

Topline
The Color of News: How Different Media Have Covered the General Election
 Project for Excellence in Journalism

Amount of News Coverage by Outlet									
Percent of Campaign Stories Where Each Candidate was a Significant Presence									
September 8 - October 16, 2008									
Candidate	All Media	Newspapers	Online	Network Morning TV	Network Evening TV	Network Total (ABC, CBS, and NBC)	ABC total	NBC total	CBS Total
Obama	62.4%	63.5%	60.8%	60.3%	63.1%	61.7%	64.1%	65.7%	56.4%
Biden	9.3	11.2	13.8	16.8	10.0	13.3	10.7	14.8	13.8
McCain	62.4	65.3%	60.8	60.8	67.5	64.2	64.9	71.6	56.9
Palin	28.4	25.9	32.0	40.5	27.3	33.7	44.3	34.3	34.3

Amount of News Coverage by Outlet							
Percent of Campaign Stories Where Each Candidate was a Significant Presence							
September 8 - October 16, 2008							
Candidate	Cable Total	Cable Daytime	Cable Evening	CNN Total	MSNBC total	Fox News Total	Radio (Excluding Talk)
Obama	64.0%	62.1%	64.4%	69.0%	60.6%	66.0%	58.0%
Biden	7.4	7.7	7.4	8.2	8.2	6.6	7.5
McCain	64.1	61.5	64.6	72.8	69.9	59.4	58.6
Palin	25.8	26.7	25.6	27.0	28.8	27.0	28.7

N=2,412 campaign stories

A candidate is considered a significant presence if 25% or more of the story is about him or her.

Tone of Campaign Coverage by Outlet
Percent of Campaign Stories with a Tone
September 8 - October 16, 2008

		Overall		Newspapers		Online		Network Morning TV		Network Evening TV		Network Total (ABC, CBS, and NBC)		ABC total		NBC total		CBS Total	
Candidate	Tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone
Obama	positive	209	35.8%	23	45.1%	20	37.0%	19	34.5%	27	38.6%	46	36.8%	18	48.6%	19	43.2%	9	20.5%
	neutral	204	35.0	14	27.5	18	33.3	20	36.4	28	40.0	48	38.4	9	24.3	16	36.4	23	52.3
	negative	170	29.2	14	27.5	16	29.6	16	29.1	15	21.4	31	24.8	10	27.0	9	20.5	12	27.3
Biden	positive	28	24.8	3	25.0	4	25.0	4	23.5	4	40.0	8	29.6	1	20.0	3	30.0	4	33.3
	neutral	49	43.4	6	50.0	6	37.5	8	47.1	4	40.0	12	44.4	3	60.0	4	40.0	5	41.7
	negative	36	31.9	3	25.0	6	37.5	5	29.4	2	20.0	7	25.9	1	20.0	3	30.0	3	25.0
McCain	positive	84	14.2	3	6.1	5	9.3	9	14.3	9	12.2	18	13.1	5	14.7	9	16.7	4	8.2
	neutral	169	28.5	12	24.5	13	24.1	14	22.2	29	39.2	43	31.4	10	29.4	16	29.6	17	34.7
	negative	340	57.3	34	69.4	36	66.7	40	63.5	36	48.6	76	55.5	19	55.9	29	53.7	28	57.1
Palin	positive	77	28.2	5	22.7	9	32.1	14	31.8	7	23.3	21	28.4	4	20.0	11	42.3	6	21.4
	neutral	90	33.0	8	36.4	6	21.4	13	29.5	14	46.7	27	36.5	7	35.0	7	26.9	13	46.4
	negative	106	38.8	9	40.9	13	46.4	17	38.6	9	30.0	26	35.1%	9	45.0	8	30.8	9	32.1
All Candidates Combined	positive	398	25.5%	34	25.4%	38	25.0%	46	25.7%	47	25.5%	93	25.6%	28	29.2%	42	31.3%	23	17.3%
	neutral	512	32.8	40	29.9	43	28.3	55	30.7	75	40.8	130	35.8	29	30.2	43	32.1	58	43.6
	negative	652	41.7	60	44.8	71	46.7	78	43.6	62	33.7	140	38.6	39	40.6	49	36.6	52	39.1

Stories where a candidate was not a significant presence were excluded from this table.

