repair the ills of a divided and segregated American society, it was imperative for the nation to realize "common opportunities for all within a single society" (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968, p.1). With regard to the news media, the commission found that despite attempts to the contrary, there was an unsuccessful attempt by print and broadcast news to offer fair and balanced coverage of the riots. By reporting the numerous events as random and inexplicable acts of angst by young black males, the media failed to report the truth which was that each event was the resulting escalation of a specific social action (Byerly & Wilson, 2009). In its report, the commission wrote, "We have found a significant imbalance between what actually happened in our cities and what the newspaper, radio and television coverage of the riots told us happened" (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968, p. 363). In its introduction, the commission wrote:

> Important segments of the media failed to report adequately on the causes and consequences of civil disorders and on the underlying problems of race relations. They have not communicated to the majority of their audience--which is white—a sense of the degradation, misery and hopelessness of life in the ghetto (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968, p. 18).

In summarizing its recommendations, the commission's report suggested that the American media should foster an attitude of inclusion by infusing representations of black life into all aspects of media production. In its report, the commission recommended improving existing journalistic practices. The commission's recommendations included more coverage of Blacks as a group and as integral part of society in newspaper articles and television programs. It also recommended that black journalists and broadcasters should be recruited and trained (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968).

Interest in the African-American Civil Rights Movement attracted the white press to black news stories. Because white publications were not able to discern the interests of black readers or to easily access black neighborhoods, they began to hire black journalists (Washburn, 2006). As resources—financial and journalistic—were taken away from black newspapers, they began to rely increasingly on wire services and news bureaus for their stories (Washburn, 2006). In this fashion the Black Press was no longer creating news, fighting for a voice, or reacting as a militant voice to the establishment and it neither attracted new readership nor attracted the readership it once commanded. By the 1970's a majority of editors working within the Black Press felt its purpose was no longer to protest, but to inform (Poindexter and Stroman, 1980).

In spite of the industry's attempts to adhere to the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders suggestions, many issues important and relevant to the day-to-day lives of the African-American community continued to be ignored by mainstream media. Byerly and Wilson (2009) observed that, "As the American society has evolved demographically over the last decades, the news industry does not appear to have evolved with it" (p. 209). Despite the fact that mainstream media outlets began to employ African-Americans, the gate-keepers continued to be mainstream editors, who were primarily white, responsible for regulating the dissemination of news and information to the American public. This has largely remained the case even in the new millennium. In fact, Byerly and Wilson (2009) have asserted that "the United States media barons that rule the airwaves, cable transmissions, and other vehicles of communication have a gender, race, and class bias—they are decidedly male, White, and rich" (p. 216).

In their article, which examines the state of journalism forty years after the publication of the Kerner Report, Byerly and Wilson (2009) argued that it is not only technology that has led to the decline of the newspaper industry, but also the industry's continuing practice of catering to a

diminishing population of white middle-class suburban readers instead of evolving to report news and information that appeals to the emerging multicultural American population. By and large, despite a move to foster the aforementioned attitude of inclusion, their evaluation found that mainstream print and broadcast media continue to be led by major corporations whose parent companies most often have very few minorities in decision making positions (Byerly & Wilson, 2009).

The lack of a diverse newsroom environment has translated into a news agenda that has continued to present content that targets the group with which the newsroom is familiar, causing the newsroom to improperly cover or ignore news events that do not seem to be important to that group. More recently, Newkirk (2011) asserted that there is currently a reverse migration of prominent African-American journalists from mainstream traditional and new media news outlets back to prominent and emerging African-American news outlets. This reverse migration has been influenced by financial cutbacks, personal disillusionment, or an inability to explore the depths of African-American issues in traditional and new media outlets targeted towards the mainstream (Newkirk, 2011). Between 2006 and 2011, "prominent African-American journalists" (Newkirk 2011, p. 40) from publications such as *Time*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *The New York Times*, *Fortune,* and *The Washington Post* left their positions to work for African-American owned and/or operated publications and new media ventures such as *Essence, Ebony*, *BlackAmericaWeb.com*, and *The Root.com.* This is largely because "black-oriented media offer [African-Americans] the opportunities to report on issues that are both close to the hearts of African-Americans and often not explored with any depth by the mainstream press" (Newkirk, 2011, p. 42).

In some instances, even though African-Americans did not stay with the news organizations they migrated to, all cited a sense of relief and a freedom to explore issues that were of interest to them culturally and socially while they were there (Newkirk, 2011). The pitfall of this reverse migration and voluntary segmentation has been that African-Americans reporting African-American news stories still may, in some way, lack the objectivity to report all sides of a news event because of what prominent journalist Jack White terms "a commonality of interest between editor and audience" (Newkirk, 2011, p. 43).

Additionally, like their predecessors, modern black-owned media, both traditional and online, have lacked the financial foundation that mainstream media corporations have to purchase the latest technologies and budgets to cover news events on a large scale. As a result, even though these organizations have allowed African-Americans to report news content "without filters," financial constraints inhibit original content development in both traditional and online news environment. This means that content is often recycled. Additionally, African-American new media news outlets rely often on freelancers instead of full-time staff writers (Newkirk, 2011). Byerly and Wilson (2009) have asserted that the Black Press is "still relevant and useful" (p. 219) and can serve as a model for other minority groups to follow and also as a model for mainstream news outlets to help them do a better job of reporting news events in and relevant to the African-American community. Despite early ideas of new media's potential to create an equal and united global citizenry, the literature has revealed that this is not the case.

Existing studies and scholarly projects have examined depictions of racial disparities in legacy news coverage of socially divisive national events such as Hurricane Katrina and political campaigns. For example, McGann (2007) analyzed the ways that race and lawlessness were framed and constructed through television, newspaper, and blog coverage of Hurricane Katrina.

Akil (2007) examined the social construction of news and the Black Press by conducting interviews with African-American news print publishers. Ayres (2008) examined the ways respondents' comments to a blog sponsored by the *New York Times* reframed and offered new perspectives to online news stories. Blakeman (2008) studied the demographics and motivations for accessing traditional newspaper blogs.

Selective Exposure and Online News Consumption

A practice of reverse market segmentation has continued to proliferate in new media as sexual, social, and racial minorities adapt and create new media platforms—targeted websites—to meet their respective perspectives and agendas. New media market segmentation coupled with selective exposure could have many effects on public discourse.

As the aforementioned Kerner Report revealed, "Knowledge gaps widen whenever there is a difference in interest between segments of the population; however, these gaps diminish and vanish when interest is similar or equal between the segments" (Knobloch & Carpentier, 2003, p. 92). The phenomenon of selective exposure as it is used here is a concept that originated in psychology. The theory of selective exposure states that "people generally choose to expose themselves to ideas that support their beliefs while filtering information that opposes those beliefs" (Melican & Dixon 2008, p.157). Garrett and Resnick (2011) has found that selective exposure is more about the personal need for opinion reinforcement rather than a conscious effort to avoid dissenting opinions.

Although researchers agree that the phenomenon exists, no studies have been able to concretely isolate the psychological reasons for its existence. The literature reveals that this is because the conscious or inadvertent manipulation of data to conduct experiments or the influence of the people or platform by which the research instrument is administered cannot be

ruled out as having had some effect on the outcome of the experiments. As a result, a review of the literature reveals that studies on selective exposure tend to agree with previous studies about the existence of the phenomenon and explore cultural and tangible factors that influence the way individuals select news sources and stories.

Zillman and Bryant (1985) have indicated that selective exposure is the result of media users who habitually and unequally allot their media choices by demonstrating preferences based on situational and personal factors. Melican and Dixon (2008) have pointed out that early studies of internet news have exposed a relationship between racial issues and internet news consumption and hypothesize that the nontraditional nature of internet news could lead more people to limit their personal exposure to ideologies on issues such as race that do not reflect or reinforce their personal opinions and beliefs. They find that the theory of selective exposure provides a critical basis for thinking about how people choose their online news sources (Melican & Dixon, 2008).

Perceived credibility—the factual, valid, truthful presentation of information—is another factor that influences selective exposure. Logically, an individual who finds a source to be credible is likely to select that source habitually as a source of information. Conversely, if a source is deemed less credible, individuals will not select that source to obtain news. Studies have been conducted regarding perceptions of the credibility of news presented online. In each study, the results varied, based on the purpose of the study and the variables involved in measuring perceived credibility. For example, Johnson and Kaye (1995) found that politically interested audiences viewed information on candidates and campaigns online as more credible than other news sources. Flanagin and Metzger (2000, 2001) studied the perceived credibility of a variety of news sources and found that the study participants viewed newspapers as the most

credible news sources. Research conducted by Squires (2002) and Byerly, Langmia, and Cupid

(2006) on race, source selection, and trust revealed that racial minority audiences utilize

mainstream and personalized news sources to obtain information, but are more trusting of the

information they find in sources that are personalized.

Beaudoin and Thorson (2005) examined the influence of race on credibility and

concluded that race played a major role in predicting the perception of news credibility. They

found that being black played a stronger role than being white in predicting perceived credibility

of news coverage of blacks and whites. This was because African-Americans scrutinize

portrayals of themselves as a group in mass media. In contrast, the study noted that whites do not

consider themselves to be part of a distinct ethnic group and therefore do not place

"great importance on their racial identity" (p. 38). Melican and Dixon (2008) examined

the relationship between users' perceived credibility of online news sites and their personal level

of prejudice and found that the less the user viewed traditional news sources as credible, the

more likely the user was to have racist ideologies.

With regard to race and culture, Byerly and Wilson (2009) have asserted that research

shows that multicultural audiences comprised of many racial and ethnic groups, including

African-Americans, have a variety of news interests and seek news from either traditional or

online news outlets whose news agendas reflect these interests. In addition to interest in politics,

crime, and safety—issues of importance to white audiences—minority audiences are also

interested in reporting that covers healthcare, issues of illiteracy, and poverty, and other "issues

and events that affect them and their communities" (Byerly & Wilson, 2009, p. 216). Knobloch,

Appiah, and Alter (2008) conducted a study of 112 black Americans and 93 white Americans

and found that white participants did not use race as a factor in choosing news stories to read, but

the black participants, on the other hand, spent more than twice the time reading news stories about blacks than news stories about white subjects.

Yzer and Southwell (2008) have pointed out another problem with new media and have suggested that just because the Internet represents a free space for expression and participation, it does not follow that all people will transcend social barriers to engage in widespread interactions with people very different from themselves. These social barriers could be personal or economic. Knobloch, Appiah, and Alter (2008) refer to abundant research that suggests that "race of the source makes no difference for White viewers' responses to media, but studies examining Blacks' responses to media content show that race makes a marked difference" (p. 402). Melican and Dixon (2008) assert that researchers should examine the relationship between internet news sites and social inequalities that involve race and socio-economic status to determine the degree to which the Internet will affect America's cultural divisions (p. 165).

In addition to credibility and race, skepticism has also been noted to influence the selection of news sources. In a study of Israeli media, Tsfati (2010) explored the degree to which skepticism about traditional news coverage influences the consumption of news from alternative news venues online. The study defined media skepticism as "the perception that journalists do not live by their professional standards" (Tsfati, 2010, p. 23) to report news in balanced and objective ways, and that the depth of their reporting and the degree to which they practice journalistic morality is easily influenced by the promise of personal gain. The hypothesis of the study was that media skeptics are more likely to seek and trust alternatives to traditional mainstream news coverage while individuals who were less skeptical of traditional mainstream news were more likely to trust and be satisfied with traditional news sources (Tsfati, 2010). Regarding online news consumption, the study found that the degree to which the consumer

trusted the online content was directly related to the degree to which the internet coverage was providing otherwise unavailable information and to the degree to which the internet coverage was accessible and speedy (Tsfati, 2010).

The literature has also revealed that framing, a journalistic practice that seeks to instigate reader interest in a story, is an additional factor related to selective exposure. Entman (2007) has defined framing as "the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation" (p. 164). Journalists frame stories by providing article titles, also known as leads, to attract readers' attention to the article. Tankard (2001) explained that the different types of frames used in print news include subheads, photographs, photo captions, and leads. Framing may most commonly occur in subheads and leads, but photographs may also frame a story. Abraham and Appiah (2006) have noted that an audience of news consumers may be exposed to multiple news stories "some with pictures and some without pictures" (p. 191). Folger and Woodhall (1982) asserted that images also frame accompanying news stories as cues for news consumers to consider in context with the text of the report.

Regardless of type, frames are used to indicate one of four subjects: intrigue, conflict, human-impact, or economy (Zillman et al, 2004). Gross and D'Ambrosio (2004) have suggested that there are three purposes for framing: to set an agenda that highlights a problem, to encourage moral judgment, or to promote policy. Research shows that conflict leads are used to most often to frame stories, with human impact—human suffering or misfortune--being the second most commonly employed frame (Zillman et al., 2004). Researchers have agreed that the way a story is framed greatly affects the way audiences perceive, interpret, comprehend, and retain information in news stories. Zillman, et al. (2004) examined the effect of framing on the

selection of news stories by analyzing the manner in which 111 subjects perused a fictitious online newsmagazine based on actual and manipulated leads. The researchers hypothesized that stories framed by conflict would be selected most often by the study participants. The results indicated that stories framed by conflict and agony were selected most often in the study and that the study participants also spent more time reading the conflict and agony stories than any of the other stories framed by economy or misfortune leads (Zillman, et al., 2004, p.75).

In conclusion, this review of literature concerning online news consumption identifies the three factors that influence how news is presented and consumed by individuals and the public-at-large. An overview of the legacy media practice of market segmentation was followed by an examination of studies on selective exposure and the effect of opinion on the selection of websites and online information. The chapter ends with a description of the influence the internet has had in altering the existing public sphere. The literature suggests that there is a need for more research on the ways in which these phenomena influence the presentation and consumption of information. The literature review also provides the theoretical framework under which research questions can be developed to conduct such a study. This framework provides the basis for analysis of information presentation and consumption online and suggests a variety of variables that can be examined to arrive at conclusions about how market segmentation and selective exposure online affect the perspectives, opinions, and actions of the citizenry comprising the public sphere.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

Two concepts serve as the foundation of this study: market segmentation and selective exposure. The practices of market segmentation and selective exposure have tremendous implications for the production and consumption of information and the development of

knowledge that exists in the public sphere. Sears and Freedman (1967) found that four social and cognitive factors influence an individual's voluntary or selective exposure to information and opinions: education, social class, the perceived utility of the information, and past history of exposure to similar information. While education, social class, and previous history of exposure to similar information are likely universally understood as social and cognitive factors, the concept of utility requires more discussion for clarity. Knobloch and Carpentier (2003) define utility as the degree to which exposure to the information will afford an improved understanding of events and the extent to which this understanding will "afford individuals a better orientation in as well as more effective means of acting on their physical and social environments" (p. 92). The concept of utility in relation to selective exposure in online news provides the most promising avenue for analyzing the role of selective exposure as it relates to this dissertation project.

While examining literature on the adaptation of legacy media practices, especially market segmentation, is paramount to this project, evaluating published findings concerning selective exposure and its relationship to news consumption is equally as important. Wallace (2001) explored the impact of the Internet on individual behavior from a psychological perspective. Her conclusion was that "as people participate in online group discussions with others who share their views they may well hold biased discussions, experience the influence of group polarization, and move further and further toward extremism" (p. 79). This polarity maintains the possibility of gaps in knowledge among groups in the larger population as people habitually and selectively expose themselves to only those sources of news that reflect their perspectives. Knobloch et al (2005) asserted that "the act of information selection, and the concept of selective exposure to that information, is an important issue in considering the relationship between the

audience and its media" (p. 181). This assertion reinforces the idea that understanding how the

variables of gender, race, and socio-economic status influence online

news consumption will lead to more viable conclusions about the relationship between selective

exposure, coverage, and consumption.

The media practice of market segmentation, coupled with the individual practice of

selective exposure, greatly affect the degree to which the public is informed. Additionally, if

fragmentation of news via segmentation persists online, the public's common agenda may turn

into divergent agendas (Maier, 2010). Ruiz et al. (2011) have suggested that the characteristics

of online news are a contemporary form of the actions of the 18th century public sphere, asserting

that the participatory nature of new media journalism allows debate in a public arena in a way

that is more accessible and efficient than its legacy counterparts. Jurgen Habermas' theory of the

public sphere focused on the political actions of the public sphere of 18th century French

bourgeois class and was formed before the proliferation of the Internet and its emergence as a

platform for the dissemination of information and news. According to Habermas (1989), "The

function of the public sphere is to mediate between civil society and the state; providing a space

for rational debate that gives rise to consensus on public affairs" (p. 155). Reflecting on his

theory, Habermas (1998) stated:

> Independently of their cultural backgrounds all the participants intuitively know
> quite well that a consensus based on conviction cannot come about as long as
> symmetry relations do not exist among the participants – relations of mutual
> recognition, reciprocal perspective-taking, a shared willingness to consider one's
> own tradition with the eyes of the stranger and *to learn* from one another, and so
> forth" (emphasis in original) (p. 169).

While the theory is not without its critics, the theory of the public sphere as Habermas

(1989) defined it refers to access to information as a condition for citizenship and political

action. Mindich (2005) has argued that an informed public sphere is a fundamental component of a functioning democratic society. In the 21st century, the Internet is "an extension of the public sphere" and suggests that as such, it should be a platform for "critical and rational discussions" (Ruiz, 2011, p. 466). Huspek (2007) has suggested that the application of Habermas' theory cannot be fully applied without also examining "exclusionary practices and forms of oppositional otherness" (p. 823). Huspek (2007) notes that "exclusionary practices and the pressures behind them may indeed work at cross-purposes with the ideals of open and free communication, and in so doing they represent a degradation of the public sphere" (p. 824). As a result, Habermas' theory can arguably be applied to the analysis of the information presented and exchanged in online news.

Three attributes are vital to the effectiveness of the sphere: competence to speak, access to participate in the public discourse and the ability to question or introduce new assertions into the existing discourse without intimidation (Habermas, 1989). The quality and availability of reliable and adequate information is necessary to facilitate sound discussion because tainted or inept information will lead to "prejudicial decisions and inept debate" (Webster, 1995, p. 105). Online content consumers who use the Internet as a source for news constitute citizens seeking to be informed so as to contribute to discourse in the modern public sphere and the practices of market segmentation and selective exposure that prevail in the medium have profound effects on the knowledge base of the public sphere.

Application of these theories will allow an evaluation of how news website content differs from site to site and how the framing of common stories differs based on the target audiences to whom they are presented. Application of the overall framework will allow

conclusions to be drawn about the reasons for and the possible effects of market segmentation and selective exposure on the greater American culture.

Research Questions

This study attempts to examine the characteristics of the presentation of news stories on the homepages of three inter-related news websites to arrive at conclusions about how the segmented content presented to selectively exposed online news consumers could affect not only the news agenda but also social and political discourse in the real world. Such an examination is important because the growing number of people turning to online sources for news and information may be unwittingly contributing to the proliferation of inconsistent news reporting by selectively exposing themselves to the news platforms of their choice. Melican and Dixon (2008) have asserted that the internet as a platform for news reporting offers "a means for people to limit their exposure to information that verifies their existing ideologies" (p.163).

Scholars have suggested that studying online news consumption could provide valuable insight into the social and intellectual effects of online news. No major studies have used quantitative and qualitative analysis to examine the inconsistencies in content and coverage of news events across untargeted news sites and news sites that target African-Americans in order to arrive at conclusions about the potential effects of these inconsistencies on public discourse. In addition, no study has examined how these inconsistencies affect public discourse by examining a news story that is reported, over time, by both groups of news websites. The results of this study will contribute to the growing research on online news consumption and suggest paths for further research.

Segmentation and Content

Market segmentation is a legacy media practice that began as a marketing tool to align

sponsors with consumers over television programming and newspaper ads (Wilson, Gutierrez & Chao, 2003). The practice has migrated to the World Wide Web in the form of targeted content that addresses content consumers based on personal, political, and economic interests, race, and/or gender (Gross & D'Ambrosio, 2004). As the number of Americans turning to the Internet as their primary news source continues to increase, it is important to analyze the characteristics and content of online news to expose and correct latent problems associated with the practices that inform its production and presentation (Hayes, Singer & Ceppos, 2007). These characteristics may include site design, content, and patterns of coverage. Melican and Dixon (2008) have asserted that the relevance and importance of a "systematic content analysis of internet news presented from traditional and nontraditional sources could serve as a basis for determining existing patterns in online news" (p.164).

Hayes, et al. (2007) have asserted that the best starting point for research into the role of journalists in public discourse is answering questions about the verifiability of the content and its ability to aid citizens in protecting or promoting their "political, artistic, cultural, sexual, religious, and economic liberties" (p. 265). Selber (2004) has suggested that a critical look at the reasons why online news deems some issues and topics to be more important than others could prove that the internet merely reflects the current structure of society (p. 85). As a result of these suggestions, the first research question for this study is:

    RQ1: *What role does market segmentation play in the consistency of reporting of news*
     stories on news websites?

This study attempted to answer this question by determining which features were common to all three of the news site homepages in this study's Web sphere and by determining

which features are common only to targeted sites in the Web sphere. It also attempts to draw

conclusions about how market segmentation affects news reporting of general interest stories on

targeted news websites and untargeted mainstream websites, and to determine how the content of

each of the pages in the Web sphere indicate perceptions about audience content preferences.

Homepage Content and Selective Exposure Online

The theory of selective exposure (Sears and Freedman, 1967) posits that people choose

content and information that aligns with their beliefs and ideas. Burnett and Marshall (2003)

predicted that segmentation of information on the internet would make it difficult for content

producers to select "the right stories from the enormous flood of information in order to deliver

personalized news" (p.153). Legacy media successfully practiced segmentation for the purposes

of providing content that would attract members of particular groups of American readers,

listeners and viewers. Hayes et al. (2007) have asserted:

> The ubiquity and variety of readily available information sources, as well as
> as the propensity of many communicators to put a personal spin on what they
> disseminate, raise initial questions that media consumers might ask themselves
> in deciding what content to trust and from whom…(p. 265).

Along similar lines, Melican and Dixon (2008) have suggested that personal filtering via

selective exposure has the potential to fragment society and decrease the population's abilities to

engage in public discourse. Pingree, et al (2013) has observed that "exposure to news can affect

citizens' perceptions of the most important problems facing the nation" (p. 352). As a result of

the issues researchers have raised about the consumption of segmented, selectively filtered news

content, the second research question for this study is:

> *RQ2*: *How is segmented news content presented to audiences selectively*
>
> *exposed to news online?*

This study attempted to answer this question by discerning which types of stories were reported on both targeted and untargeted news sites, discerning differences in the frames of news stories when the same story was reported on both targeted and untargeted websites, and determining if stories primarily of interest to African-Americans were also reported on untargeted news site in the study's Web sphere.

Selective Exposure Online and Public Discourse

Habermas (1989) noted that in order to fulfill its obligations to the democratic process, the public sphere must be adequately informed and able to engage in public discourse. Hayes et al. (2007) have asserted that despite the changing landscape of the news platform, the goal of journalism and the media is still to provide credible information that "citizens in a democracy need to be free and self-governing" (p. 275). Entman (2007) suggested that examining the agenda setting role of the media by evaluating the differences "patterns in the media's problem definitions, causal analyses, moral judgments, and preferred policies" (p. 170) could greatly improve the contribution media makes to the democratic process. As a result of these observations and Entman's (2007) suggestion, the third research question for this study is:

> *RQ3*: *What are the implied effects of disparities in news coverage across targeted and untargeted news websites on discourse in the public sphere?*

This study attempted to analyze how differences in editorial slant and site news agendas can affect the availability of information consumers receive and the perspectives content consumers have about topics that should be of equal interest to both targeted and untargeted audiences when they consume news online.

After introducing his theory of the public sphere, Habermas (1996) revisited the theory in light of modern media and asserted that the increased influence of mass media had detrimentally

affected the public sphere and the democratic process. He asserted that traditional peer-to-peer communication between citizens in the public sphere had been replaced by agenda-based communication fed to the citizens by corporate driven media. Moving from a critique of mass media to a critique of new media, Sunstein (2001) asserted that the onset of the Internet would threaten democracy because the new media platform would lead to group polarization. Later, the results of a study by Gerhards and Schaefer (2010) found that "only minimal evidence" (p.155) supported the assumption that the Internet is a better communication space than print media because popular inclusion of marginalized issues does not happen. As a result of these assertions, examining differences in the ways news stories are reported across the Web sphere sites is important to determine how gaps in content or perspective might affect the ability of the public-at-large to engage in purposeful discourse.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This study uses Web sphere analysis to comparatively analyze news coverage on three news websites at one particular point in time in order to examine the common features of the news sites' homepage layouts, to discern the types of stories that are presented on news site homepages, to discern the factors that may influence coverage of new stories on the homepages, and to determine whether or not targeted and untargeted audiences receive access to the same news stories on news websites.

Web sphere analysis, introduced by Schneider and Foot (2004), is a multi-method content-analysis approach that allows researchers to investigate the actions of Web producers and/or the relationship between Web producers and content consumers over a particular timeframe. The method allows researchers to analyze the content of a sample of related internet resources that are connected by hyperlinks or a shared central theme. According to Foot (2006), a Web sphere is defined as "a unit of analysis boundable by time and object-orientation, sensitive to developmental changes, within which social, political and cultural relations can be analyzed in a variety of ways"(p. 2).

