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The View on News:

A Content Analysis of the News on *The View* and *ABC World News with Diane Sawyer*

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Abstract

This study investigates and compares the content, quantity, and style of news on the popular television shows *The View* and *ABC World News with Diane Sawyer*. The study also specifically compares the content and quantity of political news coverage on both shows. The research found that while the shows remained dramatically different in their overall approach to news, their political coverage was almost identical in quantity and very similar in content. Unlike previous studies which have almost exclusively looked at entertainment shows like *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*, this study provides a dataset for another important entertainment show that has even more viewers: *The View*.

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While some argue that journalism is in a state of decline, evidence suggests news consumption is not declining (Pew, 2010). It is true that both the nature and narrative of journalism is changing. Traditional outlets such as newspapers and nightly news programs report declining audiences (Pew, 2010; Media Decoder, 2010) while other outlets, such as online sources and some cable shows enjoy a growing audience (Pew, 2010).

In both content and method, the picture of a family settled on the couch to watch the evening news has passed. In a 2010 survey report, the Pew Research Center found that 44 percent of those polled got news digitally, through internet or mobile devices. Additionally, 39 percent of those surveyed said they regularly get their news from cable shows that include *The O'Reilly Factor* and *The Daily Show*. Top reasons for viewership of cable news shows included interesting views, opinions, and entertainment (Pew, 2010). What does this mean for the future of journalism? Should journalists be concerned with the blurring lines between news and entertainment? This study will suggest journalists examine new formats in order to appreciate and capitalize on their success. Both journalism and entertainment shows have changed and are now moving toward one another by a gravitational-like pull. Perhaps this can be explained by the public's need for an "antidote to the bullshit" (Baym & Jones, 2010, p. 287). Either way, as "infotainment" increases, journalists must find a way to recognize and capitalize on these

changes. In order to do that, they must first quantify the changes. Recent studies have addressed this very issue.

Studies have examined content of news and entertainment shows and their affect on audiences to varying conclusions. While most scholars agree soft news has increased in quantity over recent years, one recent study found the public is still informed, at least to a level that is minimally acceptable in a democratic society (Baum & Jamison, p. 957). Another recent study found content in nightly network news programs and *The Daily Show* to be equally substantive, if not necessarily equally informative (Fox, Koloen & Shain, 2007, p. 223). These studies have focused on numerous shows such as *The Daily Show*, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *Late Night with David Letterman* but have left out *The View*. Meanwhile, *The View* boasts higher ratings among the key demographic, viewers 18-49, than *The Daily Show*, which has been the focus of numerous scholarly studies (Gorman, 2010).

Although *The View* receives honorable mention in many studies, it has not been the focus of one. *The View* certainly warrants such investigation. It has been the recipient of numerous awards including 28 daytime Emmy awards. The show has also received awards from organizations like The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. *The View* has also found itself on coveted *Time Magazine* and *Forbes* lists. Although now in its 14th season with current co-hosts Barbara Walters (1997), Joy Behar (1997), Elizabeth Hasslebeck (2003), Sherri Shepherd (2007), and Whoopi Goldberg (2007), the show has featured a rotating cast with varied backgrounds and political beliefs (About The View, 2010).

Baym and Jones (2010, p. 282-283) attribute the success of *The View* to the freedom the co-hosts have from conventional journalism methods. Unbound by objectivity, political correctness, and traditional journalism methods, *The View* reaches its audience in a way that viewers find more authentic and credible (Baym & Jones, 2010, p. 284). In an article written for *Time Magazine*, James Poniewozik notes that *The View* co-hosts display obvious bias and say what they think. He believes this formula works because the show displays transparency and even more, talks about what people care about instead of what journalists want them to care about (Poniewozik, 2008). Mayor Michael Bloomberg wrote an article featuring the co-hosts as one of *Time Magazine*'s most influential people in the world. "By pulling no punches, they pull answers—and emotions—out of guests that are more genuine than you often see on TV," wrote Bloomberg (2009). Although these sentiments are speculative, they present important lessons for journalists. A direct comparison of news content between a traditional nightly newscast and *The View* will provide a stepping stone to properly examine these ideas.

The purpose of this study is to compare news content between a traditional hard news outlet, *ABC World News with Diane Sawyer (ABC News)* and a non-traditional news outlet, daytime talk show *The View*. Is the state of journalism such that *The View*, a self described "morning chatfest" (About the View, 2010) offers as much news and political information as a traditional evening newscast like *ABC News*? In addition to a strict news comparison, this study also compares political news content. Over a 2 week period, 10 full episodes of *ABC News* and the first 30 minutes of 10 episodes of *The View* were coded in order to analyze these components. The results of this study will provide journalism professionals further data to analyze the state of journalism today, specifically regarding "infotainment."