Tone of Campaign Coverage by Outlet
Percent of Campaign Stories with a Tone

September 8 - October 16, 2008

		Cable Total		Cable Daytime		Cable Evening		CNN Total		MSNBC total		Fox News Total		Radio (Excluding Talk)	
Candidate	Tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone	# of stories	% of stories with tone
Obama	positive	104	33.8%	8	18.2%	95	36.1%	43	36.1%	32	43.2%	29	25.2%	13	39.4%
	neutral	102	33.1	20	45.5	82	31.2	30	25.2	32	43.2	40	34.8	15	45.5
	negative	102	33.1	16	36.4	86	32.7	46	38.7	10	13.5	46	40.0	5	15.2
Biden	positive	10	20.4	3	37.5	7	17.1	5	26.3	2	15.4	3	17.7	2	33.3
	neutral	21	42.9	3	37.5	18	43.9	7	36.8	7	53.9	7	41.2	2	33.3
	negative	18	36.7	2	25.0	16	39.0	7	36.8	4	30.8	7	41.2	2	33.3
McCain	positive	47	15.3	13	31.0	34	12.8	15	12.6	8	9.9	24	22.2	9	30.0
	neutral	86	27.9	15	35.7	71	26.8	31	26.1	14	17.3	41	38.0	9	30.0
	negative	175	56.82	14	33.3	160	60.4	73	61.3	59	72.8	43	39.8	12	40.0
Palin	positive	37	28.7	8	40.0	29	26.6	11	26.2	8	21.1	18	36.7	3	25.0
	neutral	38	29.5	8	40.0	30	27.5	16	38.1	4	10.5	18	36.7	6	50.0
	negative	54	41.9	4	20.0	50	45.9	15	35.7	26	68.4	13	26.5	3	25.0
All Candidates Combined	positive	198	24.9%	32	28.1%	165	24.3%	74	24.7%	50	24.3%	74	25.6%	27	33.3%
	neutral	247	31.1	46	40.4	201	29.6	84	28.1	57	27.7	106	36.7	32	39.5
	negative	349	44.0	36	31.6	312	46.0	141	47.2	99	48.1	109	37.7	22	27.2

Stories where a candidate was not a significant presence were excluded from this table.

Frame of Campaign Coverage									
Percent of Campaign Newshole									
September 8 – October 16, 2008									
	Overall	Newspapers	Online	Network Morning TV	Network Evening TV	Network Total (ABC, CBS, and NBC)	ABC total	NBC total	CBS Total
Political Horserace	52.7%	52.3%	54.3%	66.6%	44.7%	56.2%	51.8%	63.5%	52.3%
Ads, Fundraising*	9.8	12.2	5.8	6.7	5.2	6.0	6.5	4.8	6.8
Public Record	5.5	6.9	7.2	2.1	2.5	2.3	1.2	3.8	1.6
Policy	20.4	12.6	20.4	19.1	35.6	27.0	29.6	22.3	29.6
Personal	5.4	9.2	3.7	1.6	5.8	3.6	2.3	2.8	5.5
Other	6.3	6.8	8.7	3.9	6.2	5.0	8.6	2.9	4.3

Frame of Campaign Coverage							
Percent of Campaign Newshole							
September 8 – October 16, 2008							
	Cable Total	Cable Daytime	Cable Evening	CNN Total	MSNBC total	Fox News Total	Radio (Excluding Talk)
Political Horserace	53.8%	62.1%	52.6%	56.9%	53.9%	51.3%	51.3%
Ads, Fundraising*	10.7	6.8	11.4	7.9	9.3	14.7	3.8
Public Record	3.8	3.2	3.9	3.7	6.6	1.4	4.9
Policy	24.2	20.2	25.0	24.2	27.2	21.7	25.9
Personal	3.1	3.6	3.0	2.1	2.0	5.1	4.9
Other	4.4	4.2	4.0	5.1	1.1	5.8	9.2

*Also includes stories about the treatment of candidates by the press, the electoral calendar, and endorsements.

Top Storylines by Media Outlet
Percent of Campaign Newshole
September 8 – October 16, 2008