After a pilot study validated the need for a larger study, data was collected from the sites in the Web sphere over a constructed two-week period allowed for the collection of a substantial number of stories that were then analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate the characteristics and patterns that govern the coverage of news stories online. In the following section, the methodology and results of the pilot study are presented as a preliminary

foundation for the methodology applied to the larger study. The explanation of the pilot study is followed by an explanation of the characteristics of the sample, methodology, study variables and data collection used in the dissertation study.

Pilot Study

In order to make initial determinations about three factors imperative to the justification of a larger study of the possible effects of market segmentation and selective exposure, a simple constructed week Web sphere pilot study was conducted to compare news coverage on the homepages of mainstream news websites with news coverage on African-American news websites. The pilot study was an evaluation of homepage news content collected during a constructed seven-day week within the time period of September 22, 2011 to October 31, 2011 to answer three research questions: (1) Are there African-American websites and blogs whose main objectives are to report news and, if so, are such sites comparable to mainstream news websites? (2) Do discrepancies exist between the stories covered on mainstream news websites and African-American sites that warrant a larger study? (3) Is a constructed week method of data collection a viable approach for collecting the data that can be objectively analyzed in a large study?

Once the research questions for the pilot study were outlined, Web sphere analysis was employed to select the websites that would be suitable for the pilot study. This analysis was composed of cross-referencing the blog rolls of potential mainstream news websites and blogs with the blog rolls of targeted African-American websites. Each website chosen for the pilot study was mentioned on at least two other sites under examination. Once a relationship was established, its homepage and a description of the site were examined to see if the site included common characteristics—content, structure, and purpose that would enable it to be included in

the pilot study's Web sphere. Based on site metrics and average monthly unique page views obtained from two site analytics websites, *Alexa* and *Compete*, the sites examined in the pilot study were the most viewed sites by their respective audiences.

Ultimately, 12 news websites made up the sphere for the pilot study: four African-American sites, four mainstream sites, and four television broadcast-affiliated sites. Websites associated with television news channels were included in the Web sphere of the pilot study because the study had not yet specified the study's Web sphere as one that would allow for analysis of only web-based news sites with no ties to legacy media. These sites shared common characteristics of purpose, content and site visibility. The broadcast affiliated sites were: CNN, ABC, MSNBC, and CBS. For the most part, the homepages of the broadcast affiliated sites consisted of original written and video content; however, some of the sites did link to stories found elsewhere on the web, but not to other sites in the designated Web sphere. Four additional sites in the Web sphere were news sites that targeted African-Americans, primarily presenting news relevant to the African-American community. The sites that targeted African-Americans were: *The Root* and *BlackAmericaWeb*—two sites that consist of original news content and commentary along with newsfeeds linking to stories elsewhere on the Web—and *Huffington Post Black Voices* and *The Grio*—aggregated sites that provide links to stories and videos content from various sites around the web. The four remaining sites in the pilot study Web sphere were a mixture of both mainstream liberal and conservative online news sites: *DailyKos*, *The Huffington Post*, *Talking Points Memo*, and the *Drudge Report*.

A constructed week sampling methodology was employed through which screen captures were taken from each website in the Web sphere after midnight once a week on days randomly

selected for seven weeks. The result was a seven-day constructed week sample in which each day of the week—including the weekend days—was represented. Constructing the week in this fashion was done to allow opportunities to uncover patterns across the sites in the pilot study Web sphere that might emerge regarding the types of news stories that were reported on different days of the week. This constructed week data collection method resulted in 84 screen captures.

Capturing screenshots of the homepages allowed analysis of the superficial similarities and differences in coverage of stories by each site. This meant that examining the homepages provided an opportunity for general and detailed analysis of each site's news coverage based on the stories that appeared on the homepages. The homepage screen captures indicated the presence of discrepancies between the coverage of stories on mainstream news sites and African-American targeted news sites.

While the results of the pilot study did not lead to detailed analysis that delved into the reasons for inclusion or exclusion of the stories, they did answer each of the designated pilot study research questions. The results of analysis also substantiated the viability of and need for a larger study. The results of the pilot study informed this research project by indicating that the practice of segmentation utilized by traditional legacy media is practiced in new media news coverage as well and justifying the need for a larger study that would analyze how strongly market segmentation, when coupled with selective exposure, affects the presence and framing of online news stories and the consciousness of online news consumer. It also reinforced the viability of constructed week sampling for a larger study.

First of all, the study revealed that there are many reputable, quality news websites focused on providing news and information for the African-American community. In addition to

discerning the existence of reputable news websites targeting African-Americans, the results also revealed discrepancies in news coverage between the mainstream and the targeted news sites. Over the collection period, all of the stories common to the homepages of the mainstream sites in the sphere were also covered by at least one of the African-American sites. However, none of the mainstream sites covered any of the stories that were common to the four African-American sites. When analysis of the homepages on a single day was conducted, these discrepancies were much more obvious. On the contrary, breaking news stories were commonly covered by all of the sites, albeit from different perspectives. In fact, the results indicated that stories that related specifically to the African-American community were often overlooked by the mainstream news sites unless the stories were breaking stories concerning politics and also suggested that mainstream news sites did not often report on story topics informed by race. The mainstream sites seemed to focus only on politics, economics, and health with no relation to race. African-American sites, on the other hand, seemed to focus more on the relationship of race to most social and political issues they covered. The results of the pilot study also reinforced the fact that the constructed week methodology utilized by the pilot study would work, with modifications to accommodate a larger study in order to align itself with standard content analysis practices.

Overview of Methodological Approach

Drawing from the methodology used in the pilot study, a larger study was undertaken for this project that also employed Web sphere analysis. With this approach in mind, this dissertation project utilized only news websites that had no ties to legacy media such as print or broadcast news sources. Unlike the pilot study, websites associated with legacy media were not included in the study because the goal of the study was redefined to analyze new media news

39

coverage. For this study, the content of the homepages of three news websites (an untargeted mainstream site, the *Huffington Post*; a targeted site produced by a mainstream news site, *Huffington Post Black Voices*; and a targeted site produced by an African-American media group targeting an African-American audience, *News One*) were examined comparatively to evaluate the characteristics and consistency of news coverage across the sites and to discern the similarities and differences in content and the implications of those similarities and differences on public discourse.

The *Huffington Post* sites were selected because they had been examined in the pilot study and represented a mainstream and targeted website produced by the same media group. The *News One* site was added, in lieu of any of the other targeted sites used in the pilot study, because it was a Web only news site produced by African-American targeting African-Americans. It was also determined that utilizing a site owned and operated by members of the group it targeted would add another layer of comparative analysis of patterns of story inclusion and coverage on untargeted sites and targeted sites to arrive at conclusions about their content and news agendas.

After the websites were selected, a constructed week sampling method was employed to collect data. Once the variables were identified, the structural elements of the homepages of the websites as well as characteristics of stories presented on the sites were coded. After these variables were identified and coded, they were tested for reliability.

Content analysis was utilized to examine the relationships between the variables. Neuendorf (2011) defines content analysis as a "summarizing, quantitative, analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method, including attention to objectivity/inter-subjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing"(p. 277).

Quantitative and qualitative analysis were used to evaluate the data. Quantitative analysis was employed to discern variable frequencies and percentages for comparative analysis of homepage elements and news story presence and degree of coverage while qualitative analysis was employed to analyze textual similarities and differences among common stories reported on each of the three sites.

Sample Characteristics

Data for the study was obtained from three news websites. Two sites in the Web sphere, *Huffington Post* and *Huffington Post Black Voices,* are both operated by *Huffington Post* Media Group, LLC, a subsidiary of American Online, Inc (AOL) that offers a mix of links, news and blogs around the web as well as some original political news reports. The third site in the sphere, *News One* is operated by Interactive One, a division of Radio One, the leading media producer of programming and content targeted specifically to African-American audiences. The profile for each of the sites is as follows:

The *Huffington Post*[1] website has deemed itself "the internet newspaper" and is a news, lifestyle, and entertainment site targeted towards liberals. It is published by AOL and the *Huffington Post* Media Group. An evaluation of its site traffic over a 13 month period as reported by Compete Site Metrics (2012) indicated that it averages 18,846,083 unique page views per month. According to Alexa Site Metrics (2012), the site appeals to American, childless, moderately educated females. Stories related to African-Americans posted to this site are often linked to the media group's *Black Voices* site.

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[1] Huffington Post. Last Retrieved April 7, 2012, from http://www.huffingtonpost.com

The *Huffington Post Black Voices*[2] website is a multimedia aggregated news and

entertainment website targeted toward African-Americans. It is published by the *Huffington Post*

Media Group, LLC. An evaluation of its site traffic over a 13 month period as reported by

Compete Site Metrics (2012) indicated that it averages 369, 104 unique page views per

month. According to Alexa Site Metrics (2012), the site appeals to African-American, childless,

moderately-educated females who earn more than $30,000. Mainstream stories that appear on

this site are often linked to the media group's *Huffington Post* site.

The *News One*[3] website is a news and entertainment website that targets African-

Americans. The site is published by Interactive One, a division of Radio One, Inc. Compete Site

Metrics did not provide page view data for the site. According to Alexa Site Metrics (2012), the

site appeals to African-American, childless, moderately-educated females who earn more than

$30,000. Stories that related to both the mainstream and to African-Americans are often

hyperlinked to other sources of news including the other two sites that comprise the study's Web

sphere.

Data Set

The data analyzed for this study was the result of a constructed two-week period of data

collection during which the homepages of the websites in the study were captured. Utilizing

constructed week sampling ensured that the data collected represented news coverage over a

representative period of time. Screenshots of the homepages for all three sites were captured one

day each week for a 14-week period. In addition to the homepage screenshots, the first 10

homepage stories from each website, and the hyperlinks to the full text of each of these stories

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[2] Huffington Post Black Voices. Last Retrieved April 7, 2012, from http://huffingtonpost.com/black-voices
[3] NewsOne. Last Retrieved April 7, 2012, from *http://www.newsone.com*

articles were also collected by accessing, copying and pasting them into Microsoft Word documents.

The resulting data set, using this collection method, was 420 stories. 140 stories were collected from *Huffington Post*, 140 stories were collected from *Huffington Post Black Voices* and 140 stories were collected from *News One*. To maintain organization, the screenshots taken from each website were saved by date and name of website. Additionally, the first 10 story links were saved by date, name of website, and designation as story link files. The stories collected from each site were identified and saved by date, website, and ordinal location on the page. Once all data was captured, all screenshot files, story link files, and article text files were grouped by date and site and filed in separate file folders.

Data Collection

Constructed week sampling was employed to collect data for this study. Research suggests that for this sampling method to be representative, at least two constructed weeks are necessary to obtain data that can be analyzed for accurate results that can be generalized (Hester & Dougall, 2007). Adhering to this model, this study utilized a 14-week collection period that would equate to two constructed seven-day weeks in the time period from January 4, 2012 to April 7, 2012. During the collection period, the collection days were randomly selected until each day of the week was represented twice in the data set. The collection days were: January 4, 9, 20, 24; February 3, 5, 12, and 20; March 1, 10, 13, 21, 29; and April 7, 2012. During the collection period, data was collected from all sites in the Web sphere one day each week for the 14-week period, resulting in a constructed sample of data in which each day of the week was represented twice. Constructing two weeks in this way allowed an opportunity to determine if

there were patterns of coverage that emerged as stories were collected on different days of the week.

On days when data was collected, the collection period ranged from 7 p.m. to 11:59 p.m. This time frame for collection was selected because it was deemed that the news cycle settles after 7:00 p.m. and that the news websites were less likely to update their homepages during the collection process, unless there were breaking news stories. To this end, it was concluded that collection between 7 p.m. and 11:59 p.m. would ensure that the content of the websites in the sphere would be static and not likely to be altered in the midst of the actual collection process. On days when data was collected, it took a total of one hour to collect the homepage screenshots and first 10 story links from all of the homepages in the study's Web sphere. Collection of the text, via copy/paste, took longer and was done after the screenshots and links were captured from all three sites.

Variables

Once collected, the 420 articles were organized and coded using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The articles were coded using 14 variables in order to analyze patterns of reporting and coverage and possible other factors of Web news required to answer the research questions for the study. Each of the chosen variables reflects research on research concepts related to the design, attractiveness, accessibility, and believability of the stories presented in the online medium. Each of the variables can be analyzed both independently and in relation to other variables in the study to determine patterns of news coverage in order to answer the research questions set forth by this study.

Home Page Story Number

This variable represented the ordinal location of the story on its homepage. For the

purposes of this study, this variable is used to analyze the placement of stories in relation to their topics on the homepage. Applying appropriate scholarship, this variable could also be examined to determine the order in which stories are read on a news website's homepage and to determine whether or not layout patterns indicate that the content providers consciously place stories in certain areas of the homepage. Because the first 10 stories were captured from each homepage during the collection period, the range of codes for this variable was a numerical value between 1 and 10.

Story Number

This variable was used to maintain organization of the stories used in the study for documentation purposes. It is used to generate an enumerated stories index. It is not used in analysis, but to index the stories so that they might be referenced at later dates for evaluation, study replication, or for additional research. The range of codes for this variable is 1- 420.

Date

This variable represented the date the story was originally posted to the homepage. It was used to maintain organization and is also used to examine similarities and differences in coverage of news coverage posted on each of the sites on particular dates during the data collection period. The range of dates for the data collected were January 4, 9, 20, 24; February 3, 5, 12, 20; March 1, 10, 13, 21, 29; and April 7.

Location on Page

This variable represented the spatial placement of the story on the website's homepage. Employing the principles of design, this variable was used to determine patterns of presentation and also, applying applicable research, to analyze the effect that story placement may have on the perceived importance of the story by both content producers and site visitors. The range of

codes for this variable were 1=headline; 2=top third, center; 3=top third, right; 4=top third, left; 5=middle third, center; 6=middle third, right; 7=middle third, left; 8=lower third, center; 9=lower third, right; 10=lower third, left.

Category

This variable indicated the way the website had categorized the story. For each homepage, clicking on a lead from the homepage redirects visitors to a specific "page" within the website where the full text of the story and comments are available. For the purpose of this study, this variable was used to compare how each of the sites categorizes their news stories and what the implications of those categories might reveal. It was not possible to collapse the list of categories into a minimal list because many of the stories were categorized by the Web sphere sites in categories unique to each of the respective sites in the study. As a result, for the variable *category*, there were 29 category codes for stories from the *Huffington Post.* There were 12 category codes for stories from *Huffington Post Black Voices.* There were 12 category codes for *News One.* Any stories on any of the three sites that were hyperlinked to external sites outside the Web sphere were coded as "Other".

Images

This variable indicated the presence or absence of an image or images accompanying the text of a news story. For the purpose of this project, this variable was used to evaluate the availability of images that assist the lead in attracting readers to a story. For the variable *images*, each story was coded 1=yes if an image accompanied the link to the story or 2=no if there was no accompanying image.

Video

This variable indicated the presence or absence of video accompanying the text of a story. For the purposes of this project, this variable was used to evaluate the availability of multimedia content to assist with the comprehension of a story. For the variable *video*, each story was coded 1=yes if video was included or 2=no if video was not included.

Web Origin

This variable indicated which website in the Web sphere from which the news story was originally reported and collected. For the purpose of this study, this variable was used as both an organizational aid and also used to assist with the examination of patterns of news coverage. The range of codes for this variable was: 1=*Huffington Post*, 2=*Black Voices*, 3=*News One*.

Length

This variable indicated the number of words contained in the story. It was discerned by using the Word Count feature in Microsoft Word to count the actual words in each story, minus any comments, and prefatory information—such as the title, author, and location of reporting. Evaluating the number of words given to stories by the sites in the project's Web sphere will allow comparative analysis of the depth of coverage each of the sites in the project give stories based on subject or category. The code for this variable was the actual number of words in the story and ranged from 36 words to 4,081 words.

Reporting Source

Even though a news story may have appeared on a particular site, it may not have been originally reported by that site and its lead may have been hyperlinked to a different site. For this study, the variable indicated the original source of reporting for each news story collected for the project. This variable was used to determine how many original stories each site in the Web sphere produced to analyze if it could enable one to arrive at conclusions about how the original

source of stories posted on the website homepages might influence the perceived credibility of the sites. The range of codes for this variable was: 1=original report, 2=external link, 3=AP, 4=summary from another site, 5=Reuter's, 6=America's Wire, 7=Religious News Service.

Day

This variable represented the actual day of the week the story was captured from the website. For the purpose of this study, this variable was used to analyze patterns of coverage relevant to particular days of the week. Examining this variable in relation to the topic variable allowed for determinations about whether or not the day of the week has any influence over the content posted to the sites' homepages. There was a range of seven days for this variable with 1=Sunday, 2=Monday, 3=Tuesday, 4=Wednesday, 5=Thursday, 6=Friday, and 7=Saturday.

Topic

This variable represented the tags used by the website to categorize the story. For the purpose of this study, this variable was used to analyze patterns of coverage and omission of news events to evaluate market segmentation. There were 65 topic codes. The topics were not collapsed into a general list and the list of codes was generated from the original tags that each website assigned to each of the stories. It was also used in relation to the "category" variable to evaluate the differences and similarities of how the Web sphere sites classified their stories. The range of codes for this variable was 1-65.

Number of Comments

This variable represented the actual number of comments a story received from readers. For the purpose of this study, this variable was used to discern perceived reader interest in the story. The range of codes for this variable was the numerical amount of comments each collected story received.

Reliability Testing

To test the reliability of the coding before beginning data analysis, an additional coder was asked to code a random representative sample of the articles. It was determined that a representative sample could be 10% of the collected articles (*n=42*). To choose a random sample, a range of 1-422 was entered into a random number generator program which generated 42 random numbers. This list of 42 random numbers was cross-referenced with the enumerated stories index compiled for the project, and the corresponding 42 articles from the collected stories were chosen for the test. The random sample was representative of each day of the collection period. Coding for an average of 4.5 stories per day from January, an average of two stories per day from February, an average of 2.8 stories per day from March, and two stories from April were tested for reliability.

After training, one coder in addition to the researcher examined the homepage screenshots and the news articles from each of the three Web sphere websites. The test coder coded the sample for 10 of the 15 original variables: story number, homepage story number, location, category, image, video, source of the story, reporting source, topic, number of words, and author's gender. The test coder was given access to SPSS and the coding variables and allowed adequate time to independently code each of the 42 stories. It was determined that it was not important to evaluate the reliability of coding for day of the week, number of comments, numerical date were not needed because those variables were concrete variables with values that were not part of a subjective interpretation.

Inter-coder reliability was calculated using Scott's Pi, a statistical formula for testing agreement that calculates observed agreement and expected agreement to determine the

acceptable chance agreement of coding between the results of the two coders. Frequency of agreement can range from 0.00-1.00 (Scott, 1955). In light of a variety of research sources that identify an acceptable result of a coefficient between .7 and .8 in inter-coder testing (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). Therefore the goal for this reliability test was to achieve a Scott's Pi coefficient of .75 or greater coding consistency for each variable tested (Perry, 2002). Reliability for each variable was calculated using *ReCal2* freeware[4], an online reliability calculator.

Pre-testing for inter-coder reliability suggested the need for second coder retraining prior to final reliability testing. Once the second coder was retrained, reliability testing was conducted to verify reproducible coding. The results of reliability testing revealed that the resulting coefficients met or exceeded the targeted acceptable coefficients of consistency for two coders. The coefficients for each variable were as follows: story number (1.0), homepage story number (.973), location (.865), category (.891), image (.973), video (1.0), web origin (.964), reporting source (1.0) and topic (.925).

Qualitative Methods

Once quantitative data analysis of the homepage stories was completed, a closer examination of the 420 stories was conducted to analyze how stories on the same topics were reported on each of the three sites. Common stories were extracted by cross-referencing story topics and dates in the SPSS Stories Index List of Collected Stories created for this study to locate redundancies in date and title frames. First redundancies in topics were located. Then, reporting dates were cross-referenced to determine if the stories had been reported on the same day. It was determined that qualitatively examining stories that were posted as one of the top10

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[4]True Random Number Service. Retrieved November 23, 2012 from http://dfreelon.org/utils/recalfront/recal2.

on the same day on different sites in the Web sphere would allow for comparative analysis of lead framing and context of the news report.

The subset of common topics reported on the same day on at least two of the Web sphere news sites fell under the categories of politics, celebrity behavior, crime, or race. The common stories covered in the first ten stories on at least two websites on the same day during the collection period, in no particular order, were reports about the following topics: the State of the Union Address, Rick Santorum, the 2012 Grammy Awards, Whitney Houston, Don Cornelius, Newt Gingrich, Black v African-American, Trayvon Martin, Black Duke students, the popular meme Sh*t White Girls Say, Consumer Agency Appointments, President Obama, the economy, Etta James' death, Nick Cannon, and Blue Carter.

Once the common stories were located, the text of each posted story was entered into NVivo software for qualitative textual analysis. Each story was indexed in NVivo by title and website. First general text analysis was conducted to obtain visual information about how the same stories were covered on each of the sites. This visual analysis took the form of text search queries, word cloud analysis, and the generation of word trees.

First text search queries were conducted. These queries were conducted to determine how each site covered the same stories in particular. To arrive at a general idea of how a particular site covered a story, each of the stories was queried to determine which 20 words were used most often. To more easily discern which terms were used most often, story clouds were generated for each of the stories. Once the story clouds were analyzed, the most often used words were noted for further analysis. It was determined that evaluating story clouds could offer a visual overview of how each particular site covered similar stories. In these story clouds, in which the most

51

common words appear the largest and the words used the least appear in the smallest text, general patterns of context of coverage were discerned across the Web sphere.

Finally, to obtain an overview of how common topics were reported across all three sites, word trees were generated and examined to reveal the general context and uses of the term across all of the sites to determine, in general, if the topics of the common stories were reported through a positive or a negative perspective. Keywords for this portion of analysis represent both conceptual words as well as concrete terms commonly related to the topics discussed in the articles. For the purposes of this study, conceptual terms were defined as terms or ideas that have abstract meanings that may differ based on sociological factors or related to the perspectives and situational instances. For the purposes of this research project, concrete terms were defined as terms whose meanings are held in consensus regardless of sociological factors, perspectives, or situational instances. Both conceptual and concrete keywords were searched in an attempt to pinpoint common topics and to gauge differences in perspectives across the Web sphere.

The conceptual keywords queried for this project were: bad, fair, good, great, power, race, truth, right, and poor. The concrete keywords queried for this project were: abuse, African-American, American, black, business, celebrities, congress, crime, democrat, drugs, economy, education, entertainment, government, justice, leader, life, Limbaugh, men, minority, money, Newt, political, President, President Barack Obama, Obama, racism, republican, Santorum, singer, speech, Trayvon, voters, whites, Whitney, and women. The keywords used most commonly amongst all the stories in the subset of common stories reported within 24 hours of each other were: Obama, Trayvon, President, Whitney, African-American, and American.

Lastly, two groups of the commonly covered stories were extracted and their texts were analyzed. One group of stories consisted of coverage of the controversial shooting death of Trayvon Martin, an African-American Florida teen shot on the way home from a convenience store. The other group of stories consisted of coverage of President Barack Obama's 2012 State of the Union address. Coverage of the 2012 State of the Union address was selected because it was a news event of interest to all segments of the American population and, therefore, both targeted and untargeted audiences of sites in the study's Web sphere. Coverage of the death of Trayvon Martin was selected because it was initially an event primarily of interest to the study's targeted group—African-Americans—but eventually became an event covered by all of the news sites in the Web sphere as well as interest in the story grew. These two groups of stories were evaluated to discern the differences in frame, context, and content of reports based on the source of the reports and target audience and to arrive at conclusions about the role of agenda-setting and selective exposure that might have impacted the general public's constructive discourse on issues related to either of these groups of stories.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

The results of this study and analysis of the three research questions are presented in four

parts within this chapter. The first part of the chapter details the shared features of the news

websites in the study's Web sphere. The results of the quantitative content analysis of the news

topics covered on the three websites that comprised the Web sphere for this study are presented.

The second part of this chapter presents the results of the quantitative analysis of the frequency

and placement of news stories on the websites in the Web sphere. The third and fourth parts of

the study presents the qualitative results of analysis of the coverage of two major news events

that occurred during the data collection phase of this study: President Barack Obama's 2012

State of the Union address and the controversial shooting death of an African-American Florida

teen, Trayvon Martin.

General Features of the Homepages in the Web sphere

Evaluation of the content collected from the sites in the Web sphere during the

constructed two-week collection period from January 4, 2012 to April 7, 2012 revealed that

while the perspectives and framing of stories differed from site to site, all three of the homepages

in the Web sphere had similar layouts and static content.

First of all, the backgrounds on each of the collected homepages were white, which

enhanced readability. The homepages of each site contained a masthead that identified the name

the caption "The Internet Newspaper: News, Blogs, Video, Community" and a search query box

of the website. Additionally, both the *Huffington Post* and *Huffington Post Black Voices* present

centered under the masthead (see Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2). In contrast, the *News One*

homepage presents itself as a website. The site's logo is present in the upper left of the homepage

while a banner ad occupies the remainder of its masthead space at the top of the *News One*

homepage. While the search query box was included in the mastheads of the *Huffington Post* and

Huffington Post Black Voices homepages, it was not included in the *News One* masthead.