In order to craft the study, an appraisal of relevant literature was conducted to illuminate the current status of “infotainment.” The literature concerning this study covered a wide range of topics including the changing state of journalism, television talk shows, and satire and entertainment shows. After the review, the method and results are presented, followed by a discussion of the findings.

A Review of the Literature

The Changing State Of Journalism

There is no lack of commentary on the state of journalism. In numerous articles, scholars reflect on the content, style, and responsibilities of modern journalists. As one scholar notes, although there is a much higher quantity of broadcast journalism, the quality has degraded in recent years (Baym 2005, p. 259). One area of significant interest scholars have focused on is the way journalism is responding to the rapid changes in technology and news consumption.

The journalism industry has been shaken by loss of revenue and audience. Some journalists adapt their reporting in ways that create misunderstanding when received by the audience (Curran, 2010). Some of these adaptations include an increase in tabloid style reporting and an increase in the number of journalists assigned to report on subjects about which they are uneducated (Curran, 2010). Ben-Porath (2007) found another trend developing in journalism in his study. He focused on the internal fragmentation of journalism, caused by the turn from monological or traditional broadcast to conversation-based reporting, or dialogical. Examples given by Ben-Porath (2007, p. 415) of dialogical news were CNN’s *Anderson Cooper 360*,

MSNBC's *Countdown with Keith Olbermann*, and Fox News' *The O'Reilly Factor*. He found many negative implications stemming from conversation-based reporting, including a diminishing authority of reporters and a lack of fact-checking and accountability. The study concludes that conversational reporting will negatively affect journalism's ability to "maintain its place as a social-political institution" (Ben-Porath, 2007, p. 425). Ben-Porath's study is in contrast to most studies in this literature review. Instead, this review suggests that this conversational style adds authenticity and entertainment value to news that might otherwise go unseen in a traditional news format.

Another adaptation has been the increase of entertainment news in traditional news outlets. According to Ferri (2010) in a study entitled *Emergence of an Entertainment Age*, one new phenomenon has emerged from the ever-growing entertainment news and shrinking hard news outlets. Ferri highlights the new trend to gather celebrities' opinions about news issues, pointing to one example of Eva Longoria Parker giving her opinion on the Arizona immigration story. This mutation of hard news comes as viewers are turning more and more to entertainment shows to get their news. It is of little surprise, then, that traditional news outlets are attempting to incorporate more entertainment into their programs. This mutation is also discussed by Baum (2005).

In an age of cultural diversity, the media environment has become defined by blurred borders. The metaphorical wall between the editorial and business sides of news has dissolved, as have any clear distinctions between the public and private spheres, public affairs and popular culture, and information and entertainment. (Baum, 2005, p. 262)

Jones and Baym (2010) are in agreement, saying it is “untenable to continue to think of or speak of politics and entertainment in terms of blurred boundaries, much less separate realms” (p. 282).

Further reflecting on the idea of news content, one study evaluated the entertainment content on three network morning shows (Cleary & Adams-Bloom, 2009). An analysis of a one month period of three different network morning shows found 20 percent of the content to be entertainment news. This study also found that 40 percent of that entertainment coverage was about products produced by the networks’ parent companies, revealing a disturbing trend in the name of journalism.

Additionally, Cleary and Adams-Bloom (2009) found the entertainment news to be covered with a positive spin. This practice correlates with an idea presented by Fox et al. (2007) who found that *The Daily Show* used humor and laughter to deflect the negative nature of their political content. Perhaps other shows that contain political content are capitalizing on that same practice. *The View* also attempts to use humor to offset heavy moments as shown by the several applause breaks co-host Joy Behar receives for the one liners she deadpans during news stories.

In his study, Harrington (2008) also reflects on the combination of entertainment and news. He suggests that instead of arguing over which category has intellectual supremacy, journalists should study the cultural changes affecting journalism in order to improve and adapt to them. Harrington studied consumption of news by conducting a focus group of young people (under 30 years of age). The participants were chosen from an audience of the Australian television show *The Panel*, a show that uses humor and conversation to discuss news. Based on the results from the focus group, Harrington concludes that journalism, from the classroom to the newsroom, should be examining the cultural changes in society and the changes in media

consumption in order to become “future proofed” (p. 405). That entertainment and news are being combined should not alarm scholars, but rather motivate them to understand the trends in order to capitalize on the new ways young people consume news (Harrington, 2008).