rank	Overall		Newspapers		Online		Cable Total		Network Total (ABC, CBS, and NBC)		Network Morning TV		Network Evening TV	
	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole
1	Economy and Financial Crisis	18.4%	Economy and Financial Crisis	10.6%	McCain v Obama polls	12.5%	Economy and Financial Crisis	27.5%	Economy and Financial Crisis	22.5%	Economy and Financial Crisis	21.2%	Economy and Financial Crisis	24.01%
2	VP Debate	8.1	VP Debate	10.1%	Economy and Financial Crisis	12.5	Attacks by McCain Camp	6.9	VP Debate	8.3	VP Debate	10.9	VP Debate	5.4
3	McCain vs Obama Polls	5.8	Public Record for Palin	7.5	VP Debate	11.1	VP Debate	5.5	Attacks by McCain Camp	6.9	Attacks by McCain Camp	9.9	Palin CBS Interview	5.2
4	Attacks by McCain Camp	5.3	Profile of McCain	6.1	Attacks by McCain Camp	6.4	2 nd Pres Debate	4.4	Palin ABC Interview	5.0	3 rd Pres Debate	6.6	Palin ABC Interview	4.9
5	Public Record for Palin	4.6	McCain vs Obama Polls	6.0	Public Record for Palin	5.7	3 rd Pres Debate	3.8	3 rd Pres Debate	4.7	McCain vs Obama Polls	5.1	Attacks by McCain Camp	3.7
6	McCain Suspends Campaign	4.0	McCain Suspends Campaign	5.5	McCain Suspends Campaign	5.6	McCain vs Obama Polls	3.6	McCain vs Obama Polls	4.2	Palin ABC Interview	5.0	McCain vs Obama Polls	3.3
7	3 rd Pres Debate	3.9	3 rd Pres Debate	4.4	Voting Irregularities	5.4	McCain Suspends Campaign	3.1	Swing States	3.4	Swing States	3.9	2 nd Pres Debate	3.2
8	Swing States	3.5	Swing States	4.4	Swing States	3.7	Public Record for Palin	2.7	Palin CBS Interview	3.3	Lipstick on a Pig Comment	3.5	Lipstick on a Pig Comment	3.1
9	2 nd Pres Debate	3.4	2 nd Pres Debate	3.3	Palin Nominated for VP	3.5	Swing States	2.7	Lipstick on a Pig Comment	3.3	Public Record for Palin	3.5	Swing States	2.9
10	Voting Irregularities	2.5	Profile of Obama	3.2	Health Care as an Issue	2.6	Palin Nominated for VP	2.4	2 nd Pres Debate	3.3	2 nd Pres Debate	3.3	3 rd Pres Debate	2.7

**Top Storylines by Media Outlet
Percent of Campaign Newshole
September 8 – October 16, 2008**

rank	ABC Total		CBS total		NBC total		CNN total		Fox News total		MSNBC total	
	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole	Story	% of campaign newshole
1	Economy and Financial Crisis	22.7%	Economy and Financial Crisis	21.8%	Economy and Financial Crisis	23.1%	Economy and Financial Crisis	28.8%	Economy and Financial Crisis	21.6%	Economy and Financial Crisis	32.8%
2	Attacks by McCain Camp	9.6	VP Debate	8.8	VP Debate	6.7	Attacks by McCain Camp	6.3	VP Debate	5.2	Attacks by McCain Camp	10.0
3	VP Debate	9.5	Palin CBS Interview	8.5	Attacks by McCain Camp	6.6	VP Debate	4.4	Attacks by McCain Camp	4.9	VP Debate	7.0
4	Palin ABC Interview	9.1	Attacks by McCain Camp	5.2	McCain vs Obama Polls	5.2	McCain Suspends Campaign	4.1	2 nd Pres Debate	4.8	2 nd Pres Debate	5.0
5	Swing States	6.1	3 rd Pres Debate	4.7	3 rd Pres Debate	4.6	3 rd Pres Debate	4.1	3 rd Pres Debate	3.9	McCain vs Obama Polls	4.2
6	3 rd Pres Debate	5.0	McCain vs Obama Polls	4.4	2 nd Pres Debate	4.5	Swing States	3.6	McCain vs Obama Polls	3.6	Public Record for Palin	3.6
7	Palin and Women Voters	3.4	Palin Nominated for VP	3.4	Public Record for Palin	4.4	Voting Irregularities	3.4	Palin Nominated for VP	3.4	Attacks by Obama Camp	3.6
8	Lipstick on a Pig Comment	3.1	Lipstick on a Pig Comment	3.0	McCain Suspends Campaign	4.2	2 nd Pres Debate	3.3	McCain Suspends Campaign	3.3	3 rd Pres Debate	3.4
9	McCain vs Obama Polls	2.8	Health Care as Issue	2.9	Swing States	4.0	McCain vs Obama Polls	2.9	O'Reilly Interviews Obama	2.8	Swing States	2.0
10	2 nd Pres Debate	2.7	Palin ABC Interview	2.8	Palin ABC Interview	3.8	Palin ABC Interview	2.9	Obama Relationship w/ Ayers	2.8	Palin Nominated for VP	1.8