Under their mastheads, all three sites provided a tabbed horizontal menu bar to enable

site visitors to bypass the homepage and immediately access categorized stories. The horizontal

menu bars of the *Huffington Post* and *Huffington Post Black Voices* contained 13 tabs: Front

Page, Politics, Business, Entertainment, Tech, Media, Life & Style, Culture, Comedy, Healthy

Living, Women, Local, and More. *News One's* menu bar increased from 6 tabs to 7 tabs over the

collection period. *Even* though the tabs varied over the collection period, they always included

the tabs: Main, Nation, World, Entertainment and WashingtonWatch (see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.1 Example of *Huffington Post* Homepage Masthead

Figure 4.2 Example of *HP Black Voices* Homepage Masthead
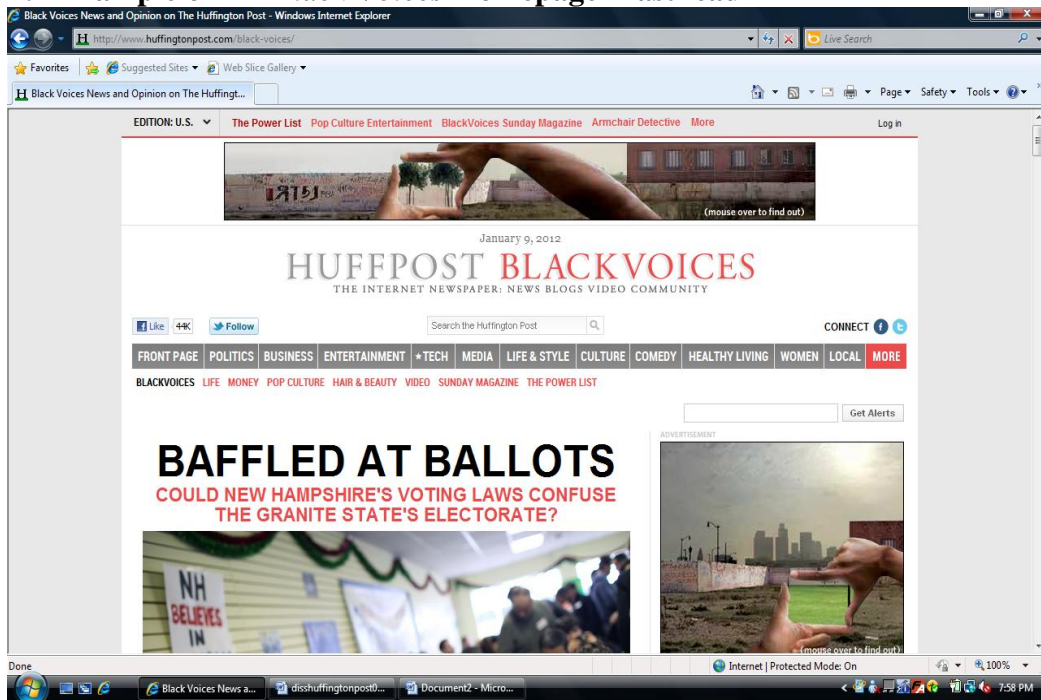
Figure 4.3 Example of *News One* Homepage Masthead
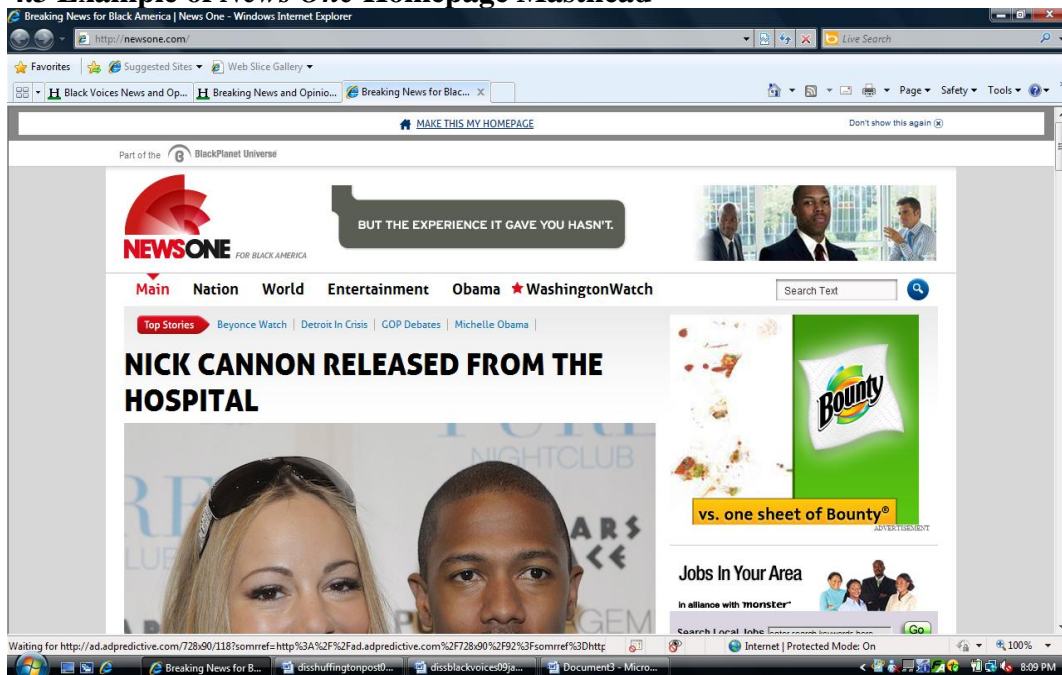
Under each site's horizontal menu bars, each site presented an index to featured news. On the *Huffington Post* homepage, this index contained hyperlinks to the homepages of the other websites the media group produces. The hyperlinks in the index were: TV, *Black Voices*, Latino Voices, Weddings, World, Religion, Crime, Green, Sports, and Occupy Wall Street. On the *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepages, this index contained hyperlinks to the other pages within the *Huffington Post Black Voices* site. These pages varied over the collection period, but always included the hyperlinks: Life, Money and Pop Culture pages. Like the *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepage, the *News One* homepage only indexes the other pages within the site. However, within the *News One* homepages collected for this project, the hyperlinks in the index are to the top four stories posted on the site and vary from day to day.

On all three Web sphere sites, the headline stories homepages were presented with the largest image and a lead displayed in a larger font than any of the other story leads featured on the homepage. After the headline stories, presentation of the remaining news content on each of the sites followed a three-panel layout with left, center, and right columns. The layouts on both *Huffington Post* and *Huffington Post Black Voices* were the same: A centered headline story signaled by an image that is the width of all three columns and a hyperlinked lead in a font size that is the largest font on the homepage. Under the headline story, the remaining content was separated into three columns. Although the *News One* homepage also followed the three-panel layout, the content of each of the columns differed from those of the *Huffington Post and Huffington Post Black Voices* homepages. Like the other two sites in the Web sphere, the *News One* homepage presented a headline story accompanied by an image framed by a lead displayed in the largest font on the page, but the headline stories were not centered on the top of the

homepage. Instead, its headline stories always took up the left and center columns of the page. The remaining stories on the *News One* homepage were presented in two columns.

The left column of both the *Huffington Post* and *Huffington Post Black Voices* sites contained featured blog summaries of op-ed postings identified by title and author, and organized by posting date. The left column of the *News One* homepage was reserved for news—political, educational, celebrity, and crime—stories. Each of the stories was presented with a lead, an image, a byline (when available) and the number of comments the story has received.

With the exception of the *Huffington Post Black Voices* site—where the second and third stories were posted immediately under the headline lead and image—the center column of the *Huffington Post* was reserved for major political or economic news stories. Each story was identified by a hyperlinked lead caption above an image and the number of comments the story has received below the image. The center column of the *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepages consisted of major celebrity, education, and political stories. The layout of the *NewsOne* homepage did not include a center column.

For the *Huffington Post* homepage, the top half of the right column presented a dynamic ad, social media hyperlinks and hyperlinks to most of the site's six most popular stories. The remainder of the right column is used by the website to post hyperlinks to more *Huffington Post* bloggers, sponsor links, and random, local, celebrity, technology, and fashion news. For the *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepage, the top of the right column contains a dynamic ad, links to the site's most popular videos, social media hyperlinks, hyperlinked leads to *Huffington Post* stories that have been recommended or liked on Facebook, followed by sponsor links, and random news stories related to African-American celebrities, entertainment, and race issues. The right column of the *News One* homepage seems to be reserved primarily for social media links,

sponsor ads, and links to other sites sponsored by Media One and Reach media. For example, the site's homepages contained a Media One ad, followed by hyperlinks to the top five stories that have been recommended on Facebook.

The bottom of each of the Web sphere news homepages contained a blog roll of news sites with related content site visitors might like. The blog roll for the *Huffington Post* consisted of a variety of legacy media newspaper websites, news websites, columnists, and blogs. The blog roll for *Huffington Post Black Voices* consisted of websites and blogs deemed to be of interest to African-Americans. The blog roll for *News One* listed other news websites and provided links to other websites run by Media One, as well as a website that targeted towards the Christian and community and its issues.

> *RQ1:   What role does market segmentation play in the consistency of reporting of news stories on news websites?*

In order to evaluate the consistency of news reports across the websites in the Web sphere, data was analyzed to determine general topics covered by each Web sphere site, common topics covered by all three Web sphere sites, and the frequency of coverage of these topics by site. The goal of this analysis was to determine if market segmentation affects the topics of news stories posted on targeted and untargeted news website homepages.

First, it should be noted that the stories collected for this study represent the first 10 stories from each of the three homepages in the Web sphere. During the collection period, the *Huffington Post* homepages averaged 46 stories per day. The *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepages averaged 32 stories per day. The *NewsOne* homepages averaged 23 stories per day.

Topic Frequency: All Stories

Once topics were coded and the data was entered into SPSS for each story, the data was

analyzed in two ways. First, the data was analyzed to determine which topics were frequently

reported on the homepages of all of the websites in the Web sphere. Once the general topic

frequency was discerned, the topics data was also analyzed site by site to discern similarities and

differences in the topics most frequently reported by the sites (see Figure 4.4). Of the 420 stories

collected from the sites in the Web sphere and coded for analysis in SPSS, a variety of story

topics were reported on each of the three sites during the data collection period (see Table 4.1).

Of these varied topics: President Obama, the GOP primaries, the general election, Congress, the

State of the Union Address, murder, Trayvon Martin, celebrity behavior, Whitney Houston,

celebrity and dignitary obituaries, black history, gay rights, the Super Bowl, health, technology,

music, education, and race were topics that were reported on all three of the

Figure 4.4. Topics Frequently Covered in the Web Sphere
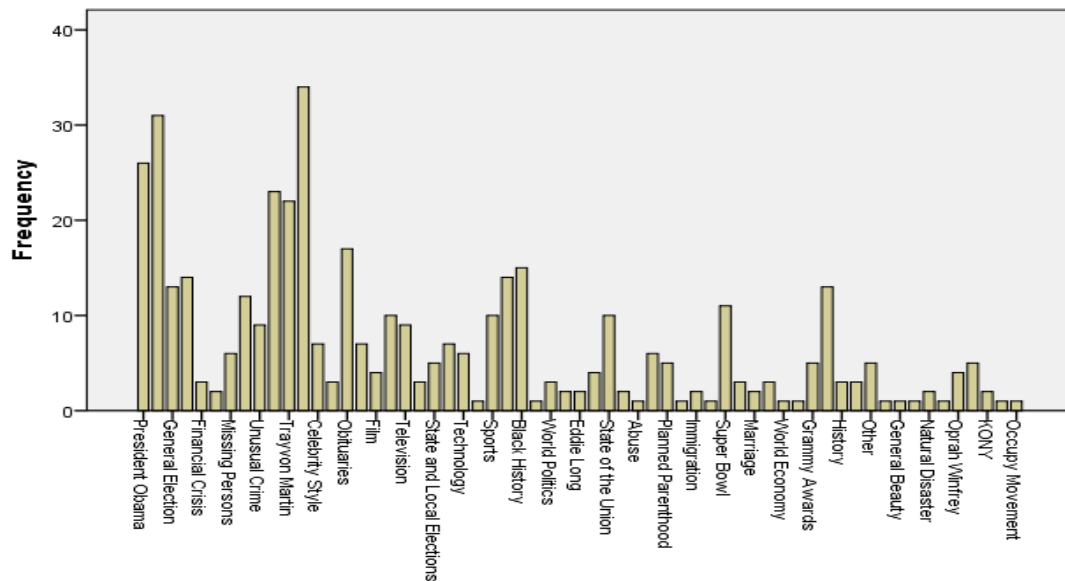
sites, while stories on the topics of unusual crime and missing persons were only covered by

Huffington Post Black Voices and *News One. Huffington Post* and *Huffington Post Black Voices*

also both posted stories on celebrity style.

Table 4.1 provides a comparative illustration of the frequency of all story topics across the study's Web sphere for which at least one of the sites in the Web sphere posted at least five stories. Topics for which there were less than five stories posted on any of the Web sphere homepages were collapsed into the category "other". This category consists of stories on the topics including the financial crisis, celebrity style, food, television, gay rights, state and local elections, technology, recreation, sports, world politics, Wiki leaks, the military, the world economy, travel, the Grammy awards, history, natural disasters, books, Rush Limbaugh, KONY, the General Services Administration and the Occupy Movement.

Even though all three sites posted stories related to the common topics, coverage of those stories varied widely from topic to topic (see Table 4.2). For example, while all three website homepages covered the GOP primaries, the *Huffington Post* reported on the topic 22 times, whereas *News One* reported on the topic 8 times, and *Black Voices* reported on the topic on its homepage only one time. Similar differences were found when examining coverage of the death of Whitney Houston. Whereas *News One* posted nine stories on the topic, the *Huffington Post* posted only one story on the topic. On the other hand, whereas the *Huffington Post* posted 10 stories about Congress, *News One* posted only one story about Congress. Regarding the topic of black history stories, *Huffington Post Black Voices* posted eight stories to its homepage on the topic, but the *Huffington Post* only reported one story about black history on its homepage. *News One* did not post any stories specifically on the topic of black history, but the general content of all of its articles were related to African-American issues on a daily basis. *Huffington Post Black Voices* also posted 12 stories related to race, while the *Huffington Post* only posted one story about race.

Table 4.1 Most Frequently Covered Topics on Web Sphere Homepages

	Huffington Post	*HP Black Voices*	*News One*
Black History	.7% (n=1)	5.7% (n=8)	4.3% (n=6)
Celebrity Behavior	2.8% (n=4)	12.1% (n=17)	9.3% (n=13)
Congress	7.1% (n=10)	2.1% (n=3)	.7% (n=1)
Education	.7% (n=1)	3.6% (n=5)	.7% (n=1)
General Election	5.7% (n=8)	2.1% (n=3)	1.4% (n=2)
GOP Primaries	15.7% (n=22)	.7% (n=1)	5.7% (n=8)
Health	1.4% (n=2)	4.3% (n=6)	4.3% (n=6)
Music	.7% (n=1)	3.6% (n=5)	2.9% (n=4)
Murder	1.4% (n=2)	2.1% (n=3)	5.0% (n=7)
Nature	5.0% (n=7)	0.0% (n=0)	0.0% (n=0)
Obituaries	4.3% (n=6)	4.3% (n=6)	3.6% (n=5)
Planned Parenthood	3.6% (n=5)	0.0% (n=0)	0.0% (n=0)
President Obama	10.0% (n=14)	2.1% (n=3)	6.4% (n=9)
Race	.7% (n=1)	8.5% (n=12)	7.1% (n=10)
Super Bowl	1.4% (n=2)	2.8% (n=4)	3.6% (n=5)
State of the Union	3.6% (n=5)	1.4% (n=2)	2.1% (n=3)
Trayvon Martin	2.1% (n=3)	6.4% (n=9)	7.1% (n=10)
War	3.6% (n=5)	0.0% (n=0)	.7% (n=1)
Whitney Houston	.7% (n=1)	2.1% (n=3)	6.4% (n=9)
Other	28.6%(n=40)	35.7%(n=50)	28.6%(n=40)
TOTAL	100% (n=140)	100% (n=140)	100% (n=140)

*Totals do not equal to 100% due to rounding

All three sites gave scant coverage to the topic of gay rights in the articles collected for the study, posting one story each on their respective homepages during the collection period. All three sites also covered the topic of technology evenly, with each site averaging two posted stories about the topic during the collection period. The *Huffington Post Black Voices* and *News One* posted stories that were not reported on *Huffington Post* (see Table 4.3). Both sites were equally more likely to post stories related to health on their homepages than *Huffington Post.* Also, on both sites the *Huffington Post Black Voices* and *News One*, stories related to health were covered six times.

Table 4.2 Frequency of Stories on Topics Common to All Three Web Sphere Sites

	Huffington Post	*HP Black Voices*	*News One*
National Politics			
President Obama	23.7% (n=14)	25.0% (n=3)	39.1% (n=9)
GOP Primaries	37.2% (n=22)	8.3% (n=1)	34.8% (n=8)
General Election	13.6 (n=8)	25.0% (n=3)	8.7% (n=2)
Congress	17% (n=10)	25.0% (n=3)	4.4% (n=1)
State of the Union	8.5% (n=5)	16.7% (n=2)	13.0% (n=3)
Category Total	100% (n=59)	100% (n=12)	100% (n=23)
Crime			
Murder	40% (n=2)	18.75% (n=3)	25.0% (n=7)
Trayvon Martin	60% (n=3)	56.25% (n=9)	35.7% (n=10)
Other	0% (n=0)	25.00% (n=4)	39.3% (n=11)
Category Total	100% (n=5)	100% (n=16)	100% (n=28)
Celebrities			
Celebrity Behavior	28.6% (n=4)	51.5% (n=17)	44.8% (n=13)
Celebrity Style	21.4% (n=3)	12.1% (n=4)	0.0% (n=0)
Whitney Houston	7.1% (n=1)	9.1% (n=3)	31.0% (n=9)
Obituaries	42.9% (n=6)	18.2% (n=6)	17.2% (n=5)
Other	0.0% (n=0)	9.1% (n=3)	7.0% (n=2)
Category Total	100% (n=14)	100% (n=33)	100% (n=29)
Miscellaneous			
Black History	9.1%(n=1)	18.6% (n=8)	17.6% (n=6)
Gay Rights	9.1% (n=1)	2.3% (n=1)	2.9% (n=1)
Super Bowl	18.2% (n=2)	9.3% (n=4)	14.7% (n=5)
Health	18.2% (n=2)	14% (n=6)	17.6% (n=6)
Technology	18.2% (n=2)	4.7% (n=2)	2.9% (n=1)
Music	9.1% (n=1)	11.6% (n=5)	11.8% (n=4)
Education	9.1% (n=1)	11.6% (n=5)	2.9% (n=1)
Race	9.1% (n=1)	27.9% (n=12)	29.4% (n=10)
Category Total	100.1% (n=11)*	100% (n=43)	100% (n=34)*
TOTAL	100% (n=89)	100% (n=104)	100% (n=114)

*All totals do not equal exactly 100% due to rounding

Table 4.3 Frequency of Stories on Topics Common to Only Targeted Web Sphere Sites

	HP Black Voices	*News One*
Employment	8.3% (n=2)	0% (n=0)
Missing Persons	8.3% (n=2)	20% (n=4)
Unusual Crime	8.3% (n=2)	35% (n=7)
Film	12.5%(n=3)	5% (n=1)
FAMU Hazing	4.2% (n=1)	5% (n=1)
Religion	16.7% (n=4)	10% (n=2)
Immigration	4.2% (n=1)	5% (n=1)
Arts	8.3% (n=2)	5% (n=1)
Oprah	8.3% (n=2)	10% (n=2)
Abuse	0.0% (n=0)	5% (n=1)
General Style	12.5% (n=3)	0% (n=0)
General Beauty	4.2% (n=1)	0% (n=0)
NAACP Awards	4.2% (n=1)	0% (n=0)
TOTAL	100% (n=24)	100% (n=20)

The *Huffington Post* and *Huffington Post Black Voices* were equally more likely to post obituaries than *News One.* Education received little coverage on *Huffington Post* and *News One* during the collection period, with both sites posting only one story on the topic, while *Huffington Post Black Voices* posted five stories on the topic during the same period. All three sites also covered the Trayvon Martin story, with *News One* posting 10 stories to its homepage. *Huffington Post Black Voices* posted nine stories to its homepage on the topic, while *Huffington Post* posted three stories on the topic.

In order to arrive at conclusions about the presence and physical presentation of news stories on the homepages of the Web sphere sites, the relationship between the subjects of stories and their placement on the homepages was analyzed. Because these stories were the first 10 stories, most of them appeared in the top third of the Web sphere homepages. It should be noted that although the *Huffington Post* is designated as the untargeted site for this study because it

does not target a particular racial group, it does practice market segmentation because it defer its

coverage of news of relevance to marginalized or minority groups to its satellite sites. Since the

data revealed that market segmentation was practiced on the sites in the Web sphere, the goal of

this analysis was to determine how content producer's perceptions of target audience needs and

preferences influenced the stories placed at the top of each site's homepage. Table 4.4 shows the

distribution of collected stories used for this study. Since only the first ten stories were collected

no stories analyzed for this study were from the bottom third of a site's homepage.

Table 4.4   Location of All Collected Stories on Web sphere Homepages

	Huffington Post	*HP Black Voices*	*News One*
Headline Story	10% (n=14)	10% (n=14)	10% (n=14)
Top Third	87% (n=122)	87% (n=122)	85% (n=119)
Middle Third	3% (n=4)	3% (n=4)	5% (n=7)
TOTAL	100% (n=140)	100% (n=140)	100% (n=140)

On the *Huffington Post* site about 3% (n=4) of the 140 stories collected were posted in

the middle of the site's homepages. Similarly, only 3% (n=4) of the 140 stories collected for the

Huffington Post Black Voices homepages were in the middle of the homepage. Likewise, on the

News One homepages only 5% (n=7) of the 140 stories collected for the study were from the

middle of the site's homepages.

Topic Frequency: Headline Stories

For this study headline stories were identified as the first story at the top of the

homepage. An analysis of the topics reported as headline stories offered insight into the news

content editors deemed most important to its site visitors. On each of the sites in this study's

Web sphere, headline stories were designated as the first story at the top of the homepage with

the largest image, accompanied by a lead posted with the largest font size compared to the other stories posted on the homepages. Of the 14 *Huffington Post* homepages captured for this study, quantitative analysis revealed that most often these headline stories were related to politics and were either stories about President Obama or the GOP Primaries. Of the 14 *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepages captured for this study, quantitative analysis revealed that most often the headline stories were stories about Trayvon Martin. Of the 14 *News One* homepages collected for this study, quantitative analysis revealed that most often the headline stories were stories about African-American celebrities.

For the *Huffington Post* homepages captured during the collection period, stories about the GOP primaries were the most commonly reported headline stories on site during the constructed two-week period. Of the 14 *Huffington Post* headline stories, stories on the GOP primaries accounted for 21.4% (n=3) of headline stories (see Table 4.5). GOP primary headline stories were followed in frequency by stories about President Obama, which represented 14.3% (n=2) of the headline stories. On the *Huffington Post* homepages, headline stories about the president tied with headline stories about war (n=2).

During the same time period, an evaluation of the 14 headline stories on the *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepages revealed that stories about the Trayvon Martin case were the most common headline stories on the site (see Table 4.6). These stories represented 28.6% (n=4) of the headline stories collected from the site. These stories were followed by stories reporting the deaths of celebrities and/or prominent African-American activists, which were 14.3% (n=2) of the *Huffington Post Black Voices'* headline stories.

Table 4.5 Frequency of Headline Story Topics on *Huffington Post* Homepages

Headline Story Topic	Percentage and Frequency
President Obama	14.3% (n=2)
GOP Primaries	21.4% (n=3)
General Election	7.1% (n=1)
Congress	7.1% (n=1)
Nature	7.1% (n=1)
State of the Union	7.1% (n=1)
War	14.3% (n=2)
Super Bowl	7.1% (n=1)
Grammy Awards	7.1% (n=1)
Natural Disaster	7.1% (n=1)
TOTAL	**100% (n=14)***

*Total does not equal to exactly 100% due to rounding.

Table 4.6 Frequency of Headline Story Topics on *Huffington Post Black Voices* Homepages

Headline Story Topic	Percentage and Frequency
General Election	7.1% (n=1)
Employment	7.1% (n=1)
Race	14.3% (n=2)
Trayvon Martin	28.6% (n=4)
Obituaries	14.3% (n=2)
Health	7.1% (n=1)
Religion	7.1% (n=1)
State of the Union	7.1% (n=1)
Arts	7.1% (n=1)
TOTAL	**100% (n=14)***

*Total does not equal to exactly 100% due to rounding.

In contrast to the most reported headline stories on the *Huffington Post* and *Huffington Post Black Voices* sites, stories about celebrity behavior were the most common headline stories of the 14 headline stories on the *News One* homepages captured for this study (see Table 4.7). These stories represented 21.4% (n=3) of the headline stories posted to the site during the collection period.

In contrast to the headline stories, the 10th stories on each site were usually relegated to the middle of each Web sphere site's homepage. Stories about the GOP primaries were most often the 10th stories on the *Huffington Post* homepages. Stories about race were most often the tenth stories on the *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepages. Stories about celebrity behavior were most often the 10th stories on the *News One* homepages.