These studies indicate a continuing need to examine the new ways journalism is taking form, including the advantages and disadvantages. These negative trends, tabloid-style, non-expert and conversational style reporting, which scholars have suggested are negative trends, are reflected in the format and style of *The View*. And although scholars decry these trends, more and more journalists are trying to incorporate them into their newscasts. Meanwhile, the co-hosts on *The View* have been executing these practices with success. Additionally, they are using their own opinions to comment on the stories and are also, as would be expected by three comedians, using humor to lighten the mood. As hard news moves toward entertainment, entertainment is also moving toward news, at least in some instances. This migration reflects the need to create a body of research on *The View*, especially considering the similarities it has with the current state of journalism.

Television Talk Shows

Scholarly articles and studies have examined television talk shows including *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *Late Night with David Letterman*, *Larry King Live*, *The Jerry Springer Show*, and *Live with Regis and Kathy Lee*. The scope of shows studied combined with their high ratings belay the significance of their role in the future of journalism. *The Oprah Winfrey Show* repeatedly receives high marks from scholars. In his discussion, Mittell (2003) noted his survey respondents generally found *Oprah* to “contribute positively to society in fostering education and

literacy, addressing social issues, providing positive role models for minorities, and promoting and raising money for important causes” (p. 44). The praise for *Oprah* was not duplicated in results about other talk shows. For shows like *Live with Regis and Kathy Lee*, *Larry King Live*, and *The Jerry Springer Show* respondents offered descriptions such as “annoying,” “self-serving,” and “despicable” (p. 43-44). In Mittell’s (2003) study, survey respondents generally found little educational value in talk shows (a.k.a. soft news) but did find them entertaining. This finding came from a general survey asking about talk shows. In contrast, a survey done analyzing similar “soft news” outlets found that “some individuals derive civic-oriented ‘quality’ from news consumed primarily for entertainment” (Baum & Jamison, 2006, p. 957). This study found that individuals with low awareness of political issues were still able to vote informed and “correctly” simply by viewing television talk shows. This finding is even more dramatic when the researchers explained that for these individuals the choice was not between hard news and soft news but rather soft news or no news (Baum & Jamison, 2006, p. 948).

The ability to vote correctly based on what news or political information talk shows provided was examined in detail in Baum’s (2005) study. Baum found that for political junkies, any exposure to candidates tends to reinforce their partisan predispositions. In contrast, the talk show setting and its less politically aware audience creates a gentler atmosphere that paints all candidates in a more positive light. This softer setting can counter weakly held negative associations about the candidates (Baum, 2005). Furthermore, Baum (2005) found that because low-awareness individuals “presumably lie closer to the point of ambivalence regarding the candidates, relatively small changes in likeability may be sufficient to change their vote choice” (p. 228). The study’s final conclusion was that the blending of politics and entertainment

is steadily growing and therefore politicians should get comfortable on talk shows because it is there they can reach voters they would not ordinarily be able to (Baum, 2005). This conclusion was in line with an article in *The New York Times* that suggested talk shows offer political candidates a free platform that introduces them to an audience that would not typically be interested in anything political (Stanley, 2010).

Other studies briefly mention talk shows in their research. Jones and Baym (2010) discuss the less partisan and spectacle-centered approach talk shows bring to news and political discussion. This format attracts viewers but does not necessarily mean it cannot lead to hard-hitting journalism. Jones and Baym (2010) point out that “two of the most uncomfortable media encounters John McCain faced in the 2008 election occurred on *The View* and *The Late Show with David Letterman*” (p. 283). All of these studies suggest talk shows are an important platform for viewers to get information, especially considering most of the viewers of these shows will not seek it elsewhere.

Satire and Entertainment Shows

Much has been written and studied about the relationship of journalism with satirical and entertainment television shows. Scholars seem to be fascinated by the dynamic shows like *The Daily Show* and its contemporaries *The Colbert Report* and *Real Time with Bill Maher* present to journalism. Articles and studies on *The Daily Show* have focused on the content, the ethical concerns, the effects on audience and the reflection it casts on the journalism profession.

One study compared political content of broadcast network newscasts and *The Daily Show* during the 2004 election (Fox et al., 2007). Reflecting on the record breaking voting

turnout for young voters and their news consumption, the researchers sought to find out if the satirical news they received was as informative as the traditional news sources (Fox et al., 2007). The researchers found that although there was substantially more humor than substance in *The Daily Show's* content, the amount of substance was equal to that of the traditional newscasts (Fox et al., 2007). Furthermore, this study found that the humor and laughter incorporated in the show seemed to counter the negative nature of the political content (Fox et al., 2007). This is an important lesson for journalists to consider when delivering news.