Table 4.7 Frequency of Headline Story Topics on *News One* Homepages

Headline Story Topic	Percentage and Frequency
President Obama	7.1% (n=1)
Murder	7.1% (n=1)
Race	7.1% (n=1)
Trayvon Martin	14.3% (n=2)
Celebrity Behavior	21.4% (n=3)
Obituaries	7.1% (n=1)
Gay Rights	7.1% (n=1)
Technology	7.1% (n=1)
Hazing	7.1% (n=1)
Eddie Long	7.1% (n=1)
State of the Union	7.1% (n=1)
TOTAL	100% (n=14)*

*Total percentage does not equal to exactly 100% due to rounding.

Data on each of the following tables represents topics for which at least two stories were posted on the top two thirds of a Web sphere homepage during the data collection period. Stories that were only posted once were collapsed into the category "other" for each site's homepage. For the *Huffington Post* homepages, the collapsed category "other" included stories on race, food, music, gay rights, local elections, Black history, books, Wiki Leaks, world economy, travel, Whitney Houston, KONY, the General Services Administration, and the Occupy Movement (see Table 4.8). For *Huffington Post Black Voices,* the collapsed category "other"

Table 4.8 Location and Number of Collected *Huffington Post* Homepage Stories by Topic

	Headline	Top Third	Middle Third	Total Stories
Celebrity Behavior	0	3	0	3
Celebrity Style	0	3	0	3
Congress	1	9	0	10
Financial Crisis	0	3	0	3
General Election	1	7	0	8
GOP Primaries	3	16	3	22
Grammy Awards	1	1	0	2
Health	0	2	0	2
History	0	3	0	3
Military	0	2	0	2
Murder	0	2	0	2
Natural Disaster	1	1	0	2
Nature	1	6	0	7
Obituaries	0	6	0	6
Planned Parenthood	0	5	0	5
President Obama	2	11	1	14
Rush Limbaugh	0	4	0	4
Sports	0	3	0	3
State of the Union	1	4	0	4
Super Bowl	1	1	0	2
Technology	0	2	0	2
Television	0	2	0	2
Trayvon Martin	0	3	0	3
War	2	3	0	5
World Politics	0	2	0	2
Other	0	17	1	18
TOTAL	14	121	5	140

included stories on the GOP primaries, food, gay rights, hazing, immigration, the Grammy awards, the NAACP awards, and general beauty (see Table 4.9). For the *NewsOne* homepages, the collapsed category "other" included stories on Congress, food, education, film, gay rights, publications, world politics, hazing, war, abuse, immigration, lawsuits, the military, the Arts, Jerry Sandusky, Rush Limbaugh and KONY (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.9 Location and Number of Collected *HP Black Voices* Homepage Stories by Topic

	Headline	Top Third	Middle Third	Total Stories
Arts	1	1	0	2
Black History	0	8	0	8
Celebrity Behavior	0	15	2	17
Celebrity Style	0	4	0	4
Congress	0	3	0	2
Education	0	4	1	5
Employment	1	1	0	2
Film	0	2	1	3
General Election	1	2	0	3
Health	1	5	0	6
Local Elections	0	4	0	4
Marriage	0	2	0	2
Michelle Obama	0	2	0	2
Missing Persons	0	1	1	2
Murder	0	3	0	3
Music	0	5	0	5
Obituaries	2	4	0	6
Oprah Winfrey	0	2	0	2
President Obama	0	2	0	2
Race	2	10	0	12
Religion	1	3	0	4
Sports	0	4	0	4
State of the Union	1	1	0	2
Style	0	3	0	3
Super Bowl	0	4	0	4
Technology	0	2	0	2
Television	0	4	0	4
Trayvon Martin	4	5	0	9
Unusual Crime	0	2	0	2
Whitney Houston	0	3	0	3
Other	0	10	0	10
TOTAL	14	122	5	140

Table 4.10 Location and Number of Collected N*ews One* Homepage Stories by Topic

	Headline	Top Third	Middle Third	Total Stories
Black History	0	6	0	6
Celebrity Behavior	3	9	1	13
Eddie Long	1	1	0	2
Grammy Awards	0	2	0	2
General Election	0	2	0	2
GOP Primaries	0	8	0	8
Health	0	6	0	6
Missing Persons	0	3	1	4
Murder	1	6	0	7
Music	0	3	1	4
Obituaries	1	4	0	5
Oprah Winfrey	0	2	0	2
President Obama	1	7	1	9
Race	1	8	1	10
Sports	0	3	0	3
State of the Union	1	2	0	3
Super Bowl	0	5	0	5
Technology	1	1	0	2
Television	0	2	1	3
Trayvon Martin	2	8	0	10
Unusual Crime	0	6	1	7
Whitney Houston	0	9	0	9
Other	2	16	0	1
TOTAL	14	119	7	140

*RQ2: How is market segmented news content presented to audiences selectively
exposed to news online?*

Story Length

Another variable offering insight into the depth of coverage topics found on each site in

the Web sphere was word count or length of each article. Data for articles on topics posted on

each site were analyzed to seek out any possible relationship between the topic, the depth of

coverage, and the targeted audience for each site in the Web sphere. To accomplish this goal,

general article topics discerned from earlier analysis were categorized and word count averages

were calculated (see Table 4.11).

Table 4.11 Average Word Count for Stories on Common Topics on Web Sphere Homepages

	Huffington Post	*HP Black Voices*	*News One*	*Average All Sites*
National Politics				
President Obama	713	299	404	502
GOP Primaries	596	565	494	552
General Election	606	956	220	594
Congress	740	325	530	532
State of the Union	574	729	660	654
Crime				
Murder	640	527	320	496
Trayvon Martin	565	541	318	475
Celebrities				
Celebrity Behavior	166	323	314	267
Celebrity Style	94	295	0	127
Whitney Houston	801	252	43	365
Obituaries	708	626	673	669
Miscellaneous				
Black History	291	492	0	261
Health	744	331	817	631
Music	382	366	313	354
Education	746	549	353	549
Race	425	553	517	498
Average All Stories	549	483	427	470

Stories categorized as Black History appeared on two of the three sites. One story related to Black History Month was posted on the *Huffington Post* homepage and was 291 words long. Stories on the same topic that appeared on the *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepage averaged 492 words. No stories on this topic were isolated as a category on the *News One* website.

Stories about celebrity behavior averaged 267 words. The reports averaged 166 words in the *Huffington Post reports,* 323 words in *Huffington Post Black Voices* reports, and 314 words in *News One* reports. Similarly, stories about celebrity style were also longer on the *Huffington*

Post Black Voices site than on the *Huffington Post* site averaged 94, but similar stories averaged

295 words in *Huffington Post Black Voices* reports. Stories about Congress averaged 532 words.

These stories averaged 740 words in the *Huffington Post* reports, 325 words in *Huffington Post*

Black Voices reports, and 530 words in *NewsOne* reports.

      Stories about education averaged 746 words in the *Huffington Post* reports, 549 words in

Huffington Post Black Voices reports, and 353 words in *News One* reports. Stories about the

general election averaged 606 words on the *Huffington Post*, 956 words on the *Huffington Post*

Black Voices, and 220 words on the *NewsOne* homepage. Stories about the GOP primaries

averaged around 552 words. These stories averaged 596 words in *Huffington Post* reports*,* 565

words in *Huffington Post Black Voices* reports, and 494 words in *News One* reports. Stories

about health-related topics averaged 744 words on the *Huffington Post*, 331 words on *Huffington*

Post Black Voices, and 817 words on *News One* homepage.

      Stories about murder averaged 640 words on the *Huffington Post*, 527 words on

Huffington Post Black Voices, and 320 words on *News One.* Music stories averaged 382 words

on the *Huffington Post*, 366 words on the *Huffington Post Black Voices*, and 313 words on

NewsOne. The obituaries presented on each of the three homepages averaged 669 words in

length. *Huffington Post* obituaries averaged 708 words, *Huffington Post Black Voices* obituaries

averaged 626 words, and *News One* obituaries averaged 673 words.

      Among the general topics most often covered by each of the homepages in the Web

sphere, were stories about President Obama. These stories averaged 713 words in the *Huffington*

Post postings, 299 words in the *Huffington Post Black Voices* reports, and 404 words in *News*

One reports.

Stories about race averaged 425 words on the *Huffington Post*. Related stories averaged 553 words on *Huffington Post Black Voices*. Stories about race averaged 517 words on *News One*. Stories about Trayvon Martin averaged 565 words in *Huffington Post reports*, 541 words in *Huffington Post Black Voices* reports, and 318 words in *News One* reports. Stories about the death of Whitney Houston averaged 801 words on the *Huffington Post*, 252 words on *Huffington Post Black Voices*, and 439 words on *News One*.

Origin of Stories

For the purposes of this study, the origin of content was also an important variable. The origin of stories posted on each homepage was analyzed to discern the percentage and frequency of the collected stories that were original to each site and the percentage and frequency of news stories that were from wire services, and the percentage and frequency of stories that were externally linked to websites outside the study's Web sphere. Data regarding the origin of the news posting was coded and analyzed.

In general, among the Web sphere site homepage stories collected for the study, the *Huffington Post* homepages presented the most original reports in its first 10 stories (see Table 4.12). 75% (n=105) of the 140 stories collected from the site's homepages were reports original to the site. *Huffington Post Black Voices* had only slightly fewer original reports than the *Huffington Post*, with 71.9% (n=100) of the 140 collected stories for which the variable could be coded were original to the site (see Table 4.13). One caveat to the calculation of these findings is that because *Huffington Post Black Voices* is an extension of *Huffington Post*, stories that were original to the *Huffington Post* site that were also reported on the *Huffington Post Black Voices* site were coded as original reports. A significantly lower percentage of the stories collected from the *News One* homepages were original reports. Of the 140 stories collected from the *News One* homepages, only 37.1% (n=52) were original reports (see Table 4.14).

Table 4.12 Sources of Reporting of All Collected *Huffington Post* Homepage Stories

	Percentage and Frequency
Original Reports	75.0% (n=105)
Externally Linked	5.0% (n=7)
Wire Services	14.3 (n=20)
Summary from Another Site	5.7% (n=8)
TOTAL	100% (n=140)

Table 4.13 Sources of Reporting of All Collected *HP Black Voices* Homepage Stories

	Percentage and Frequency
Original Reports	71.9% (n=100)
Externally linked	5.8% (n=8)
Wire Services	16.5 (n=23)
Summary from Another Site	5.8% (n=8)
TOTAL	100% (n=139)*

* Value was missing for this variable for one story.

Table 4.14 Sources of Reporting of All Collected *News One* Homepage Stories

	Percentage and Frequency
Original Reports	37.1% (n=52)
Externally linked	3.6% (n=5)
Wire Services	35.0% (n=49)
Summary from Another Site	24.3% (n=34)
TOTAL	100% n=140

100% (n=14) of the headline stories collected from the *Huffington Post* homepages were original reports. 50% (n=7) of the headline stories from *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepages were original reports and 35.7% (n=5) of the headline stories from the *News One* homepages, while an equal amount (n=5) of *News One* headline stories were summaries of stories originally reported by other news sources. When its outside sources were examined more closely, analysis revealed that even though *News One* did not have a high number of original reports, its external

sources were still reputable reports from wire services. 35% (n=49) of the stories posted to the

News One homepages came from the Associated Press. 14.2% (n=20) stories posted to the

Huffington Post were distributed by the Associated Press. On the *Huffington Post Black Voices*

homepages collected for the study, 13.6% (n=19) of posted stories were reports distributed by the

Associated Press.

RQ3: What are the possible effects of disparities in news coverage across targeted and untargeted news websites on discourse in the public sphere?

Qualitative analysis revealed that common stories that appeared on both *Huffington Post*

and *Huffington Post Black Voices* were merely reposts of the same text. In some instances,

different images accompanied the reposts, but the leads or title and text of both articles were the

same. As a result, stories that were common only to *Huffington Post* and *Huffington Post Black*

Voices were eliminated from qualitative analysis, while a story that was posted to *Huffington*

Post but not *Huffington Post Black Voices* was considered as long as it was also reported on

News One. For this reason, qualitative analysis of the frequency and editorial slant of common

articles was conducted using stories that were commonly reported on both *Huffington Post Black*

Voices and *NewsOne* or on *Huffington Post* and *News One*.

<center>*General Textual Analysis*</center>

Of the related stories, stories with racial intonations—positive, neutral, or negative

without regard to any major news occurrence were largely reported only on *Huffington Post*

Black Voices and *News One*—the sites that targeted African-American audiences. Stories about

prominent black celebrities were also reported mostly only on the targeted websites, even if the

celebrities had mass market popularity or were significant to popular culture. These stories

included reports about the death of *Soul Train* producer and host Don Cornelius and the death of

<center>76</center>

blues singer Etta James. There were two exceptions, the death of Whitney Houston--which was initially covered by all three sites—and a report about Nick Cannon being hospitalized (which was reported on *Huffington Post* and reposted on *Huffington Post Black Voices* but received no coverage on *News One*).

Similarly, though all three sites consistently reported on President Barack Obama, the context of stories about President Obama differed. Reports about the president on the *Huffington Post* were largely related to policy, campaign activities, and party opposition in Congress. However, while reports on the targeted sites also reported on stories related to policy, campaign activities, and Congressional and party opposition, they also posted stories about President Obama in other contexts—such as stories related to lifestyle, personality, or relationships which were ignored by the *Huffington Post* (see Appendix A for a complete list of all collected stories).

Following quantitative content analysis, a qualitative analysis of stories about two major news events that occurred during the data collection period was conducted to comparatively evaluate news coverage of the events on the targeted and untargeted sites in the Web sphere. Collected stories for two major news events were chosen for evaluation: stories about President Obama's 2012 State of the Union Address and stories about the controversial shooting and death of an African-American Florida teen, Trayvon Martin. The State of the Union stories were chosen because the news event was of interest to targeted and untargeted audiences of Americans. The Trayvon Martin stories were chosen because the story was of primary interest to African-Americans but coverage of the event eventually spread to coverage on the untargeted site was well. The titles and content of these stories were examined to uncover the frequency of posted reports on the topic, the homepage location of the reports, the posted leads of the reports, and the editorial slant of the stories.

NVivo qualitative analysis software was used to conduct basic textual analysis and then, a close reading of each of the articles related to each news event was undertaken to determine similarities and differences in the ways the stories were framed and reported. The results of qualitative analysis of the contexts, editorial slants, and reporting patterns are separately presented in the following sections.

Coverage of President Barack Obama's 2012 State of the Union Address

The annual State of the Union Address (SOU), which apprises Congress and the American public of the current state of the country's economic, political, and social well-being and outlines the direction of the Administration's policies for the new year, was covered by each Web sphere site within its first 10 stories. Coverage of the address consisted of live blogs, video clips, commentary, and recaps of the speech and responses to it.

An Overview of Coverage of the 2012 State of the Union Address

All of the articles pertaining to the State of the Union Address were captured on January 24, 2012. Each site ran a live blog during the speech that offered updates that consisted of quotes from the speech and responses from attendees and viewers on social media. In terms of content, on the evening of the State of the Union address, seven of the ten stories on the *Huffington Post* homepage were related to coverage of the event. On *Huffington Post Black Voices* only two homepage stories were related to coverage of the event. On the *News One* site, three homepage stories were related to coverage of the event.

The Huffington Post's Coverage of the 2012 State of the Union Address

The leads and editorial slant obviously differed from site to site within the sphere. Coverage on *The Huffington Post (Huffington Post)* focused on the content of the speech and the reactions of those present in the House Chamber and on First Lady Michelle Obama's attire. The

site's frames for its homepage postings were: "Obama's State of the Union Address: Everybody Must Play by the Same Rules", "Obama Greets Gabrielle Giffords at 2012 State of the Union (Video, Photos)", "Republican Response: Mitch Daniels Delivers Speech after State of the Union (Video)", "Obama Makes 'Spilled Milk' Joke During 2012 State of the Union (Video)", "State of the Union Address 2012 Prompts Twitter Reaction", and "Michelle Obama State of the Union Dress 2012: A Barbara Tfank! (Photos, Poll)".

On January 24, 2012 the first story posted on the *Huffington Post* homepage was "Obama's State Of The Union Address: Everybody Must Play by The Same Rules" focused on recapping the content of the speech and was a mixture of summary and direct quotes from the speech. The article summarized the president's speech, "In his third State of the Union Address to the nation, Obama pitched a blueprint for economic success based on four components: American manufacturing, American energy, skills for American workers and a renewal of American values." The article also pointed out that this State of the Union speech was at the onset of the president's re-election campaign and made a connection between his comments on equality during the speech and the likelihood that they would serve as foundation of his re-election campaign. It stated, "Obama's speech came in the midst of a rapidly escalating presidential campaign season. His strong message about the need for social and economic equality will become a familiar theme in the months leading up to the November elections."

Additionally, the article also highlighted the fact that the president supported some proposals that "make for good politics but stand next to no chance of moving in Congress." Among them was the concept of the Buffet rule which, according to the president, would "restore an economy where everyone gets a fair shot, everyone does their fair share, and everyone plays by the same set of rules." Regarding reaction to his speech, the article noted that

most of the president's points were applauded by fellow Democrats and rebuffed by Republicans, but "there were occasional moments where the entire chamber erupted into cheers."

The fifth story on the *Huffington Post* homepage was a recap of the Republican response to President Obama's address by Indiana Governor, Mitch Daniels. In this article, the reporter recaps the highlights of Daniels' rebuttal, cross-references Daniels' remarks with points made by President Obama, and interjects himself as the voice of reason to point out flaws in Daniels' remarks and points where Daniels' actually inadvertently agrees with President Obama. For example, in his response, the Indiana Republican castigated the president and Democrats by referring to the president's policies as a "grand experiment in trickle-down government" that has "held back rather than sped economic recovery." The governor also attacked the administration by stating that "no feature of the Obama presidency has been sadder than its constant efforts to divide us, to curry favor with some Americans by castigating others."

According to the article, Daniels seemed to agree with points the president made in his speech regarding economic policy. The governor suggested the need for bipartisan agreement on sound economic policies, stating, "If we fail to shift to a pro-jobs, pro-growth economic policy, there will never be enough public revenue to pay for our safety net, national security, or whatever size government we decide to have." The reporter summarizing Daniels' response quickly pointed out that "Obama actually used very similar language in his State of the Union address, also saying that Americans sank and swam as one."

Two of the additional *Huffington Post* January 24 postings were video clips. One clip, "Obama Greets Gabrielle Giffords At 2012 State Of The Union (Video, Photos)" posted as the second story on the homepage, showed the president greeting former congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. The summary for the clip is that "he stopped and spent a few extra moments greeting

Rep. Gabby Giffords (D-Ariz)." The other clip, "Obama Makes 'Spilled Milk' Joke During 2012 State Of The Union (Video)" posted as the sixth posting on the homepage, showed the president attempting to make a joke during a lighter moment in his address. The summary of the clip quotes the president's attempted joke about reforming a rule that could have been used to make some dairy farmers spend upwards of 10K to prove they could contain spilled milk, which the rule classified as an oil. The punch line was, "With a rule like that, I guess it was worth crying over spilled milk." The summary also points out that the joke was not well-received and resulted in "an audible groan" in the chamber.

The eighth story posted on the *Huffington Post* homepage was a slideshow of Twitter reactions to the president's statements during his speech, "State Of The Union Address 2012 Prompts Twitter Reaction." The article reported, "From both sides of the aisle, there was no shortage of reaction to the address."

The 10th story posted on the *Huffington Post* homepage was an article about Michelle Obama's attire for the event. The brief posting, "Michelle Obama State Of The Union Dress 2012: A Blue Barbara Tfank! (Photos, Poll)", stated that the First Lady dazzled in "a shiny sapphire dress from designer Barbara Tfank" accompanied by a brooch and black slingback pumps. The posting also included an interactive poll for readers to vote on how they thought the first lady looked.

Huffington Post Black Voices' Coverage of the 2012 State of the Union Address

In contrast to the *Huffington Post, Huffington Post Black Voices* had significantly less coverage of the State of the Union address on its site. In addition to a live blog, coverage of the State of the Union Address on *Huffington Post Black Voices* included only one other report related to the State of the Union address. That report was one article that reported on the tradition

of inviting guests to sit with the First Lady, summarized the guest list for the 2012 address and

highlighted the African-Americans on the list. The article, "State Of The Union Guest List:

Michelle Obama Continues A 30-Year Tradition Of Extraordinary Americans," was the fourth

story posted on the homepage highlighted the everyday Americans invited as guests or

"Skutniks" to be seated with the First Lady was a tradition started by President Reagan in 1982.

The article also points out that two of the invited guests were African-Americans—Sara

Ferguson, a Pennsylvania elementary school teacher and Alicia Davis, the first African-

American woman appointed a general manager of General Motors' Orion Assembly. The story

also includes a link to a collection of stories about the 2011 State of Union Address.

News One's Coverage of the 2012 State of the Union Address

With the exception of its live blog, the stories posted on the *News One* homepage about

the State of the Union Address were retrospective and prescriptive in nature. The frames for the

stories posted on its homepage were "10 Issues Obama Should Address during the State of the

Union" and "Obama's Past State of the Union Addresses in Review." The retrospective story

reviewed the highlights of and reactions to each of President Obama's previous State of the

Union addresses. The prescriptive story, written by Dr. Boyce Watkins, a Professor at Syracuse

University, was more of a commentary that highlighted the topics the 2012 State of the Union

address should cover.

Posted as the second story on the *News One* homepage, Dr. Watkins' commentary lists

ten topics that he would "love to see him [President Obama] attack head-on." The list is what Dr.

Watkins refers to as "an African-American buffet of ideas that the president could tap into as he

discusses America's future." Watkins' "buffet" of topics is actually more of a review of the

strengths and weaknesses of the president, his leadership, and his administration's policies. The

list included the topics of poverty, threats to American civil liberties, uneducated children and adults, healthcare, prison reform, job creation, the national debt and tougher leadership.

The commentary is a matter-of-fact call to action that highlights the president's performance and shortcomings. Watkins lists poverty three times on the list and makes three suggestions to the president regarding it. First he observes that the president made no mention of poverty in his 2011 address and advises him not to make the same mistake in the 2012 address. Watkins writes, "Last year you were the first Democratic President since Harry S. Truman not to mention poverty during your State of the Union Address…If you can't bring poor people to the table, then this gives every future president an excuse to ignore them as well." The second time Watkins lists poverty, he highlights income inequality by writing, "Income inequality is a huge problem along both racial and non-racial lines. The gap between the rich and the poor continues to grow and the wage of the American worker has remained stagnant as corporate profits continue to shoot through the roof."

The third time Watkins lists poverty he points out that the wealth gap between blacks and whites has increased during the Obama Administration. Watkins writes, "This problem is not as much of a reflection on you as it is on our nation's long-standing commitment to butt-naked racism, but still, we must face the issue head-on and not simply avoid the matter by arguing that the 'rising tide will lift all boats'." The issues of civil liberties and prison reform that Watkins lists attacks the president for approving the National Defense Authorization Act and refers to the prison system as "modern day slavery" that needs to be reformed. Watkins gives kudos to the president for emphasizing the importance of education reform but suggests that the president might also address rising college costs and student loan debt in his speech.

Watkins writes, "The inflation of educational costs has become too much for most families to bear." Addressing rising health expenses, Watkins observes, "Americans can't afford to get sick anymore, especially if they don't have jobs." Raising the issue of job creation, Watkins writes, "Thus far your work on job creation has been mediocre at best." He addresses the rising national debt by saying that the problem should be dealt with by not allowing the rich to "walk away without responsibility." Watkins begins the last item on the list, tougher leadership, by complimenting the president. He writes, "You've become a better president over the past two years. You're maturing right before our eyes." But, he warns that President Obama should be a tougher leader. In the end, Watkins writes, "Being the first Black president is not for the faint of heart, and not everyone wants to hold hands and sing "we shall overcome." Watkins adds, "Some…compare you to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., but we must remember that Dr. King said and did what was right, even when it wasn't popular. That, my friend, takes courage." Watkins ends his commentary by writing "Good luck, Mr. President, we'll be watching."

The fourth posting on the *News One* homepage on January 24 was a summary of the president's past three State of the Union addresses. The article, "Obama's Past State of the Union Addresses in Review" is a summary of an article from the *Huffington Post* that outlines the themes of the previous three speeches. The article summary notes, "As with all State of the Union addresses, they are often tailored to the times in which that [sic] are delivered." The summary goes on to review President Obama's previous themes as unity in 2011, a rallying call for support of healthcare reform in 2010, and improving the economy in 2009.

In summary, coverage of the 2012 State of the Union Address differed from site to site in the study's Web sphere. While each site carried a live blog during the speech, the articles that were posted to each site's homepage were from different perspectives. Coverage on the

Huffington Post was informational because the site reported on the content of the address and reaction to it. Coverage of the address on *Huffington Post Black Voices* seemed to be superficial, focusing not the speech or rebuttal, but rather reporting on the African-American guests of First Lady Michelle Obama. While the coverage on *Black Voices* did not include posted reports on the content of the speech besides its live blog, African-Americans interested in the Mrs. Obama's guests would have been interested in knowing how many were African-American. On *News One*, posted coverage was retrospective—offering a look at President Barack Obama's previous State of the Union addresses—and prescriptive—suggesting what the president should include in his 2012 address.

<p style="text-align:center">*Coverage of the Shooting Death of Trayvon Martin*</p>

All sites in the Web sphere covered the February 26, 2012 shooting of Trayvon Martin, an African-American Florida teen who was shot and killed in by a self-appointed neighborhood watch captain, George Zimmerman, in a gated community on his way home from a convenience store within their first ten stories during the data collection period. Posted stories appeared on at least one of the Web sphere homepages on the collection days: March 10, March 13, March 21, March 29, and April 7.

An Overview of Coverage

The two targeted sites, *Huffington Post Black Voices* and *News One* covered the story from distinctly different perspectives than *The Huffington Post*. Additionally, *Huffington Post Black Voices* and *NewsOne* reported two of the same stories, one story about the results of a Gallup poll of blacks and whites and their opinions on George Zimmerman's guilt. Even though these stories were reports of the findings of the same poll to African-American audiences, the leads were different. On *Huffington Post Black Voices* the posted lead was "Blacks, Whites Have

Stark Split on Role of Race in Trayvon Martin Case, Poll Says." The posted lead on *NewsOne,*

for the same story, was "Gallup/USA Poll: Whites Overwhelmingly Believe Zimmerman is

Innocent."

The other story both *Huffington Post Black Voices* and *NewsOne* posted was a report

about an NBC news producer fired for airing a misleading audio clip of Zimmerman that was

linked to an external site. This story referred to an NBC producer who was fired for tampering

with 911 tape recordings that were played on the NBC's *Today Show* on March 27th. Once

again, the leads for the same story were framed differently. On *Huffington Post Black Voices,* the

posted lead was "NBC Fires Producer of Misleading Zimmerman Tape." On *NewsOne* the

posted lead was "NBC Fires Producer For 'Racist' Edit of Zimmerman 911 Call." According to

the story hyperlinked from the site *Media Decoder,* the producer was fired for editing the

following audio clips together and attributing the statement to George Zimmerman, "This guy

looks like he's up to no good. He looks black." The writer acknowledges that the comments were

taken out of context before quoting the actual exchange Zimmerman had with the 911 operator,

"But Mr. Zimmerman's comments had been taken grossly out of context by NBC." The actual

quote was, "This guy looks like he's up to no good. Or he's on drugs or something. It's raining

and he's just walking around, looking about." Then the dispatcher asked, "O.K., and this guy —

is he white, black or Hispanic?" Only then did Mr. Zimmerman say, "He looks black." The

misleading quote and the entire exchange is also quoted on the *News One* report on the fired

producer, but *News One* also added a bit of commentary. The writer that summarized the

Decoder's report on *News One* observed , "Zimmerman's unedited statement sounded much

different — though just as discriminatory," before quoting the actual complete exchange.

The report on results of a Gallup poll about opinions on the story were also framed differently on both *Huffington Post Black Voices* and *NewsOne* homepages. The story was posted as the headline homepage story on *Huffington Post Black Voices* on April 7 The lead on the *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepage for the Gallup poll results was "Blacks, Whites Have Stark Split on Role of Race In Trayvon Martin Case, Poll Says." The *Huffington Post Black Voices* story begins, "A new poll on the Trayvon Martin case found that blacks and whites have starkly different views about the role race has played in the story."

The report summarizes the event that led to the racial division in the following manner: "Martin, 17, was shot and killed by a self-appointed neighborhood watch member as he returned to the home of his father's fiancé on Feb. 26 in Sanford, Fla.[Florida]." Among the poll's findings, the article states that about 75% of African-Americans think that George Zimmerman would be arrested if Trayvon Martin had been white and 33% of whites agreed with them. The report also indicates that 50% of whites do not think race is a factor in the case, and over 50% of non-black respondents felt that more evidence was needed to determine if Zimmerman was guilty or innocent. The article identifies Martin as black, and mentions that Zimmerman has a white father and a Peruvian mother.

On the *News One* homepage, a story reporting the same findings posted as the ninth homepage story on April 7 begins, "The death of Trayvon Martin has sparked a fury in most corners of Black America and each detail is read eagerly by many people who are fiercely advocating for George Zimmerman, 28, the White-Hispanic neighborhood watchman who shot him in the chest at point-blank range, to be tried for his murder. White America is saying not so fast." In the same story, the *News One* report also cites a Pew Center poll, reporting that "43% of whites say there is too much media coverage compared to 16% of blacks." This story also

indicates that Gallup polled 3,000 people. The other statistics outlined in the report are the same as those reported in the *Huffington Post Black Voices* report.

The Huffington Post's Coverage of Trayvon Martin Stories

The Huffington Post covered the news event from an informational perspective. Its stories were about activism, national leader's opinions on the shooting, and Trayvon Martin's hacked email and Facebook accounts. Leads for stories posted to the site were "Al Sharpton: Trayvon Martin Killing '[Cries] Out for Justice to be Done' (Video)," "The Blaze, Site Founded by Glenn Beck, Insinuates That Slain Teen Trayvon Martin was Troublemaker," "Al Sharpton on Trayvon Martin Killing: 'I Intend to Stay On It'," "Trayvon Martin 'Million Hoodie March' Draws Hundreds In New York City" and "Trayvon Martin Email and Facebook Accounts Allegedly Hacked by White Supremacist."

The *Huffington Post* stories that reported activist Al Sharpton's perspectives on the Trayvon Martin case were posted as the seventh and ninth homepage stories on March 21. The seventh homepage story, "Al Sharpton: Trayvon Martin Killing '[Cries] Out for Justice to be done'" is a video of the portion of his MSNBC program where he discusses the facts of the Trayvon Martin killing. The article summarizes key factors behind the reason the case gained national attention. The reporter writes, "The case has shocked people across the country—especially because, even though he confessed to the killing, Zimmerman has not been arrested." On his show, Sharpton asserted, "This family has only asked for justice. They've not called anybody names. They've acted in a dignified way. They deserve this nation's support, and we're coming to give it to them."

The second story featuring Sharpton on the site is the ninth story on the homepage, and frames the story as a local tragedy that "has grown into a national tragedy." The article highlights

some basic facts about the case including that it reportedly took three days for the medical examiner to contact Martin's parents, and that it took three weeks for the case to gain national attention. The article focused largely on Sharpton's use of his MSNBC show *Politics Nation* as a platform for calling for Zimmerman's arrest and the pursuit of justice in the case. The article quotes Sharpton as raising a number of questions regarding the circumstances of the killing: "Zimmerman should be arrested," he said. "There's more than enough probable cause to arrest him. The whole claim of self-defense is bogus. How do you claim self-defense against someone you are pursuing?" In the article, the reporter also wrote, "For many, there is something very old and painful at the heart of the Martin tragedy: that the mere fact of a child's blackness can be enough to make him a target."

On March 21, the *Huffington Post* also posted a headline story to its homepage, "The Blaze, Site Founded by Glenn Beck, Insinuates That Slain Teen Trayvon Martin Was Troublemaker." The article reported that the right-wing website blamed Martin for his own demise. According to the article, *The Blaze* website contained a commentary in which an editor for the site says that Sharpton was exploiting "racial controversy" and implied that "Martin was a troublemaker," citing a school suspension that the site speculated could have been "theft, sexual harassment, vandalism, or sex offenses" even though documentation suggests that the suspension was related to excessive tardiness. The article also provided more key information to the case including the fact that police dispatchers told Zimmerman to stay in his car.

The third article posted to the *Huffington Post* homepage on March 21 was a report on the "Million Hoodie March" in New York City. The article, "Trayvon Martin "Million Hoodie March' Draws Hundreds In New York City" reported on a rally organized by Daniel Maree, to express his outrage over the case, that was held in New York City to call for the arrest of George

Zimmerman in Florida. The article also quoted the slain teen's parents and reiterated that the 17-year-old was "returning to a gated community in the city after buying candy at a convenience store. He was unarmed and was wearing a hooded sweat shirt, called a hoodie." The article also provided perspective from Martin's parents who attended the rally and expressed their desire to obtain justice for Trayvon.

The final article on the topic posted to the *Huffington Post* homepage was the fifth homepage story posted on March 29, "Trayvon Martin's Email and Facebook Accounts Allegedly Hacked By White Supremacists." This article was also posted as the headline story to the *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepage on March 29 with the same lead. The article presented opposing views of Martin based on news blogs and websites supporting Zimmerman, that had circulated the contents of the teen's email and social media accounts, including a misattributed image that was mistakenly identified as Trayvon Martin in attempts to taint his reputation and weaken the call for justice in the case.

The article explains that a self-described white supremacist claims to have hacked Martin's email and social media accounts and posted the teen's usernames and passwords to expose evidence that the teen was a habitual marijuana smoker and alleged drug dealer. According to the article, "A slide posted to the message board titled, 'Trayvon Martin Used Marijuana Habitually." Another news blog site provided a screenshot of Martin's Gmail inbox which contained college and SAT information, "Martin apparently used his Gmail account for his college search, and it's filled with emails about upcoming SAT tests and scholarship applications." The article also quotes Adrien Chen, a blogger for *Gawker.com* who asserted that hacking the teen's online accounts for a smear campaign was unsuccessful because according to Chen, "the picture they paint is of a normal high school junior preparing for college."

Huffington Post Black Voices Coverage of Trayvon Martin Stories

In contrast to the informational postings on *Huffington Post*, *Huffington Post Black Voices* covered the shooting by focusing on stories about Zimmerman's background and probable defense, political reaction to the shooting, and Martin's hacked email account. *Huffington Post Black Voices* postings included "George Zimmerman, Neighborhood Watch Captain Who Shot Trayvon Martin, Charged With Violence Before," "George Zimmerman Neighbors Complained About Aggressive Tactics Before Trayvon martin Killing," "Trayvon Martin Case: Police Video Shows No Blood, Bruises On George Zimmerman After Killing," "Allen West Slams Bobby Rush, Jr. For Wearing Hoodie On House Floor," "Trayvon Martin's Email And Facebook Accounts Allegedly Hacked By White Supremacist," "NBC Fires Producer of Misleading Zimmerman Tape", "Trayvon Martin Case: George Zimmerman Lawyer Cites 'Shaken Baby Syndrome' As Defense," "Blacks, Whites Have Stark Split On Role Of Race In Trayvon Martin Case, Poll Says."

The headline story on *Huffington Post Black Voices* on March 10 was "George Zimmerman, Neighborhood Watch Captain Who Shot Trayvon Martin Charged With Violence Before." The article indicated that the attorney for Martin's parents felt that the Sanford County police withheld information about Zimmerman's background from the family. The article goes on to review Zimmerman's record for being charged with resisting arrest and battery on a police officer, although the charges were dropped. The article also indicated other ways that the police had been uncooperative with Martin's family and attorney as they sought justice. An additional story on Zimmerman's aggressive nature was also posted as the second homepage story on March 13. According to this article, "A volunteer community watch captain who shot an

unarmed Florida teenager to death last month had been the subject of complaints by neighbors in his gated community for aggressive tactics, a homeowner said."

According to the anonymous homeowner, several complaints about Zimmerman had been made by homeowners in the community. The article cited growing pressure on the Sanford police to arrest Zimmerman. It also quoted the Martin family's attorney, Benjamin Crump as saying, "I don't think they have any intention on arresting this white man for killing this black boy." The article also included quotes from the Sanford County police chief who asserted, "It is with that thought that we want to make sure that we due [sic] a fair and complete and thorough investigation so that we can reach some form of justice with this event." In addition, the article also detailed the state of Trayvon's body once police arrived: "Arriving police found Martin's 140 pound body face-down in a patch of grass less than 100 feet from his family's home. The young man was unarmed, with a few dollars and a pack of Skittles in one pocket and a canned iced tea in the other."

The March 29 article posted as the fourth story on the *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepage reported on the state of George Zimmerman when he was brought in for questioning immediately after the killing occurred. The article, "Trayvon Martin Case: Police Video Shows No Blood, Bruises On George Zimmerman After Killing" indicated that a video obtained by ABC News shows Zimmerman without blood on his clothes or injuries associated with having his head "pounded" into the sidewalk. According to the article, "In the video, apparently taken by surveillance cameras outside and inside the police station, Zimmerman's face and head were clearly visible and showed no injuries consistent with the kind of fight Zimmerman's statement described." In addition to restating the facts of the case, the article also cited the funeral director,

Richard Kurtz, who prepared Martin's body for burial who stated, "I didn't see any evidence he had been fighting anybody."

Two additional articles were posted on *Huffington Post Black Voices* about the case during the collection period. One of the articles, posted as the second story on the site's homepage on March 29, was "Allen West Slams Bobby Rush For Wearing Hoodie On House Floor". The article was about Representative Bobby Rush, a Democrat from Illinois, who wore a hoodie on the House floor to show support for Trayvon Martin, which was a violation of the House dress code. Rush was removed and later ridiculed by Representative Allen West, a Republican from Florida. Though the article reports that West called Martin's killing tragic and worthy of investigation, he called Rush's actions "immature gimmickry." The other article, "Trayvon Martin Case: George Zimmerman Lawyer Cites 'Shaken Baby Syndrome' As Defense," was posted as the sixth homepage story on the *Huffington Post Black Voices* site on April 7, and explained that Zimmerman's defense team asserted that he had suffered from injuries similar to Shaken Baby Syndrome after his fatal altercation with Martin. According to the article, Zimmerman's injuries from his alleged altercation with Trayvon Martin were synonymous with shaken baby syndrome—bleeding on the brain—which explained why there were no signs of injury after the shooting. The article quoted Hal Uhrig, one of Zimmerman's attorneys, as saying "You shake a baby, the brain shakes around inside the skull. You can die when someone's pounding your head into the ground."

News One's Coverage of Trayvon Martin Stories

Of the three sites, the news event received the most mentions on *News One*. While *News One* also covered the story by addressing the role of race in the case, it commented on the pattern of racial violence against black boys in the United States in general and the need for justice to

intervene in the case. Leads for *News One* stories about the case were: "*News One* Trayvon Martin Coverage: Trayvon Martin Shooting Should Spur National Outrage," "Zimmerman Refers to Trayvon As 'F**kin Coon' Before Shooting Him?"; "Million Hoodie March Organizer Says Trayvon's Murder 'Very Personal'," "Our Black Boys Are Not Trash: From Emmett Till to Trayvon Martin," "Gallup/USA Poll: Whites Overwhelmingly Believe Zimmerman is Innocent," "NBC Fires Producer For 'Racist' Edit of Zimmerman 911 Call", "Armed Neo-Nazis Patrol Sanford Protecting White Citizens."

The collected articles on the *News One* homepage related to the Trayvon Martin shooting began on March 21. The first article, "Our Black Boys Are Not Trash: From Emmett Till To Trayvon Martin" was posted as the headline story on the homepage and highlighted similarities between Trayvon Martin's death and the murder of Emmett Till. The article points out that Martin's family initially thought he was missing because he did not return home from the store and neither police nor the medical examiner made any effort to identify his body or contact his family for days. The article points out that both Martin and Till were walking home from the store when they were killed and discarded. The author, Leigh Davenport, writes, "Now, I imagine Emmett Till's flirting was as harmless as Trayvon's walk home after buying a bag of Skittles." Davenport also asserts, "There is no space in this country where Black men can't be threatened."

The second homepage posting on the *News One* site on March 21 was an expose on Daniel Maree, the organizer for the New York Million Hoodie March. The article, "Million Hoodie March Organizer Says Trayvon's Murder 'Very Personal'" explained why Martin's murder was so personal to Maree. The article quoted Maree as saying, "I've been in situations, both when I was in high school and now in New York City, where I've been walking down the

street in a Hoodie and I can instantaneously tell I'm being taken as suspicious or people start grabbing their purses when I walk by." In addition to explaining that the goal of organizing the march was to show "solidarity with Trayvon's parents as well as the resolve for people to feel more secure in their "personhood" the article also gave the date and location of the demonstration which began at Union Square and marched to the United Nations building on International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination." According to the article, Maree was born and raised in South Africa but educated in the United States.

A brief report posted as the third story on the *News One* homepage on March 21 was titled, "Zimmerman Refers To Trayvon as 'F**kin Coon' Before Shooting Him?" The report referred to an audio clip that a local Florida television station played on air. According to the station, "Zimmerman *may* have used the slur" but according to Starr, he "seems to have said the slur."

Two articles posted on the *News One* site directly link racial tensions to the Martin case. One article, "Black Liberation Militia Founder Says Trayvon Supporters Want Justice" was posted as the second homepage story on March 29. The article is the result of an interview with Prince Na'Jee Shaka Muhammad, the leader of the New Black Liberation Militia, who stated that Florida locals were tired of rallies and demonstrations and were ready to see "true justice" in the Trayvon Martin case. The article explains opposing views other demonstrators had about the militia and its participation in the Sanford rallies stating that some blacks welcomed the militia, while other blacks did not want them there because they represented the New Black Panther Party. The other article, "Armed Neo-Nazis Patrol Sanford Protecting White Citizens" was posted as the headline story on April 7. The story cited a report in the *New York Daily News*, and began, "As tensions mount in Sanford, Florida, the town where neighborhood watch captain

George Zimmerman, 28, gunned down 17-year-old Trayvon Martin on February 26 in a vigilante-style execution that has polarized the nation, armed neo-Nazis are now patrolling the streets to protect White citizens from any racial, violent retaliation." In the article, the group compared their agenda to that of Al Sharpton and other black civil rights advocates stating, "Whenever there is one of these racially charged events, Al Sharpton goes wherever Blacks need him. We do similar things. We are a White civil rights organization," said Jeff Schoep, a representative for the National Socialist movement.

Two remaining stories related to the shootings appeared on the *News One* homepages on March 29. One article, the fourth story posted to the homepage, was "Spike Lee Settles with Couple for Retweeting Their Address." The article reports that Spike Lee apologized and reached a financial settlement with a Sanford couple in their seventies after forwarding their address as the address of the George Zimmerman. The address was the wrong address. The other article, posted as the tenth story on March 29 was a summary report of an interview George Zimmerman's father, Robert Zimmerman, had with a Fox news channel in Orlando, Florida. The 19 minute interview was an opportunity for Robert to defend his son. A summary of the highlights of the interview was followed by this statement:

> So, let us get this straight: Trayvon, who had significant weight disadvantage against a heavier Zimmerman, mercilessly beat him for a minute? For no reason? Papa Zimmerman then says that his son overpowered Trayvon and then shot him. Oh, no. This ain't right.

In summary, the qualitative analysis of stories about Trayvon Martin revealed that each site in the study's Web sphere covered the story from a different perspective based on its target audience. The *Huffington Post* covered the news event from an informational perspective about the shooting and reactions to it. It also reported on national leaders' opinions about the shooting. *Huffington Post Black Voices* covered the story by reporting on the shooter's background and

probable defense, reporting on and providing reactions to the events that unfolded in the media after the shooting became publicized. *News One* covered the story by addressing the role of race in the case, commenting on the similarities between Martin's death and historically renowned deaths of other young black boys. The stories on *News One* also called for the need for the intervention of justice in the case.

In summary, the results of analysis of the data collected for this study illustrates that there are differences in the way news is covered and reported on news websites. Quantitative analysis revealed differences in the topics covered, depth of reports and location of news stories on the homepages of the sites in the Web sphere. Qualitative analysis of the coverage of two prominent news events in 2012—the State of the Union address and the shooting death of Trayvon Martin—revealed that even when the sites in the Web sphere reported on the same news topics, there were stark differences in the editorial slant of the reports. The significance and potential effects of these findings will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

In 2010, online news consumption outpaced traditional newspapers in circulation for the first time (Barnhurst, 2012). The goal of this study was to determine how legacy media practices influence the consistency of news coverage on news websites with general and targeted audiences. For this study, the content of the homepages of three news websites (an untargeted site, the *Huffington Post*; a targeted site produced by a mainstream news site, *Huffington Post Black Voices*; and a targeted site produced by an African-American media group targeting an African-American audience, *News One*) were examined comparatively to evaluate the characteristics and consistency of news coverage across the sites, to discern the similarities and differences in content, and to determine how those similarities and differences might influence future discourse in the public sphere. The implications of the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study are discussed in this chapter.

Research has shown that the migration of news consumption from legacy outlets to online outlets necessitates the examination of legacy media news content and new media news content to determine if the migration merely represents a shift in medium or a shift in media and a transformation of content consistency (Maier, 2010). Discerning existing patterns of coverage and their effects on online news reporting is also increasingly important because research shows that more Americans are obtaining their news online than ever before (Gaskins & Jerit, 2012).

As a result, the findings of this study are important because scholars have suggested that evaluation of the underlying effects of legacy media practices in online news and the evaluation

of online news content can provide important insight into the social and intellectual effects of online news consumption on public discourse. Best and Brugger (2004) suggested that the possibility of examining the interrelated context and medium of information conveyed on the Internet would offer much potential for drawing conclusions about the social, economic, and cultural effects of the consumption of online information. Similarly, Melican and Dixon (2008) also suggested that a "systematic content analysis of Internet news" (p.164) presented from traditional and nontraditional sources could serve as a basis for determining existing patterns in online news content. Discerning patterns of coverage and speculating on the possible effects of the consumption of online news is also increasingly important because research shows that more Americans are obtaining their news online than ever before (Gaskins & Jerit, 2012).

The implications of this exploratory study of news coverage on the three website homepages over a constructed two-week period from January 2012 to April 2012 are addressed in three parts in this chapter. First, the evaluation of site design and content is undertaken to discern evidence of legacy media practices. Secondly, the correlation of market segmentation to selective exposure in news consumption is addressed. Lastly, the potential social influence continued market segmentation and selective exposure could have on the future of public discourse are discussed.

The Presence of Market Segmentation and Other Media Practices in Online News Coverage

This study revealed that several legacy media practices were present in coverage on the homepages of online news websites. The findings of the first part of this study show that the legacy media practice of market segmentation is evident when online news reporting on targeted and untargeted news website homepages are compared. The results of this study also show that the traditional role of the Black Press in legacy media has also been resurrected in new media

and is evident on news websites produced by African-Americans and targeting African-American content consumers.

Maier (2010) noted the migration from the consumption of news in legacy media to online news consumption was at "a pivotal juncture" (p. 548) that required the examination of the similarities and differences between legacy media news content and new media news content:

> If news stories found online are essentially the same as news presented in newspapers and electronic media, then the transformation represents little more than a move to an all digital format. But, if news coverage is substantially different, then online news represents not only a change in medium but also content (p. 548).

While the consistency of new coverage between online news and legacy media news was not compared for this study, a difference was observed in the consistency of news coverage across the sites in the Web sphere. The differences in coverage were initially evident when the headline stories posted to each homepage were compared. Initial comparison of the topics of headline stories and subsequent comparison of the topics most often covered on the homepages of the untargeted and targeted sites were the primary indicators that market segmentation was present in online news coverage.

In legacy media, the front page of the paper is the most important portion of the newspaper because it is the most visible and also the most indicative of the editor's view of important events of the day (Gibson, 2011). Evaluation of the layout and features of the Web sphere site homepages revealed many similarities to the front pages of traditional print newspapers such as a large headline story at the very top of the page, a columnar layout for the presentation of the rest of the stories, and an index to other sections of the site. Because of the similarities in layout and features between newspaper front pages and the homepages in the Web sphere, Gibson's (2011) observation was applied to analysis of the headline stories and other

topics covered on the front page to discern the editorial perspectives/focuses of each of the sites. More often than not, the headline stories on the *Huffington Post* were related to politics—either the GOP primaries or the Obama Administration. Stories in the middle third of the page on the *Huffington Post* homepage were still stories about the GOP primaries. In contrast, the headline stories on the *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepages during the collection period were most often stories about Trayvon Martin. The stories in the middle of the page on the *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepage were most often about race. In contrast, the headline stories on the *News One* homepages during the collection period were most often about African-American celebrities. Stories that appeared in the middle third of the *News One* homepages were most often about celebrity behavior.

Research has shown that news producers assess the noteworthiness of news stories "in terms specific to individual news events, not underlying social problems" (Pingree et al, 2013). In light of this, editorial decisions about coverage and placement are based on timeliness, public interest, and the presence of conflict (Price & Tewksbury, 1997). With regard to these observations, the aforementioned results of comparative analysis of homepage content indicate two important points. First of all, they reveal which topics content producers deemed to be most important to their respective target audiences. Secondly, they also reveal messages about the news agendas of each of the Web sphere sites as well. The research defines agenda setting as the transformation of the media's agenda to the public's agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Messner & DiStaso, 2008).

The findings of the first part of the study showed that the frequency of topics covered by each website were indicative of each site's perceptions of target audience preferences and news setting agenda. Based on the frequency of topics reported on each of the sites, it was obvious

that the agendas of each of these sites were different. The stories that the *Huffington Post* posted

to its homepage and the stories that it posted to its *Huffington Post Black Voices* reveal that the

media group's content producers and editors made a conscious effort to segment news based on

the perceived interest of its targeted site visitors. Similarly, *News One* primarily reported stories

of interest to its African-American audience.

The *Huffington Post* Media Group has the presentation of political news as the center of

its news agenda on the *Huffington Post* website and presumes that this is the interest of its site

visitors. The *Huffington Post* posted political stories well into the middle of its homepage. This

indicated that the site deems that topic of primary importance to its readers and also that it

operates to keep its visitors abreast of national politics over other topics. However, when the

media group targets African-Americans, its agenda shifts and the presumption is that the target

group's interests lie more with issues of race and justice than politics.

The fact that *Huffington Post Black Voices* presented more stories about Trayvon Martin

has two possible causes. First of all, because the site is operated by the *Huffington Post*, it could

be possible that the *Huffington Post* Media Group believed that the topic would be of more

interest to a target audience of African-Americans than to a general audience. But, it could also

indicate that the media group has set the news agenda of *Huffington Post Black Voices* to report

news about social issues instead of political issues.

In contrast, the presentation of headline news stories about African-American celebrities

on *News One* indicates that the news agenda for that site is the presentation of news about

African-Americans that was largely ignored by other news outlets. In fact, during the collection

period, all collected news stories presented on *News One* were stories uniquely pertinent to

African-American issues that, with the exception of Trayvon Marin coverage, were usually not

stories reported on either of the other sites in the Web sphere. This fact alone indicated that the news agenda for *News One* is to present stories—positive and negative—that are ignored by both general and targeted websites produced by non African-Americans. The news agendas of the sites in the Web sphere were indicated not only by the headline stories posted to the sites, but also the general placement of news stories on each site's homepage and the typical stories the sites covered during the collection period.

Surprisingly, in addition to proving that market segmentation exists in online news production, the results of this study also revealed that the traditional role of the Black Press is another aspect of legacy media that is present in new media online news. The news website created by and targeting African-Americans covered more news of relevance and interest to the black community than either of the other two sites included in the study. This suggests that online, African-American content producers have taken up the cause of the traditional Black Press. The results of this study revealed this re-emergence through the presence of coverage of news and socio-political perspectives of interest and purpose to the African-American community on the targeted site produced by African-Americans that were ignored by untargeted news websites. This re-emergence was also indicated by the *News One's* agendas to represent both positive and negative images of African-Americans in new media and to protest racial or social injustices that were not immediately reported on the untargeted site. Coverage of the Trayvon Martin news stories are a prime indication of this re-emerging phenomenon.

Additionally, of the 420 stories collected for this study, the greatest discrepancies in coverage of common stories occurred between stories posted on *Huffington Post* and stories posted on *News One*. For example, whereas the *Huffington Post* primarily reported on coverage of the GOP primaries by giving facts from an objective point of view, the scant coverage of the

GOP primaries on *News One* was subjective and reported on each candidate's record on social and economic issues relevant to African-Americans. Similarly, while both sites covered the death of Whitney Houston, another news event that occurred during the data collection period, once again, their coverage differed. Within its first 10 stories on the *Huffington Post*, the singer's death was covered in light of how the music industry would balance celebrating the Grammy Awards with respecting the singer's death and legacy. Conversely, *News One's* coverage of the singer's death focused on the singer herself and presented facts surrounding her death, retrospective articles of her contribution to pop culture, and the events of her last days.

Maier (2010) found that major news websites covered the same mix of national and international news that legacy media covered with "strikingly similar news values in how each storyline is played in terms of frequency and depth of coverage" (p. 557). Such was not the finding of this study when the coverage of stories across the Web sphere was compared. Quantitative analysis of covered story topics revealed discrepancies with regard to stories of interest to African-Americans and national news. During the 14-week collection period, *News One* continually posted stories that focused on African-Americans. As mentioned previously, these stories were national stories that were both positive and negative stories related to African-Americans from an African-American perspective. These stories ranged from traditional stories about politics and health to stories about bizarre crimes and missing persons. In fact, there was an entire page of the *News One* site devoted to missing African-American women, girls, and boys throughout the country and follow-up stories about the results of these cases. Stories about missing persons were also posted on *Huffington Post Black Voices*. These stories represent the stories largely ignored by mainstream news—traditional and digital—and in this regard the *News One* site appears to continue to fill a gap in traditional news and continues to serve the vital role

of publicizing important news events that would otherwise go unreported. For example, the missing persons stories reported on *News One* were never reported on the *Huffington Post* or on *Huffington Post Black Voices*.

In truth, *News One* presented a number of stories on a variety of topics that were not reported on either the *Huffington Post* or *Huffington Post Black Voices*. Were the content of *News One* uniquely created for the site, this point would not be worth noting because it would merely illustrate the longstanding mission of the Black Press. However, analysis of the origin of stories for this study revealed that more than a third of the stories posted on the *News One* site were stories the news organization picked up from wire services such as the AP. The implication here is that the other sites in the sphere had access to the same wire stories, but chose to ignore them. While this could be the case, another suggested explanation for the presence of stories on one site and not the others is the type of wire subscription each site in the Web sphere had during the collection period. However, assuming that the *Huffington Post* had a broader subscription to multiple AP wire services and that *News One* had only limited AP subscriptions, it could still very well be that the stories posted on *News One* are accessible by *Huffington Post* and *Huffington Post Black Voices*, but were still not picked up for reporting.

While race was also a factor in earlier studies of web content producers, race was not a measurable variable in this study because there were a number of instances where the race of the reporters could not be unequivocally determined. Even so, analysis revealed that current trends of internet content producers on the news websites examined for this story were consistent with the findings of earlier studies that found the majority of internet content producers were males.

In summary, the findings of the first part of the study showed that the frequency of topics covered by each website were indicative of each site's perceptions of target audience preferences

and news agendas. The general implications of the first part of this study are that the legacy

media practice of ignoring alternative perspectives and stories of interest to divergent and multi-

cultural audiences is present in online news, as are the practices of market segmentation and

inter-media agenda-setting. Assuming that visitors to any of the Web sphere sites selectively

expose themselves to only that site as their primary source for news without seeking out any

other sources of news or additional perspectives on the news stories being posted there, these

online news consumers would lack knowledge to adequately and substantively participate in

public discourse from an informed perspective.

Market Segmentation, Selectively Exposed Audiences and Online News Consumption

Melican and Dixon (2008) have asserted that the Internet as a platform for news reporting

offers "a means for people to limit their exposure to information that verifies their existing

ideologies" (p.163). As a result, customized news content often results in the fragmented

presentation of news content to targeted groups based on audience preferences. This

customization informs the practice of personal selective exposure which is at the heart of the

media's effect on its audience (Knobloch et al., 2008). Maier (2010) asserted that increasingly

customizing news content through segmentation can undermine public discourse and diminish

"the public's worldview" (p. 549).

Without a doubt, inconsistency in news coverage affects the perspectives of site visitors

who selectively expose themselves to news sources, but the features of websites can

inadvertently contribute to limited news consumption as well. Evaluation of the sites examined

for this study revealed that site navigation is an example of one such feature. One feature

common to each of the Web sphere homepages was the presence of a menu bar with tabs for

topic selection. This homepage feature on the *Huffington Post* and *Huffington Post Black Voices*

allowed for the most specific news story navigation and presentation because both sites provided

13 menu tabs from which site visitors could access each site's categorized news stories. In

contrast, the menu bar on *News One* provided only six menu tabs that categorized the site's news

stories. While the simplistic *News One* menu bar would seem to be less overwhelming and,

therefore, more accommodating to site visitors, less categories translates to broader categories

into which its news stories are grouped, suggesting that it would be more difficult to locate

specific news stories. However, in the process, *News One* site visitors would probably be

exposed to more stories they had not necessarily searched for. On the other hand, the specificity

of categories on either the *Huffington Post* or *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepages could

make it easier to locate specific stories, but would offer little to no exposure to additional news

stories they had not intentionally sought to read.

Melican and Dixon (2008) find that the theory of selective exposure provides a critical

basis for thinking about how people choose their online news sources and have hypothesized that

the nontraditional nature of internet news could lead more people to limit their personal exposure

to ideologies on social issues such as race that do not align with their personal opinions and

beliefs. While some of the same stories were posted to *Huffington Post Black Voices* also

appeared on the *Huffington Post*, these were stories of relevance to specific African-American

issues, not general political or social issues. Rarely did stories that appeared on the *Huffington*

Post Black Voices homepage appear on the *Huffington Post* homepage. This means that an

African-American person practicing selective exposure and only visiting *Huffington Post Black*

Voices would not be privy to a majority of stories about politics that were posted to the

Huffington Post. Conversely, someone who is not African-American and who practices selective

exposure and only visiting the *Huffington Post*, would only be privy to an abundance of news

about politics and less news about social and cultural issues affecting minority groups such as African-Americans and minorities.

A closer examination of the inconsistency in news coverage by analyzing the reporting of stories about Trayvon Martin revealed that segmentation when coupled with selective exposure can also have an adverse effect on the perspective on current events based on the editorial slant of news stories. Because each of the sites practiced market segmentation that influenced the way they covered the topic, selectively exposed site visitors to only one of the homepages in the Web sphere sites obtained information about the original incident and pending investigation from different depths and perspectives depending on the site they chose. The fact that the *Huffington Post* posted most of the headline stories about Trayvon Martin to its *Huffington Post Black Voices* homepage and had no headline stories about it on the *Huffington Post* homepage has two important implications regarding selective exposure. First, it sends a message regarding the difference in perceived perception of audience interest between the two sites. Segmenting the news in this way meant that visitors to the *Huffington Post* site might not have learned about the Trayvon Martin story at the same time as visitors to *Huffington Post Black Voices*. It could also send a message about the story's importance to site visitors who selectively expose themselves to either one site or the other. Accordingly, visitors who selectively exposed themselves only to the *Huffington Post* and never saw Trayvon Martin stories as headline stories would not perceive the story to be as important as visitors who selectively exposed themselves to only *Huffington Post Black Voices*, where related stories to the topic were headline stories four times or to *News One*, where related stories were headline stories twice. The story received the most attention on the *News One* site. Site visitors who chose *News One* as their news source received news reports on Trayvon Martin from the most perspectives.

Nakamura (2002) found that market segmentation and selective exposure are both prevalent issues in new media production and consumption, particularly where race and racism are concerned. However, people consciously or subconsciously practicing selective exposure are more likely to expose themselves to ideas that support their beliefs. If this theory holds true, it means that only African-Americans who already felt strongly about the issue would selectively expose themselves to this targeted site. Along the same vein, non-African-Americans members of the population looking for online news stories on the topic would be less likely to visit this site and, therefore, would not have been exposed to the depth or frequency of reports on the topic. Also people who had either not formed opinions or who had personally conflicted opinions about the teen's death would not be privy to the multiple perspectives they would receive from viewing reports on all of the sites.

In addition to the stories about Trayvon Martin from a different perspective than the *Huffington Post*, *News One* and *Huffington Post Black Voices* also posted homepage stories about missing African-Americans that were not reported on the *Huffington Post* homepage. Inconsistency in coverage of these types of stories across Internet news sites coupled with selective exposure can have personal as well as social implications. For example, someone who did not visit the *News One* site would have no knowledge of the missing persons, regardless of their race. The fact that these missing persons were not reported on the *Huffington Post* homepage, the site that has the most site traffic has personal safety implications for the victims as their cases were not publicized as widely as they could have been. In keeping with scholars' observations that the media determines what the public-at-large deems important, the missing persons stories related to African-Americans would more than likely not become a part of a mainstream news agenda, a point illustrated during the collection period. This implies that the

109

urgency of the situation was not widely publicized, and ultimately, the missing persons were less likely to be found. Researchers have noted that whenever the press ignores the news and events concerning a minority group, it sends "a powerful social psychological message delivered to whites and non-whites alike" (Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003, p. 117) that reinforces ideas of minority groups' inferiority and lower social status. In the case of this story, the lack of reports on the missing minorities in online news continues to perpetuate a long-standing myth that African-American children, women, and men are not victims of kidnappings or mysterious disappearances.

The literature has also revealed that framing, a journalistic practice that seeks to instigate reader interest in a story, is an additional factor related to selective exposure. Researchers have agreed that the way a story is framed greatly affects the way audiences perceive, interpret, comprehend, and retain information in news stories. With regard to this study, in cases where the same story was reported on all three of the Web sphere sites, the leads were different, especially in cases of stories about Trayvon Martin. The differences in story frames across the Web sphere could be correlated to the perceived opinions the target audience might have about the teen's death and the culprit, George Zimmerman. For the most part, the frames for these stories also aligned with the respective news agendas of the Web sphere sites. The *Huffington Post* reported on the investigation with regard to legal perspectives and politics. *Huffington Post Black Voices* reported on the investigation with regard to inconsistencies in the investigation. *News One* reported on the investigation with regard to racial injustice of the incident and subsequent investigation. As a result, people selectively exposing themselves to only one site in the Web sphere would not have been able to construct a well-informed perspective on the incident and

110

investigation because of the segmented editorial frames and perspectives from which each site reported on the story.

In summary, the topics and stories presumed to be of interest only to African-Americans and segmented by site could be of interest to larger audiences who, practicing selective exposure, would not be aware of this fact or visit the *News One* site because they deem its content irrelevant based on social or racial factors. Conversely, it could also mean that visitors selectively exposing themselves to *Huffington Post Black Voices* or *News One* would have more knowledge of pressing racial or socio-economic issues in general and less knowledge of political issues. And visitors selectively exposing themselves only to *Huffington Post* could have more knowledge of political issues, but far less knowledge of socio-economic ones.

The Implications of Segmentation and Selectively Exposed Audiences on Public Discourse

In his theory of the public sphere, Jurgen Habermas (1989) theorized that an informed public engaging in public discourse is the foundation of a viable democracy. Informed citizens engaged in informed debate make public discourse purposeful and effective. The theory of selective exposure states that "people generally choose to expose themselves to ideas that support their beliefs while filtering information that opposes those beliefs" (Melican & Dixon 2008, p.157).

While each site in the Web sphere reported on some common topics, the discrepancies and inconsistencies in coverage have major implications for the future of public discourse. Selber (2004) has suggested that a critical look at the reasons why online news deems some issues and topics to be more important than others could illustrate the point that the Internet does not supersede current social conditions, but "merely replicates [the] current structure" (p. 85) of society. Along these lines, Kellner (2000) has suggested that there are multiple public spheres,

that can either overlap or conflict. If this is the case, the three sites that comprised the Web

sphere examined in this study could each represent different spheres of discourse where uniquely

influenced by the interests and needs of the targeted and untargeted groups. The results of

qualitative analysis in this study support Kellner's suggestion that there can, in fact, be more than

one public sphere. In the case of this study, there is a Web sphere of sites related by purpose and

design, there is an African-American public sphere represented by the study's targeted sites, and

there is a general sphere, represented by the study's untargeted site. The discourse of the general

sphere and the African-American sphere overlap where common issues, such as the direction of

the nation, are presented. On the other hand, the two spheres conflict where disparity in coverage

exists, such as the controversies associated with the death of Trayvon Martin.

Research related to media agenda-setting consulted for this study agrees that "exposure to

news can affect citizen's perceptions of the most important problems facing the nation" (Pingree,

et al, 2013, p. 352). As a result, market segmentation coupled with selective exposure in online

news could have many effects on public discourse. Sunstein (2001) asserted that news consumers

should share a range of varied common experiences to arrive at consensus on particular issues.

The findings of this study indicate that the shift to online news brings with it inconsistently

reported content and implies that the role legacy media played in consistently covering the same

news events across mediums to focus the public's agenda on a common agenda is not the role or

goal new media plays in covering news events. Downey and Fenton (2003) asserted that

communication technologies such as the World Wide Web could contribute to the fragmentation

society. The results of this study reveal that assertion to be correct.

Because segmentation and customization have led to the fragmented presentation of

online news content that is tailored to specific groups and their preferences, new media news

does not build consensus among the masses, but instead builds consensus among like-minded individuals in smaller groups who selectively expose themselves to the news and information of their choice. As a result, while there is still a common agenda, it is becoming increasingly fleeting as the common agenda is increasingly transforming into divergent agendas that could lead to dissension (McCombs, 2005; Maier, 2010; Barnhurst, 2012). As more audiences receive their news from skewed perspectives that reinforce rather than expand their understanding of a story or issue, their decisions are based less in informed fact and more in personal belief. This lack of balanced exposure to a broad spectrum of news and information definitely diminishes the individual's ability to engage in public discourse with others from an informed perspective capable of contributing to public decision-making needed for democratic participation.

Maier (2010) asserted that the social role of journalism is to join the community by providing information of scope and depth that focuses people's attention on certain issues. Accordingly, if the coverage lacks depth and scope it "diminishes the public's world view due to their self imposed selection of limited news resources" (p. 549). This study has revealed that a practice of market segmentation has continued to proliferate in new media as sexual, social, and racial minorities adapt and create new media platforms—targeted websites—to meet their respective needs, align with their respective perspectives and support their respective agendas. A lack of exposure to a broad spectrum of news and information would diminish that person's ability to engage in public discourse from an informed perspective.

Burnett and Marshall (2003) predicted that the segmentation of the abundance of information on the Internet would make it difficult for content-producers to select "the right news stories from the enormous flood of information in order to deliver personalized news" (p. 153). The personal filtering associated with selective exposure could result in an increasingly

fragmented society and a decreased ability to understand and participate in public discourse (Melican and Dixon, 2008). Melican and Dixon (2008) assert that researchers should examine the relationship between internet news sites and social inequalities that involve race and socio-economic status to determine the degree to which the Internet will affect America's cultural divisions. Later, Maier (2010) asserted, "If fragmentation of news presentation via segmentation persists online, then the public's agenda may turn into divergent agendas instead of a common public agenda" (p. 551). To alleviate the pitfalls of legacy segmentation and individual selective exposure, Glasser et al. (2009) have called for the onset of pluralism in the press to end segmentation of news coverage based on race or culture.

In summary, the results of this study not only offer insight into the role legacy media plays in online news production, but it also provides a foundation for further evaluation of the fragmentation of online news that results from the adaptation of these practices in the online news environment. It introduces specific factors that can be further measured and evaluated in future scholarship. While the findings of this study reinforce previous scholars' findings about the superficial characteristics of online news coverage, they also reveal that there are more differences than similarities in coverage across news websites in general and in specific news reports. These findings indicate that differences in both the scope of coverage and depth of reporting from site to site in the sphere, coupled with selective exposure, means that selectively exposed site visitors receive varying amounts of information from narrow and varied perspectives on both common and different topics reported on each of the Web sphere sites. This varying amount of information from narrow perspectives and depths uniquely inhibits selectively exposed individuals from effectively and accurately participating in public discourse. This study

also introduces evidence of how these legacy practices reveal themselves in new media news production.

Additionally, the findings of this study contribute to scholarship in new media studies. First of all, this study used a methodology designated for content analysis of Web content. Because this study was effective in obtaining and analyzing data to discern patterns of news coverage across websites using Web sphere analysis, it shows that Web sphere analysis is an effective and valid methodology for obtaining quantitative and qualitative results from online data analysis of related internet content. Secondly, the findings of this study highlight how perspectives on news events differ when stories are being targeted towards a general audience and when stories are being targeted specifically towards an African-American audience. Lastly, the findings of this study also contribute to scholarship on the Black Press in new media by analyzing online news coverage on an African-American run news website.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

In order to arrive at conclusions about how legacy media practices and inconsistencies in news coverage might affect discourse in the public sphere, this study utilized Web sphere analysis to explore the similarities and differences in content and coverage consistency of news stories across three news websites during a constructed two-week period. For this study, the homepage stories of three websites were examined: an untargeted site, the *Huffington Post*; a targeted site produced by a mainstream news site, targeting African-Americans, *Huffington Post Black Voices*; and a targeted site produced by an African-American media group targeting an African-American audience, *News One*. Using content analysis, the data were comparatively analyzed to (1) evaluate the characteristics of news websites in light of the characteristics of legacy media; (2) assess the coverage consistency of news reports; and (3) identify the similarities and differences in content and the implications of those similarities and differences on public discourse. The findings of this study are important because they highlight some of the characteristics and patterns of news coverage across multiple websites, which is what some scholars have suggested is needed in order to evaluate the social and intellectual effects of online news consumption on public discourse, a vital component of our democratic society.

This study revealed that legacy media practices have been adapted by online news producers. One practice was segmenting news reports in order to customize news coverage according to race or socio-economic status and audience interests. Another legacy practice analysis revealed was the practice of framing news stories according to each news website's pre-

defined news agenda. Gross and D'Ambrosio (2004) suggested that there are three purposes for framing: to set an agenda that highlights a problem, to encourage moral judgment, or to promote policy. Qualitatively evaluating coverage of one story that encompassed all three of these purposes—the Trayvon Martin investigation—this study revealed that this was the case for each site in the Web sphere. For the *Huffington Post* homepages, the story frames were most often related to politics and policy of the investigation. For *Huffington Post Black Voices,* the frames were usually related to justice or behavior of the parties involved in the investigation. For *News One*, the frames usually highlighted problems with perspectives surrounding the investigation. In each instance, these frames coincided with the agenda of the news site.

The findings of this study also revealed that with regard to the Web sphere, news that was reported to the targeted African-American audiences was very different from the news that was reported to the general audience. This is an important point, because in addition to aspects of legacy media that were online, this study's results also revealed that the traditional role of the Black Press in legacy media has reemerged in online news coverage. Traditionally, the role of the Black Press was to negate negative statements about "black intelligence, ambition, honesty, and other stereotyped characteristics" (Entman, 1992, p. 342) perpetuated in the mainstream press and in public discourse. This study revealed that the motivations of the Black Press online—African-American media groups producing news content for African-American audiences—reflects the aforementioned motivations of the Black Press in legacy news production.

Burnett and Marshall (2003) predicted that segmentation of information online would make it difficult for content producers to select stories in order to deliver "personalized news" (p.153). This study also revealed that because online news is segmented and customized to meet

the interests of particular audiences, there are many differences in coverage of similar stories across websites. These differences come in the form of the presence or absence of reported stories and differences in editorial perspective and story depth based on the perceived interests of each site's target audience. The theory of selective exposure states that people make choices about the ideas they expose themselves to based on whether or not the ideas support their beliefs (Melican & Dixon, 2008). Driven largely by personal preferences, news consumers seeking customized online news that reflects their personal ideas and opinions are not likely to choose to be exposed to varied perspectives and stories across news in new media the way they were involuntarily exposed to varied perspectives and stories in legacy media. The findings of this study also implied that the level of specificity attached to each news site's navigational features could also inadvertently contribute to selective exposure.

Papacharissi (2002) asserted, "When individuals address random topics, in a random order, without a commonly shared understanding of the social importance of a particular issue, then conversation becomes more fragmented and its impact is mitigated" (p. 17). Regarding consensus on a public agenda, the findings of this study which indicate highly segmented news content that, when reported, is slanted to address the perspectives of targeted audiences, imply the discourse in the future public sphere is more likely to consist of divergent and conflicting perspectives on issues than consensus agreement. These diverging and conflicting perspectives are likely to have an adverse effect on the perceived importance of public political and social issues and how the state should handle those issues.

This is because segmentation and inconsistent news coverage, coupled with selectively exposed audiences online, have the potential to adversely affect public discourse. Whereas legacy journalism once joined communities by focusing their attention on specific issues, new

media journalism is increasingly separating online news communities by focusing their attention on different issues. Because it can actively engage in debate, thus contributing to purposeful public discourse, researchers have also asserted that an informed public sphere is crucial to a thriving democracy (Ruiz, 2011). Ruiz (2011) also suggested that the participatory characteristics of online news have allowed it to become the 21st century equivalent of a public sphere in which debate should occur. Habermas (1989) theorized, "The function of the public sphere is to mediate between civil society and the state; providing a space for rational debate that gives rise to consensus on public affairs" (p.155). Research indicates that the availability and quality of reliable and adequate information is necessary to facilitate sound discussion (Webster, 1995). Further, "exposure to news can affect each citizen's perceptions of the most important problems facing the nation" (Pingree et al., 2013, p. 352). As more Americans than ever have turned to the internet as their primary source for news, and more continue to make the shift, the findings of this study show that the public is increasingly informed by customized, segmented, and framed news online.

Limitations

This was an exploratory study of online news presented on three news website homepages—one untargeted and two targeted—designed to discern the presence of certain legacy media practices and patterns of coverage to arrive at conclusions about how online news consumption could affect public discourse. The limitations of the study presented here represent ways the existing research could be expanded and provide suggestions for future research on the effects of segmentation and inconsistency in online news reports as well as the practice of selective exposure to online news.

One limitation of this study is that it only examined a Web sphere of three news websites for an acceptable, but relatively short constructed two-week period. As a result, even though its

findings are substantiated by the results of detailed content analysis, a larger study encompassing more than three news website homepages undertaken over a longer constructed period would result in more data on which definite patterns of coverage associated with segmentation could be uncovered, leading to more generalizable conclusions.

Another limitation of the study was the composition of the sites that comprised the Web sphere. The Web sphere for this study consisted of only three sites and the two targeted sites for African-Americans audiences. While these findings contribute to scholarship on African-Americans and new media, the results of the study are only indicative of how stories related to African-Americans are covered on targeted and untargeted news websites and cannot be applied to any other targeted group. An additional related limitation to this study, which resulted from the lack of available data, was discerning the race and gender of all reporters whose posted news stories were collected for this study. Because there were large numbers of stories from each site for which gender and race could not be concretely discerned without available page features, analysis was not able to draw valid conclusions about the current state of the race or gender of online news content producers in light of existing research.

A final limitation of this study was the presumed practice of selective exposure based on the findings of earlier published new media and psychological studies about internet users. Adding a component of data collection in which a survey or observational study of human subjects using the website homepages collected for this study could have allowed for more concrete analysis of the factors influencing individual selective exposure. Those results would add another dimension of analysis to the quantitative and qualitative analysis to arrive at more concrete conclusions about how selective exposure affects public discourse.

Suggestions for Future Research

The aforementioned limitations suggest how the findings of this study can serve as the foundation for additional analysis of online news. The goal of the study was to examine differences in news reporting on untargeted and targeted audiences, specifically African-Americans and to speculate on the effects of those differences on public discourse. The Web sphere methodology used for this study could be applied to a larger Web sphere consisting of several sites targeting different racial and ethnic groups to allow for comparative analysis of news coverage across multiple sites to several different targeted groups. A larger study comparing content in this manner would yield more generalizable findings about how segmentation affects news coverage consistency among different target audiences and allow for conclusions about its effects on public discourse across many targeted groups instead of just one group.

Additionally, the findings of this study, as they relate to African-Americans can be utilized in two different ways in future scholarship. First of all, the state of 21st century trends in online news coverage of African-Americans and the continuing role of African-American new media news editors could be examined in light of the history of the Black Press and in light of each of the recommendations set forth in the Kerner Report to evaluate the inclusiveness of news websites with regard to the content and content editors online. In addition to broadening the study or applying its methodology as the foundation for comparative analysis, the collected data and existing findings of this study may also serve as the foundation for the development of qualitative research instruments that could be used to discern the habits of online news consumers through field research or focus groups. Also, the collected data and findings of this study may also inform the development of a survey instrument that would be used to

quantitatively discern effects of segmented news on the attitudes and opinions of selectively exposed audiences.

An additional avenue of research study relates to the relationship between selective exposure and apps. As new media continues to expand, younger techies are utilizing yet another platform for information—mobile and tablet apps. This has resulted in even more fragmented and selectively exposed individuals who are enjoying the benefits of targeted apps that offer quick access to desired information and content. The utilization of apps bypasses the use of the Internet, which implies even more fragmentation. It would be beneficial to the field to evaluate the effects app usage is having on public discourse, consensus, and political awareness and activity.

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APPENDIX A:

List of the 420 articles collected and analyzed for this study

#	Source	Date	Title
1.	*HP*	1-04-12	"The Iowa Caucus' Real Results: Hardly Anybody Voted, and Nobody Won Anything"
2.	HP	1-04-12	"Citizens United' Backlash: Montana Supreme Court Upholds State's Corporate Campaign Spending Ban"
3.	HP	1-04-12	"Obama NLRB Recess Appointments Thrill Labor, Infuriate Business"
4.	HP	1-04-12	"How Rick Santorum Pulled It Off: A Tale of Two Supporters"
5.	*HP*	1-04-12	"Scott Brown Backs Obama Recess: Appointment of Consumer Finance Watchdog Richard Cordray
6.	*HP*	1-04-12	"Rick Santorum Denies Making 'Black People' Remarks, Claims To Be 'Bigger Player in 2012 Primary Race"
7.	*HP*	1-04-12	"Michele Bachman Concedes 2012 GOP Primary Race after Iowa Caucus"
8.	*HP*	1-04-12	"Mitt Romney's Conservative Critics Take One Last Stab at Preventing His Anointment"
9.	*HP*	1-04-12	"New Hampshire Lawmakers Call for Investigation into Obama's Ballot Eligibility, Citizenship"
10.	*HP*	1-04-12	"New Hampshire Lawmakers Pass Law Allowing Parental Objections to Curriculum"
11.	*HPBV*	1-04-12	"From Meme to Social Commentary"
12.	*HPBV*	1-04-12	"Robert Carter, Fighter against Segregation, Dies at 94"
13.	*HPBV*	1-04-12	"Mariah Carey Reveals Nick Cannon Has Kidney Failure"
14.	*HPBV*	1-04-12	"Florida Early Voting Limits Could Negatively Affect Blacks, Latinos"
15.	*HPBV*	1-04-12	"Will Smith, Jada Pinkett Smith Divorce: Laura Wasser Reportedly Retained by Jada"
16.	*HPBV*	1-04-12	"Kim Kardashian Cheated on Reggie Bush with Kanye West, Says Amber"
17.	*HPBV*	1-04-12	"No Child Left Behind Turns 10 Facing Mixed Results and Uncertain Future"
18.	*HPBV*	1-04-12	"Gabrielle Union and Dwayne Wade Cover Essence 'Love' Issue (PHOTOS)

19. *HPBV*   1-04-12   "Stacey Nicole English Missing: Family and Friends Seek 'Post-Christmas Miracle,' Search for Clues
20. *HPBV*   1-04-12   "50 Cent's *All Things Fall Apart* Movie Trailer"
21. *NO*   1-04-12   "Should Obama Support Gay Marriage?"
22. *NO*   1-04-12   "Romney Looking to Win In NH"
23. *NO*   1-04-12   "Jayson Blair Play Set to Run in New York"
24. *NO* "   1-04-12   "Rumor: Beyonce Having Baby in Houston Hospital"
25. *NO*   1-04-12   "Arsenio Hall Joins Donald Trump's 'Celebrity Apprentice' Cast"
26. *NO*   1-04-12   "Cadaver Dogs Used In Search of Toddler, Mom Still Uncooperative"
27. *NO*   1-04-12   "Hilarious! 'Sh*t White Girls Say To Black Girls' Video"
28. *NO*   1-04-12   "Nephew Gouges Out Uncle's Eyes Over Remote Control"
29. *NO*   1-04-12   "Challenging GOP, Obama Names Consumer Agency Chief"
30. *NO*   1-04-12   "Baltimore's 'Watoto' Girls Sending More Messages"
31. *HP*   1-09-12   ""Bill Daley Resigning: Obama Chief of Staff Stepping Down"
32. *HP*   1-09-12   "Mitt Romney Faces Criticism From Fellow Candidates Over Pink Slip, Firing Comments"
33. *HP*   1-09-12   "Mitt Romney Holds Lead But Jon Huntsman Gaining In Latest New Hampshire Polls"
34. *HP*   1-09-12   "Keith Olbermann, Current Resolve Election Feud; Olbermann Will Control 2012 Coverage"
35. *HP*   1-09-12   "Mitt Romney's Former Intern Directly Contradicts Campaign On Gay-Rights Flyer"
36. *HP*   1-09-12   "Flashback: Jack Lew: Obama's OMB Pick Oversaw Citigroup Unit That Shorted Housing Market"
37. *HP*   1-09-12   "DC H Street Bike Shop"
38. *HP*   1-09-12   "Mitt Romney Challenged In New Hampshire Over Health Care Reform (VIDEO)"
39. *HP*   1-09-12   "Heidi Klum's Pants"
40. *HP*   1-09-12   "Gauhati, India: Leopard Kills Man, Scalps Another" (GRAPHIC PHOTOS)
41. *HPBV*   1-09-12   "In New Hampshire, Rumored Voter ID Laws Confuse Electorate"
42. *HPBV*   1-09-12   "Exclusive: Common Directs Diss Track 'Stay Schemin' (Remix) At Drake"
43. *HPBV*   1-09-12   "Newt Gingrich 'Irritated' By Outrage Over His Comments On Food Stamps"
44. *HPBV*   1-09-12   "Dee Rees' 'Pariah' And Hollywood's Inability To Include Black Americans"
45. *HPBV*   1-09-12   "Flint rapper Jon Connor is The Source Magazine's 'Unsigned Hype'"
46. *HPBV*   1-09-12   "Nick Cannon Released From Hospital After Kidney Failure"

47.	*HPBV*	1-09-12	"Oprah's Gift To Blue Ivy Carter, Beyonce's Daughter: Trunk Full Of Books"
48.	*HPBV*	1-09-12	"Solange Knowles Signs Modeling Contract With Next Model Management, Style Evolution (PHOTOS)"
49.	*HPBV*	1-09-12	"Pittsburgh Steelers' Ryan Clark Benched For Sickle Cell Trait. What Triggers It?
50.	*HPBV*	1-09-12	"'Glory': Jay-Z's Song For Daughter Blue Ivy, Beyonce's Baby (LISTEN)"
51.	*NO*	1-09-12	"Nick Cannon Released From The Hospital"
52.	*NO*	1-09-12	"Civil War Museums Changing As Views On War Change"
53.	*NO*	1-09-12	"Snoop Dogg Arrested On Weed Possession"
54.	*NO*	1-09-12	"Santorum's Record With Blacks Is Mixed At Best"
55.	*NO*	1-09-12	"Obama Appointment Of Cordray Vital For African-Americans by Rep. Andre Carson"
56.	*NO*	1-09-12	"Tiger Woods' Former Swing Coach Hank Haney To Publish Book"
57.	*NO*	1-09-12	"No Weed In Our Towns! Local Govs Say No To Medical Marijuana"
58.	*NO*	1-09-12	"Jay-Z Confirms Blue Ivy's Birth With Rap Song"
59.	*NO*	1-09-12	"Jamaica Plans to Cut Ties With British Monarchy"
60.	*NO*	1-09-12	"Black Eyed Peas' Will.i.am Launches Car Company"
61.	*HP*	1-20-12	"Roe v. Wade Still Under Siege, 39 Years Later"
62.	*HP*	1-20-12	"Watch: Rich Kids for Romney (Video)"
63.	*HP*	1-20-12	"Mitt Romney Campaign Begins Preparing For Possible South Carolina Loss"
64.	*HP*	1-20-12	"President Obama Previews State Of The Union Speech To State, Local Officials"
65.	*HP*	1-20-12	"Newt Gingrich Giddy On Eve Of South Carolina Vote"
66.	*HP*	1-20-12	"Obama Administration Announces New Decision On Birth Control, To Chagrin Of Religious Groups"
67.	*HP*	1-20-12	"Mitt Romney Calls South Carolina An 'Uphill Battle' As Vote Nears"
68.	*HP*	1-20-12	"Chuck Todd Rips Stephen Colbert's Presidential Run (VIDEO)"
69.	*HP*	1-20-12	"Tuskegee Airmen Laid to Rest at Arlington
70.	*HP*	1-20-12	"The 2012 Speculatron Weekly Roundup For Jan. 20, 2012"
71.	*HP*	1-20-12	"Obama Sings Al Green's 'Let's Stay Together' At Apollo Theater In Harlem (VIDEO)" ***ELEVENTH STORY NOT CODED FOR ANALYSIS***
72.	*HPBV*	1-20-12	"Etta James Dead: Soul Singer Famous For 'At Last' Dies At 73"
73.	*HPBV*	1-20-12	"New York Daily News' Controversial Statement About Jay-Z And Black Fatherhood"
74.	*HPBV*	1-20-12	"FAMU Hazing: Four More Band Members Charged"

75.	*HPBV*	1-20-12	"Obama Campaign Picks Stefanie Brown To Lead Black Voter Outreach"
76.	*HPBV*	1-20-12	"'The Loving Story' Takes Intimate Look At Virginia's First Legal Interracial Marriage (PHOTOS)"
77.	*HPBV*	1-20-12	"Rosalind Brewer, Named First Woman, African-American, CEO Of Sam's Club"
78.	*HPBV*	1-20-12	"Obama Sings Al Green's 'Let's Stay Together' At Apollo Theater In Harlem (VIDEO)"
79.	*HPBV*	1-20-12	"Chuntera Napier, Georgia Mom, Arrested For Allowing 10-Year-Old To Get Tattoo"
80.	*HPBV*	1-20-12	"Public Enemy Block Party In Skid Row Makes A Statement On MLK Jr. Day (VIDEO)"
81.	*HPBV*	1-20-12	"Halle Berry's Stalker Gets 386 Days in Jail
82.	*NO*	1-20-12	"4 More Charged In FAMU Hazing
83.	*NO*	1-20-12	"Etta James Dead At 73"
84.	*NO*	1-20-12	"NFL Encourages Civility, Not Mayhem At Championship Games"
85.	*NO*	1-20-12	"Ron Paul's "South Was Right" Civil War Speech With Confederate Flag"
86.	*NO*	1-20-12	"Fact Check: Gingrich's Obama Food Stamp Claim Was False"
87.	*NO*	1-20-12	"New US Plan To Stop Drug Flow Over Northern Border"
88.	*NO*	1-20-12	"Teacher Apologizes For Using Slavery in Math Equations"
89.	*NO*	1-20-12	"Eddie Long's Accuser: 'I Couldn't The Smell Of Him Off Me'"
90.	*NO*	1-20-12	"5 Things You Didn't Know About Etta James"
91.	*NO*	1-20-12	"Morgan Freeman Enrolls in Oprah's "Master Class"
92.	*HP*	1-24-12	"State Of The Union Address: Everybody Must Play By The Same Rules"
93.	*HP*	1-24-12	"Obama Greets Gabrielle Giffords At 2012 State Of The Union" (VIDEO, PHOTOS)
94.	*HP*	1-24-12	"EXCLUSIVE: Obama To Announce Mortgage Crisis Unit Chaired By New York Attorney General Schneiderman"
95.	*HP*	1-24-12	"Apple Q1 2012 Results Obliterate Expectations"
96.	*HP*	1-24-12	"Republican Response: Mitch Daniels Delivers Speech After State Of The Union" (VIDEO)
97.	*HP*	1-24-12	"Obama Makes 'Spilled Milk' Joke During 2012 State Of The Union" (VIDEO)
98.	*HP*	1-24-12	"Occupy in Parks"
99.	*HP*	1-24-12	"State of The Union Address 2012 Prompts Twitter Reaction"
100.	*HP*	1-24-12	"Demi Moore Hospitalized For Substance Abuse Issues" Report on Moviefone.com via TMZ
101.	*HP*	1-24-12	"Congress Insider Trading Bill Backed By Harry Reid"

102.	*HPBV*	1-24-12	"State of the Union 2012: Obama Delivers Address" (LIVE VIDEO & UPDATES)
103.	*HPBV*	1-24-12	"Duke University Students Call for Better Climate for Blacks"
104.	*HPBV*	1-24-12	"Newt Gingrich: Latinos, Blacks Don't Understand 'Key To Future Wealth,' But Asians Do"
105.	*HPBV*	1-24-12	"State of The Union Guest List: Michelle Obama Continues A 30-Year Tradition Of Extraordinary Americans"
106.	*HPBV*	1-24-12	"Tea Party Groups In Tennessee Demand Textbooks Overlook U.S. Founder's Slave-Owning History"
107.	*HPBV*	1-24-12	"Halle Berry, Gabriel Aubry Judge Puts Off Decision"
108.	*HPBV*	1-24-12	"'Family Feud' Shlong Survey Answer Shocks Grandma" (VIDEO)
109.	*HPBV*	1-24-12	"Mary Waters Joins 14th Congressional District Race"
110.	*HPBV*	1-24-12	"Etta James Funeral: Al Sharpton To Eulogize"
111.	*HPBV*	1-24-12	"Black, Latino Students Perform at Levels of 30 Years Ago"
112.	*HPBV*	1-24-12	"Stacey English Case: Body Found In Atlanta" ***ELEVENTH STORY NOT CODED FOR ANALYSIS***
113.	*NO*	1-24-12	"Barack Obama's 2012 State Of The Union Address" (NewsOne Live Blog)
114.	*NO*	1-24-12	"Ten Issues Obama Should Address During The State Of The Union"
115.	*NO*	1-24-12	"Marine Serves No Jail Time For Iraqi Civilian Killings"
116.	*NO*	1-24-12	"Obama's Past State Of The Union Addresses In Review"
117.	*NO*	1-24-12	"Al Sharpton To Eulogize Etta James Funeral Services"
118.	*NO*	1-24-12	"Apple Reports $1 Billion Week Profit"
119.	*NO*	1-24-12	"Barbaric! Man Sets Ex-Girlfriend on Fire?"
120.	*NO*	1-24-12	"Discussion: Police Offer $25,000 To Help Find M-Bone Killer"
121.	*NO*	1-24-12	"Black Duke University Students Outraged At 'Racist' Study"
122.	*NO*	1-24-12	"Obama to Host 'Hangout' On Google+ Next Monday"
123.	*HP*	2-03-12	"Koch Brothers, Allies Pledge $100 Million At Private Meeting To Beat Obama"
124.	*HP*	2-03-12	"Syria Violence: 200 People Killed In Assault By Government Forces In City Of Homs, Activists Say"
125.	*HP*	2-03-12	"Susan G. Komen Reverses Planned Parenthood Decision, Does Not Promise To Renew Grants"
126.	*HP*	2-03-12	"Lance Armstrong Doping Investigation Dropped: Prosecutors Close Inquiry, No Charges Filed"
127.	*HP*	2-03-12	"Bradley Manning Case: Army Officer Orders Court-Martial For Manning In Wiki Leaks Case"
128.	*HP*	2-03-12	"Eric Schneiderman Sues B of A, Wells Fargo, JPMorgan Chase Over Electronic Mortgage Fraud"
129.	*HP*	2-03-12	"Steve Appleton Dead: Micron CEO Dies In Plane Crash" (UPDATE)
130.	*HP*	2-03-12	"Cat Struts Around Town on Leash"

131. *HP*   2-03-12   "Republican Senators Promise To Join Suit Against Obama Recess Appointments"
132. *HP*   2-03-12   "Adam Lambert Joining Queen: Singer Teaming Up With Brian May And Roger Taylor"
133. *HPBV* 2-03-12   "Obama Says Jobs Numbers Show That Economy Is Improving But Too Many Looking For Work"
134. *HPBV* 2-03-12   "Wayne State University Unveils New Admission Policy"
135. *HPBV* 2-03-12   "Human Smuggling Ring: South Los Angeles Drivers Recruited To Shuttle Immigrants From The Border"
136. *HPBV* 2-03-12   "Most Memorable National Anthem And Halftime Performances" (VIDEO)
137. *HPBV* 2-03-12   "Breastfeeding PSA Features Talking Baby With Grown-Up Mug" (VIDEO, POLL)
138. *HPBV* 2-03-12   "Selita Ebanks, Former Victoria's Secret Angel, Set To Launch Swimsuit Collection" (PHOTOS)
139. *HPBV* 2-03-12   "Hispanics Are Least Prepared For Retirement, Report Finds Filed"
140. *HPBV* 2-03-12   "NFL Homes: Amani Toomer, Muhammed Wilkerson, Visanthe Shiancoe And Brian Westbrook Tour Homes On NBC's 'Open House'" (PHOTOS)
141. *HPBV* 2-03-12   "Black History Quest"
142. *HPBV* 2-03-12   "Daymond John, 'Shark Tank' Star, Talks New Season, FUBU And Technology's Impact On Fashion"
143. *NO*   2-03-12   "Black Woman Leads Crusade for LGBT Rights"
144. *NO*   2-03-12   "Muslims Demand Investigation Into NYPD Biased Surveillance"
145. *NO*   2-03-12   "Missing! Have You Seen Antonio Williams"
146. *NO*   2-03-12   "Economy Bad For Romney, Good For Obama"
147. *NO*   2-03-12   "New Poll Has Obama And Romney Tied Among Swing State Voters"
148. *NO*   2-03-12   "Man Sues Wife's Business Partner For Impregnating Her"
149. *NO*   2-03-12   "How To Tailgate In Style: Choose The Right Victory Cigar"
150. *NO*   2-03-12   "Mitt Romney Forms Strategic Alliance With Ron Paul"
151. *NO*   2-03-12   "Black Slaves Assisted Explorers Lewis And Clark In Trek Across America"
152. *NO*   2-03-12   "Stand Out At Your Super Bowl Party With Fantabulous Food"
153. *HP*   2-05-12   "Super Bowl 2012: Giants vs. Patriots" LIVE UPDATES
154. *HP*   2-05-12   "Obama Super Bowl Sit-Down: He Says He Deserves Second Term"
155. *HP*   2-05-12   "Karen Handel, Susan G. Komen's Anti-Abortion VP, Drove Decision To Defund Planned Parenthood"
156. *HP*   2-05-12   "Rachel Maddow: The Republican Party Is Waging War On Contraception" (VIDEO)

157.	*HP*	2-05-12	"JFK's Teen Mistress Addresses Their Relationship, Pol's cold war fears in memoir"
158.	*HP*	2-05-12	"Queen Elizabeth II 60th Anniversary: Monarch Celebrates Milestone"
159.	*HP*	2-05-12	"Congressmen Question Pace Of Arlington Cemetery Grave Probe"
160.	*HP*	2-05-12	"Bob McDonnell: Republican Governors, Not Obama, Deserve Credit For Rising Economy"
161.	*HP*	2-05-12	"Madonna Super Bowl Halftime Show: Popstar Slips, Runs Through Hits And New Single"
162.	*HP*	2-05-12	"Rick Santorum Opines On Susan G Komen Foundation's Planned Parenthood Decision"
163.	*HPBV*	2-05-12	"Some Blacks Insist I'm Not African-American"
164.	*HPBV*	2-05-12	"Most Memorable National Anthem Performances" (Video)
165.	*HPBV*	2-05-12	"Super Bowl Pizza Recipes That Put Delivery To Shame"
166.	*HPBV*	2-05-12	"Black Love Wedding Announcements"
167.	*HPBV*	2-05-12	"Fred Luter Poised To Be First Black To Lead Southern Baptist Church"
168.	*HPBV*	2-05-12	"*Black Voices* Preach!: Ubuntu And Our Faith"
169.	*HPBV*	2-05-12	"Black Voices History Quest, Black History In Your Backyard: Atlanta"
170.	*HPBV*	2-05-12	"Laz Alonso On Quarterbacks Becoming The Face Of NFL Franchises: Love Of The Game"
171.	*HPBV*	2-05-12	"Don Cornelius Dead: 'Soul Train' Host And Creator Dies After Apparent Suicide"
172.	*HPBV*	2-05-12	"Women's Shaved Hair Revolution Taking Shape"
173.	*NO*	2-05-12	"'King' Eddie Long Apologizes To Jewish Community"
174.	*NO*	2-05-12	"Arizona Lawmaker Proposes 'White Appreciation Day'
175.	*NO*	2-05-12	"Super! New York Giants Defeat New England Patriots, Again"
176.	*NO*	2-05-12	"Lost Malcolm X Speech Discovered At Brown University"
177.	*NO*	2-05-12	"The Sexism Behind BET's Banning of Nicki Minaj's Stupid Hoe"
178.	*NO*	2-05-12	"Patriots v Giants Rematch Made in NFL Heaven"
179.	*NO*	2-05-12	"Try These Specialty Drink Recipes for your Super Bowl Party"
180.	*NO*	2-05-12	"Romney Takes Nevada: What Does That Mean For Newt?"
181.	*NO*	2-05-12	"Soul Train Line Takes Over Times Square"
182.	*NO*	2-05-12	"Do You Prefer Black or African-American?"
183.	*HP*	2-12-12	"Grammy Awards: Musicians And Stars Turn Out For Award Show Overshadowed By Whitney Houston's Passing"
184.	*HP*	2-12-12	"2012 Grammy Awards: Celebrities Remember Whitney Houston"
185.	*HP*	2-12-12	"Adele's Grammy Performance: Singer Sings 'Rolling in the Deep'"
186.	*HP*	2-12-12	"Greek Protests Continue As Lawmakers Pass Severe Austerity Measures"

187.	*HP*	2-12-12	"Whitney Houston Dead: Singer Dies At 48"
188.	*HP*	2-12-12	"Ron Paul, Rick Santorum Suggest Foul Play From Romney Campaign"
189.	*HP*	2-12-12	"Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Inscription To Be Changed To Full 'Drum Major Instinct' Quotation"
190.	*HP*	2-12-12	"House Transportation Bill 'Technical Correction' Would Strip Workers of Pay Protections"
191.	*HP*	2-12-12	"Amber Rose, Wiz Khalifa Not Engaged"
192.	*HP*	2-12-12	"Costa Concordia Disaster: Video Inside Ship Shows Crew Reactions During Crash" (Video)
193.	*HPBV*	2-12-12	"Whitney Houston Dead: Singer Dies At 48"
194.	*HPBV*	2-12-12	"Andrew Young III, Son Of Civil Rights Icon, Continues Family Legacy"
195.	*HPBV*	2-12-12	"Roland Martin's Controversial Tweets Draw Attention To Issues Faced By LGBT Blacks, Activists Say"
196.	*HPBV*	2-12-12	"'Black Love' Wedding Announcements" (PHOTOS)
197.	*HPBV*	2-12-12	"The Duo Dishes Bloggers, Chrystal Baker And Amir Thomas, At Sunday Dinner"
198.	*HPBV*	2-12-12	"Lattimore Professes His Love For Tim Tebow: Love Of The Game"
199.	*HPBV*	2-12-12	"Earl Lloyd, First Black NBA Player, Gets Honor At Hawks Game"
200.	*HPBV*	2-12-12	"Grammy Awards 2012: Your Black Voices Love Song Playlist" (VIDEO)
201.	*HPBV*	2-12-12	"Blue Ivy Carter Photos: A First Look At Beyonce And Jay-Z's Daughter" (PHOTOS)
202.	*HPBV*	2-12-12	"Black Voices History Quest, Black History In Your Backyard: Detroit Edition"
203.	*NO*	2-12-12	"RIP Whitney Houston 1963-2012"
204.	*NO*	2-12-12	"Chaka Pulls Out of 'Inappropriate' Whitney Tribute"
205.	*NO*	2-12-12	"Whitney's Autopsy Complete Toxicology Results Pending"
206.	*NO*	2-12-12	"Grammy Awards Kicks Off Honoring Whitney Houston"
207.	*NO*	2-12-12	"Bobbi Kristina Rushed To Hospital"
208.	*NO*	2-12-12	"Remembering The Positives Of Whitney Houston's Life"
209.	*NO*	2-12-12	"Five Things We Can Learn from the Life and Death of Whitney Houston"
210.	*NO*	2-12-12	"Clive Davis Releases Statement on Whitney Houston's Death"
211.	*NO*	2-12-12	"Whitney Houston Interrupts Pre-Grammy Red Carpet Interview" (Video)
212.	*NO*	2-12-12	"Whitney Houston's Best And Worst Moments"

213.	*HP*	2-20-12	"Mitt Romney Campaign Downplays Michigan After Calling It A Must Win"
214.	*HP*	2-20-12	"Alice Stewart, Rick Santorum Aide, Explains Offensive Obama
215.	*HP*	2-20-12	"Syria Conflict: Military Sends Tanks to Homs, Activists Say"
216.	*HP*	2-20-12	"Fox News' Liz Trotta Doubles Down On Statements About Rape In The Military"
217.	*HP*	2-20-12	"Iran Nuclear Ambitions Under Scrutiny As UN Inspectors Arrive In Tehran"
218.	*HP*	2-20-12	"The Ten Richest US Presidents"
219.	*HP*	2-20-12	"US Botanic Garden 'Orchid Mystique Shows" (PHOTOS)
220.	*HP*	2-20-12	"Birth Control-Centered Gender War Boots Democratic Campaigns"
221.	*HP*	2-20-12	"Jane Mansfield"
222.	*HP*	2-20-12	"President's Day 2012: Sarah Palin Releases Video"
223.	*HPBV*	2-20-12	"Cancer Screening Budget Cuts May Prove Deadly for Some Women"
224.	*HPBV*	2-20-12	"Melissa Harris-Perry: The Media Suffers From 'Premature Speculation' Video"
225.	*HPBV*	2-20-12	"Whitney Houston's Burial: Private New Jersey Ceremony"
226.	*HPBV*	2-20-12	"Nina Chanel Abney's Paintings Mix The Pretty, The Politica And The Perverse" (Photos)
227.	*HPBV*	2-20-12	"Harriet Tubman's Descendents Draw Strength From The Matriarch's Legacy"
228.	*HPBV*	2-20-12	"Jeremy Lin doesn't make you Larry Wilmore"
229.	*HPBV*	2-20-12	"Getting through Spiritual All-Nighters"
230.	*HPBV*	2-20-12	"43rd NAACP Image Awards: Bright Stars And Colorful Gowns Fill The Red Carpet" (PHOTOS)
231.	*HPBV*	2-20-12	"Black Voices History Quest, Black History In Your Backyard: New York Edition"
232.	*HPBV*	2-20-12	"Rihanna's Birthday: Singer Turns 24, Style Evolution" (PHOTOS)
233.	*NO*	2-20-12	"Wow! Chris Tucker Owes 12 Million in Taxes"
234.	*NO*	2-20-12	"Saying Goodbye To 'Pretty Tony': Dick Anthony Williams Dies at 73"
235.	*NO*	2-20-12	"White Teacher Sues To Use N-Word In Class"
236.	*NO*	2-20-12	"8-Year Olds Given Sex Change Treatment"
237.	*NO*	2-20-12	"Nate Dogg Sex Tape Being Shopped Around"
238.	*NO*	2-20-12	"Oscar Voters Overwhelmingly White Males"
239.	*NO*	2-20-12	"Jackee Harry Admits She Introduced Whitney to Bobby"
240.	*NO*	2-20-12	"Right Wing Sheriff Admits to Gay Relationship With Immigrant"
241.	*NO*	2-20-12	"Obama To Universities: Keep Tuition Down or Lose Fed Dollars"
242.	*NO*	2-20-12	"Infant Killed After Shots Fired Into Detroit Home"
243.	*HP*	3-01-12	"Iraq War and Afghan Conflict Harmed the Economy, Study Says"
244.	*HP*	3-01-12	"Andrew Breibart Dead: Conservative Blogger Dies Suddenly at 43"

245.	*HP*	3-01-12	"Maryland Gay Marriage: Governor Martin O'Malley Signs Bill Allowing Same-Sex Couples to Wed"
246.	*HP*	3-01-12	"Rush Limbaugh: I'll Buy Georgetown Women As Much Aspirin to Put Between Their Knees as They Want"
247.	*HP*	3-01-12	"Gas Prices Inspire War of Words Obama, Dems Take on GOP"
248.	*HP*	3-01-12	"Blunt Amendment Vote: Contraception Measure Fails in Senate"
249.	*HP*	3-01-12	"Cherry Blossom Festival 2012: National Park Service Announces Early Peak Bloom Dates"
250.	*HP*	3-01-12	"Joe Arpaio, Prominent Sheriff, Unveils Results of Investigation into Obama Birth Certificate"
251.	*HP*	3-01-12	"Retirement Ideas: Fantasy Retirement Homes and Second Acts"
252.	*HP*	3-01-12	"Barry Hinkley, 5 Year Old Son Hudson Talk to Fox News about Campaign Ad" (Video)
253.	*HPBV*	3-01-12	"Swann Gallery's African American Auction Becomes Annual Rite"
254.	*HPBV*	3-01-12	"Paul Phillips, Harlem Photographer Creating Book That Celebrates The Beauty of Black Women"
255.	*HPBV*	3-01-12	"Morgan Freeman Closing Mississippi Restaurant"
256.	*HPBV*	3-01-12	"The 'Gentlemen's Guide': Style Icon Through the Years" (Photos)
257.	*HPBV*	3-01-12	"Andre 3000 Reveals Status of New Outkast Album; Notable Quote" (Video)
258.	*HPBV*	3-01-12	"HIV Origins Linked to Colonialism in Africa"
259.	*HPBV*	3-01-12	"Tracee Ellis Ross Gets Glam for Uptown Magazine 'Hollywood Issue'" (Photos)
260.	*HPBV*	3-01-12	"Without Internet, Urban Poor Left Out of Digital Age"
261.	*HPBV*	3-01-12	"Michelle Obama Veteran's Dinner 2012: Beautiful in Blue"
262.	*HPBV*	3-01-12	"Ethnic Diversity: Is It the Key to Happiness" (Poll)
263.	*NO*	3-01-12	"Happy Birthday To 'King of Calypso' Harry Belafonte"
264.	*NO*	3-01-12	"Black Women Did What? 10 History Facts About Our Beloved Sistas"
265.	*NO*	3-01-12	"Carolyn Whigham: 'I Know Who Took Whitney's Picture'"
266.	*NO*	3-01-12	"Attorney General: Sandusky Victims Between Ages of 8-17"
267.	*NO*	3-01-12	"Too Short Says Industry Conspiracy Destroyed Conscious Rap"
268.	*NO*	3-01-12	"Amber Rose and Wiz Khalifa Are Engaged"
269.	*NO*	3-01-12	"Nelson Mandela's Party Bans Youth Leader Over Racially Divisive Leanings"
270.	*NO*	3-01-12	"Seriously? Subway Ad Tells Obama To ' Go To Hell'"
271.	*NO*	3-01-12	"Obama Praises Omar From 'The Wire' and Black Griffin"
272.	*NO*	3-01-12	"2 Detroit-Area Women Abducted! $10k Offered For Their Safe Return" (VIDEO)
273.	*HP*	3-10-12	"Japan Tsunami: Country Marks One Year Anniversary of Disaster"

274.	*HP*	3-10-12	"Wyoming Caucus Results 2012: Mitt Romney Projected Winner"
275.	*HP*	3-10-12	"Rick Santorum Wins: Kansas Caucus Results 2012"
276.	*HP*	3-10-12	"Nick Zoricic Dead: Ski Racer Dies During Skicross Crash In World Cup Event" (Video)
277.	*HP*	3-10-12	"Talk Radio Losing Advertisers In Wake Of Limbaugh Scandal"
278.	*HP*	3-10-12	"Obama Plans Big Effort To Build Support Among Women"
279.	*HP*	3-10-12	"This Week In Adoptable Animals: A Rabbit And A Guinea Pig In Love And Dogs And Cats Galore" (Photos)
280.	*HP*	3-10-12	"Jay Inslee, Washington Congressman, Resigning To Focus On Gubernatorial Campaign"
281.	*HP*	3-10-12	"'Fifty Shades of Grey' Series To Be Published By Random House"
282.	*HP*	3-10-12	"Japan Disaster Costs" (INFOGRAPHIC)
283.	*HPBV*	3-10-12	"George Zimmerman, Neighborhood Watch Captain Who Shot Trayvon Martin, Charged With Violence Before"
284.	*HPBV*	3-10-12	"Sarah Palin Tells Sean Hannity That Obama Wants To Take America Back To Days 'Before The Civil War' "(Video)
285.	*HPBV*	3-10-12	"Obama Barnes and Noble Ad From 1995 Resurfaces" (Photo)
286.	*HPBV*	3-10-12	"Kanye West Disturbs The Royal Family In London"
287.	*HPBV*	3-10-12	"Robin Thicke Turns 35, Singer Celebrates With Big Birthday Bash" (Photos)
288.	*HPBV*	3-10-12	"FDNY Minority Discrimination Could Cost New York City $128 Million, Says Judge"
289.	*HPBV*	3-10-12	"Coolio Arrested, Gets Placed In Same Jail As Son"
290.	*HPBV*	3-10-12	"Black Unemployment Grows, Even As Economy Adds Jobs"
291.	*HPBV*	3-10-12	"Hot On Pinterest: 5 Pinners To Follow Now" (Photos)
292.	*HPBV*	3-10-12	"Jesse Jackson, Jr. Takes On Debbie Halvorson Over Gun Control In New Ad" (Video)
293.	*NO*	3-10-12	"Post-Racial America? U.S. Hate Groups On The Rise"
294.	*NO*	3-10-12	"Pacman Jones Released From Probation Early"
295.	*NO*	3-10-12	"Feds To Shut Down Texas Clinic For Low Income Women"
296.	*NO*	3-10-12	"Was Whitney "Looking For Love In The Wrong Places"?"
297.	*NO*	3-10-12	"Oprah Honored With Lifetime Achievement Honor at DVF Awards"
298.	*NO*	3-10-12	"Marchers Reach Alabama Capitol With Song And Cheers" (Video)
299.	*NO*	3-10-12	"14 Year Old To Be Tried As Adult For Mother's Murder"
300.	*NO*	3-10-12	"Man Shoots McDonalds Manager Over Filet-O-Fish"
301.	*NO*	3-10-12	"Not Super Tuesday: GOP Still Not Impressed With Mitt Romney"
302.	*NO*	3-10-12	"Lawyer Says Limbaugh Should Be Prosecuted For Defamation"
303.	*HP*	3-13-12	"Rick Santorum Wins Alabama Primary & Mississippi Primary"
304.	*HP*	3-13-12	"Mississippi Primary 2012 Results Map" (Real-Time Data)
305.	*HP*	3-13-12	"Stress Tests: Citigroup, Three Other Major Banks Fail"
306.	*HP*	3-13-12	"Mitt Romney On Planned Parenthood: We Will 'Get Rid' Of It"

307.	*HP*	3-13-12	"Super PAC Backlash: Washington Post/ABC News Poll Says 69% of Voters Want Groups Outlawed"
308.	*HP*	3-13-12	"Rush Limbaugh: 'Obama Lost Ground With Women' After Sandra Fluke Comments" (Audio)
309.	*HP*	3-13-12	"Cirque Cuisine, Circus-Themed Food Truck. Serves Up Healthy Carnival Fare in D.C."
310.	*HP*	3-13-12	"Alabama Prison Guards Indicted in Fatal Beating of Handcuffed Inmate"
311.	*HP*	3-13-12	"Gillian Anderson Reveals Lesbian Relationships, Talks Dream Role In Out Magazine"
312.	*HP*	3-13-12	"Afghanistan Shooting: Approval Of The War Is Down, But Is It Really Just Party Politics?"
313.	*HPBV*	3-13-12	"Atheists 'Slaves Obey Your Masters' Billboard Raises Tempers In Pennsylvania"
314.	*HPBV*	3-13-12	"George Zimmerman Neighbors Complained About Aggressive Tactics Before Trayvon Martin Killing"
315.	*HPBV*	3-13-12	"South By Southwest: 'Homeless Hotspot' Stunt Stirs Debate At SXSW"
316.	*HPBV*	3-13-12	"Bobbi Kristina Brown Dating Family Friend, Nick Gordon: Report " (Video)
317.	*HPBV*	3-13-12	"Alabama Prison Guards Indicted in Fatal Beating of Handcuffed Inmate"
318.	*HPBV*	3-13-12	"Tamia Talks: New Album, 'Beautiful Surprise,' 'Basketball Wives' And Grant Hill"
319.	*HPBV*	3-13-12	"Senator Seeks Saggy Pants Ban In NYC Schools"
320.	*HPBV*	3-13-12	"Nicki Minaj Covers Allure, Talks Big Hair And Even Bigger Future Plans" (Photos)
321.	*HPBV*	3-13-12	"Michelle Obama To Appear On Letterman Show"
322.	*HPBV*	3-13-12	"Sherri Shepherd Gets Fit For 'Dancing With The Stars', Asks Tina Fey For Advice"
323.	*NO*	3-13-12	"Has Jim Crow Moved To Silicon Valley? Racism In The Tech World"
324.	*NO*	3-13-12	"Rick Santorum Wins Mississippi and Alabama"
325.	*NO*	3-13-12	"Foreign Exchange Students Molested By American Hosts"
326.	*NO*	3-13-12	"Toddler Drowns In Septic Tank Behind Family's Home"
327.	*NO*	3-13-12	"Cops Say 'Evil Presence' Mom Killed Daughter With Scissors"
328.	*NO*	3-13-12	"Soldiers Charged With Killing 16 Civilians Could Face Death Penalty"
329.	*NO*	3-13-12	"Glen Rice Jr. Kicked Off Georgia Tech Team After Shooting"
330.	*NO*	3-13-12	"This Man Is Harvard's First Black Graduate"
331.	*NO*	3-13-12	"Man Killed Over Box Of Condoms" (Video)
332.	*NO*	3-13-12	"Shameful! Upset Parent Bites Off Coach's Ear In Rage"

333.	*HP*	3-21-12	"Beyond The Battlefield: Afghanistan's Wounded Struggle With Genital Injuries"
334.	*HP*	3-21-12	"Tim Tebow Traded? Jets, Broncos Reportedly Reach Agreement On Deal"
335.	*HP*	3-21-12	"Trayvon Martin 'Million Hoodie March' Draws Hundreds In New York City"
336.	*HP*	3-21-12	"Mitt Romney: George W. Bush And Henry Paulson Saved Country From Depression"
337.	*HP*	3-21-12	"Obama Camp Responds To Santorum's Comments About Malia"
338.	*HP*	3-21-12	"Russell, 'Kony 2012' Creator, Suffered From 'Reactive Psychosis,' Family Claims"
339.	*HP*	3-21-12	"Apple Publishes Data On Foxconn Working Conditions"
340.	*HP*	3-21-12	"Jack Abramoff Does Not Know How He Will Pay Back $44 Million, Will Not Go On 'Dancing With The Stars'"
341.	*HP*	3-21-12	"Al Sharpton On Trayvon Martin Killing: 'I Intend To Stay On It'"
342.	*HP*	3-21-12	"Dan Savage Responds To Rick Santorum's Promise To 'Pray For' Him"
343.	*HPBV*	3-21-12	"The Blaze, Site Founded By Glenn Beck, Insinuates That Slain Teen Trayvon Martin Was Troublemaker"
344.	*HPBV*	3-21-12	"Slavery Homework Problem: Another Georgia Elementary School Under Fire For Math Problem Referencing Slaves "(Video)
345.	*HPBV*	3-21-12	"Black Hair Care Basics: American Academy of Dermatology Weighs In"
346.	*HPBV*	3-21-12	"Jonatha Carr, Florida Atlantic University Student, Has Violent Outburst In Class Discussing Evolution" (Video)
347.	*HPBV*	3-21-12	"Deaf Student 'Speechless' After Obama Responds To Him In Sign Language"
348.	*HPBV*	3-21-12	"OWN Shakeup Tests Oprah Winfrey, Discovery Relationship" (Video)
349.	*HPBV*	3-21-12	"Al Sharpton: Trayvon Martin Killing '[Cries] Out For Justice To Be Done'" (Video)
350.	*HPBV*	3-21-12	"Whoopi Goldberg Directing Moms Mabley Documentary"
351.	*HPBV*	3-21-12	"Beyonce Post-Baby Body: New Mom Shows Off Slim Figure In New York" (PHOTOS)
352.	*HPBV*	3-21-12	"Jesse Jackson Jr. Wins Illinois Primary: Fends Off Debbie Halvorson's 2nd District Challenge"
353.	*NO*	3-21-12	"Our Black Boys Are Not Trash: From Emmett Till To Trayvon Martin"
354.	*NO*	3-21-12	"'Million Hoodie March Organizer Says Trayvon's Murder 'Very Personal'"

355.	*NO*	3-21-12	"Zimmerman Refers To Trayvon As "F**kin; Coon' Before Shooting Him?"
356.	*NO*	3-21-12	"Marine Sergeant Faces Dismissal For Criticizing President Obama"
357.	*NO*	3-21-12	"Yeah, Right: Creator of "Re-Nig" Bumper Sticker Says It's "Not Racist"
358.	*NO*	3-21-12	"'Kony 2012' Director Jason Russell Diagnosed With Psychosis"
359.	*NO*	3-21-12	"White Teen Gets Life For Killing Black Man With Pickup Truck"
360.	*NO*	3-21-12	"News One's Trayvon Martin Coverage"
361.	*NO*	3-21-12	"Ex-Wives Of Hollywood Superstars Ink Reality TV Show"
362.	*NO*	3-21-12	"Black Styling Practices May Lead To Scalp And Hair Issues"
363.	*HP*	3-29-12	"Milky Way PHOTO Shows Billion-Plus Stars"
364.	*HP*	3-29-12	"Foxxconn Factory's Violations: iPad Factory Workers' Grievances Detailed In Report"
365.	*HP*	3-29-12	"Paul Ryan Budget: House Passes Plan 228-191"
366.	*HP*	3-29-12	"Chelsea Clinton To Sandra Fluke: 'We Both Have Been Attacked By Rush Limbaugh'"
367.	*HP*	3-29-12	"Trayvon Martin's Email And Facebook Accounts Allegedly Attacked By White Supremacist"
368.	*HP*	3-29-12	"GOP 'War On Women' Loses Momentum In The States"
369.	*HP*	3-29-12	"FDA Close To BPA Decision Crucial For Health Of Poor Children"
370.	*HP*	3-29-12	"'Titanic: 100 Year Obsession' Opens At National Geographic" (PHOTOS)
371.	*HP*	3-29-12	"10 Countries Spending The Most On Health Care: 24/7 Wall Street"
372.	*HP*	3-29-12	"Elle MacPerson's Style Evolution" (PHOTOS)
373.	*HPBV*	3-29-12	"Trayvon Martin's Email And Facebook Accounts Allegedly Hacked By White Supremacist"
374.	*HPBV*	3-29-12	"Allen West Slams Bobby Rush For Wearing Hoodie On House Floor"
375.	*HPBV*	3-29-12	"Elton John: I Could Have Ended Up Like Whitney Houston"
376.	*HPBV*	3-29-12	"Trayvon Martin Case: Police Video Shows No Blood, Bruises On George Zimmerman After Killing"
377.	*HPBV*	3-29-12	"Niecy Nash: 'Black Celebrities Are Not As Sought After'"
378.	*HPBV*	3-29-12	"Nancy Pelosi: Bobby Rush 'Deserves A Great Deal Of Credit' For Wearing Hoodie On House Floor"
379.	*HPBV*	3-29-12	"Raven Symone Talks 'Sister Act' On Broadway, Music Business And Success"
380.	*HPBV*	3-29-12	"Al Sharpton, Tom Daschle Discuss The Supreme Court's Obamacare Hearings"
381.	*HPBV*	3-29-1	"Illinois 'Stand Your Ground' Bill Sponsor Says Proposal Will be Reintroduced"

382.	*HPBV*	3-29-12	"Charles Barkley Dons Halter Dress, Heels for Weight Watchers' Lose Like A Man Campaign" (PHOTO)
383.	*NO*	3-29-12	"Fake 911 Call Led Cops To Shoot Innocent College Student Dead"
384.	*NO*	3-29-12	"Black Liberation Militia Founder Says Trayvon Supporters Want Justice"
385.	*NO*	3-29-12	"Charles Barkley Goes Drag for Weight Watchers Ad"
386.	*NO*	3-29-12	"Lee Settles With Couple For Retweeting Their Address"
387.	*NO*	3-29-12	"Sons of Sugar Hill Founders Face Tax Charges"
388.	*NO*	3-29-12	"Final Stop: Justices To Wrestle With Health Care Law"
389.	*NO*	3-29-12	"Vegans Protest Starbucks Latest Ingredient…Bugs!"
390.	*NO*	3-29-12	"Sister of Teen Who Vanished In 1985 Continues Pushing for Justice"
391.	*NO*	3-29-12	"South Carolina Teen Girl Attacks Opponent In Soccer Game" (VIDEO)
392.	*NO*	3-29-12	"Zimmerman's Father: They May Have Cleaned My Son Up At The Scene"
393.	*HP*	4-07-12	"Chuck Grassley Calls President Obama 'Stupid' Over Supreme Court Comments"
394.	*HP*	4-07-12	"GSA Conference Video Shows Lavish Vegas Spending: EXCLUSIVE"
395.	*HP*	4-07-12	"National Review Fires John Derbyshire, Writer Who Penned Racist Screed"
396.	*HP*	4-07-12	"Thomas Kinkade Dead: Famed Painter Dies At Age 54"
397.	*HP*	4-07-12	"Tulsa Shootings That Left At Least 3 Dead Were Related, Police Say"
398.	*HP*	4-07-12	"Pilots In Fiery Navy Jet Crash In Virginia Beach Faced Tough Choices"
399.	*HP*	4-07-12	"Rocklands Farm Easter Chick Rental Allows Take-Home Cuteness With No Long-Term Commitment"
400.	*HP*	4-07-12	"Obama's Requiem for the Postwar Consensus"
401.	*HP*	4-07-12	"Masters 2012: Tiger Woods Continues To Struggle During 3rd Round
402.	*HP*	4-07-12	"GOP Superdelegates: Primary Is Over, Mitt Romney Will Be Nominee
403.	*HPBV*	4-07-12	"Blacks, Whites Have Stark Split On Role Of Race In Trayvon Martin Case, Poll Says
404.	*HPBV*	4-07-12	"Black and Jewish: 10 Celebrities You Didn't Know Were Jewish
405.	*HPBV*	4-07-12	"Naturi Naughton Talks New Role In 'The Client List' & Life After 'The Playboy Club'"
406.	*HPBV*	4-07-12	"Kendrec McDade Shooting: FBI Will Investigate Possible Civil Rights Violation" (VIDEO)
407.	*HPBV*	4-07-12	"Allen West: Tanning Salon Tax 'Racist'"
408.	*HPBV*	4-07-12	"Trayvon Martin Case: George Zimmerman Lawyer Cites 'Shaken Baby Syndrome' As Defense"

409.	*HPBV*	4-07-12	"Rekia Boyd Lawsuit: Family of Unarmed Woman Killed By Off-Duty Chicago Cop Sues City" (VIDEO)
410.	*HPBV*	4-07-12	"Oprah: OWN 'The Climb Of My Life'"
411.	*HPBV*	4-07-12	"NBC Fires Producer of Misleading Zimmerman Tape"
412.	*HPBV*	4-07-12	"Gil Noble Dead: Legendary Black Journalist Dies At 80"
413.	*NO*	4-07-12	"Trayvon Martin: Armed Neo-Nazis Patrol Sanford Protecting White Citizens"
414.	*NO*	4-07-12	"Heidi Klum Formally Files For Divorce From Seal in LA"
415.	*NO*	4-07-12	"Five Men Charged With Kidnapping and Murder of Two Women"
416.	*NO*	4-07-12	"Black Neighbors Fearful After Shootings In Oklahoma"
417.	*NO*	4-07-12	"When The Checks Stop Coming: NFL's Warren Sapp Files Bankruptcy"
418.	*NO*	4-07-12	"CNN Study: Black Kids Are Racially Biased"
419.	*NO*	4-07-12	"NBC Fires Producer For "Racist" Edit of Zimmerman 911 Call"
420.	*NO*	4-07-12	"Poll African-Americans Disappointed in Black Leadership"
421.	*NO*	4-07-12	"Gallup USA Poll Whites Overwhelmingly Believe Zimmerman is Innocent"
422.	*NO*	4-07-12	"Vanessa Williams I Was Molested As a Child By a Woman"

VITA

A native Virginian, Deidra Jeanee Lee was born on June 9, 1975, in Petersburg. After graduating from Petersburg High School, Deidra earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature from Virginia State University in Petersburg, Virginia and a Master of Arts degree in English with an emphasis in Professional Writing from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. She will receive her Doctor of Philosophy degree in Media, Art and Text from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia on December 14, 2013. In addition to her personal interests in literature and creative writing, Deidra's research interests focus on the culturally transformative effects of technology on social thought, expression and interaction.

Deidra is currently a full-time instructor in the Department of Languages and Literature at Virginia State University (VSU) and has balanced that position with her doctoral studies at Virginia Commonwealth University for the past six years. As an instructor, she has taught a variety of courses including: College Composition I and II, Introduction to Literature, Introduction to Public Speaking, Advanced Communication Skills and Technical Communication. In addition to her daily responsibilities as an instructor and student advisor, Deidra has also co-chaired a committee to develop academic services that enhance students' academic development and overall performance, and she has participated in university pilot programs to track student performance. She has also worked with the university's Quality Enhancement Program director to design promotional materials for the VSU Writing/e-Portfolio Studio and to evaluate student performance in first-year writing courses. She has also supported VSU community outreach programs by teaching summer SAT prep courses to rising high school

seniors and co-directing a summer immersion program designed to introduce high school juniors

and seniors to the rigors of post-secondary education.