Other studies have focused on the analysis showing that audiences internalize the often negative nature of news and politics. One study found *The Daily Show's* audience became more attached to it and less inclined to turn to other traditional news outlets for political information (Holbert, Lambe, Dudo & Carlton 2007). Another study showed that audiences who would otherwise be disinclined to follow politics get political information from shows like *The Daily Show* (Xiaoxia, 2010). This positive effect was marginalized as “negative interactive effects” (Xiaoxia, 2010, p. 41) were realized the longer viewers were subjected to specific political stories such as the Afghanistan War.

These studies call into question the ethics of presenting news through comedy and satire. Many scholars agree that Jon Stewart, host of *The Daily Show*, does inform his audiences substantively (Baym, 2005; Borden & Tew, 2007; Fox et al., 2007; Jones & Baym, 2010) though they disagree if it is meaningful or even ethical. Borden and Tew (2007) argue that shows like *The Daily Show* rely on journalists' moral commitments to integrity, objectivity, factuality and others in order to criticize them during their sketches. Baym (2005) concurs in his study, stating that the “notion of fake news depends on an equal conception of real” (p. 261). Baym (2005)

goes on to say that fake news “necessitates assumptions about some kind of authentic or legitimate set of news practices and ideals” (p. 261). Indeed, Baym offers many examples of this phenomena in his article while also illustrating the media criticism *The Daily Show* participates in. On *The Daily Show* comedians pretend to be reporters and thereby speak about journalism as “insiders.” In one example the “reporter” discusses how he filed his article about a presidential debate before the debate occurred because journalists write based on conventional wisdom, not the news itself (Baym, 2005, p. 270). Another example showed a “reporter” covering his ears to avoid hearing the truth because his job is to “speculate wildly” about news rather than gather facts (Baym, 2005, p. 270).

Borden and Tew (2007) argue comedians like Stewart are not held to those very same moral commitments they often make fun of. They recognize an interesting dichotomy in the roles of journalists and comedians.

Indeed, the role of comedian restricts the range of role-appropriate expression for Stewart and Colbert just as surely as the role of journalist restricts performances of “real” news. By default, the humor of Stewart and Colbert will tend to cast stones rather than to build bridges, to point out problems rather than to craft solutions, to interrupt discussion with laughter rather than to sustain it by articulating common values. (Borden & Tew, 2007, p. 312)

Borden and Tew (2007) conclude that because journalists should be doing the opposite of the above mentioned actions while remaining morally committed, they, not the comedians, are the ones who will lay out the future of journalism.

Yet other studies find quite the opposite to be true. Some scholars believe shows like *The Daily Show* have important lessons and implications for journalists that will guide the future of journalism. In one such study, Jones and Baym (2010) argue that not only is journalism failing to do its job but that satirical shows are doing it better by presenting information in an authentic, compelling and entertaining way. The same scholars suggest that the satirical presentation of news and political information serve as an “antidote to this steady diet of bullshit” the public receives (p. 287). The analysis suggests that even with the humor, bias, and unconventional format shows like *The Daily Show* incorporate, they are still better at getting information to an audience.

If traditional journalism is failing in any way, many will argue that entertainment and satire shows are stepping up to fill that void. Shows like *The Daily Show* have been steadily gaining popularity, especially with a younger audience that tends to be more disengaged. Although scholars disagree on what effect news being reported in a satirical manner has on the audience, it is nearly universally agreed that Jon Stewart, host of *The Daily Show*, does inform his audiences, often doing a better job than traditional journalists (Borden & Tew, 2007). Baym concludes his article with an important point that highlights the difference between traditional news outlets and *The Daily Show*.

In a time when most media have turned to shallow infotainment to try to ensure ratings points, *The Daily Show*, offers instead a version of news that entertains...*The Daily Show* suggests that that which gives pleasure need not necessarily divert and distract from significant issues. The mainstream news media, however, have been unwilling or unable to learn this lesson. (Baym, 2005, p. 273-274)

Considering its similarities with *The Daily Show*, *The View* warrants a similar body of research. Three of the five current co-hosts on *The View* are comedians and a satirical attitude is often found in the delivery of news. Only one of the current co-hosts, Barbara Walters, has training as a journalist. Furthermore, *The View* certainly presents its news in an entertainment format. The similarities *The View* has with *The Daily Show* do not extend to the amount of scholarly attention they have received. Yet *The View* enjoys higher ratings, is shown on a network channel and is an hour long. In order to begin to draw the sort of conclusions that have been drawn about *The Daily Show*, baseline research must be done on *The View*. This study will do so by examining the content, quantity, style, and delivery of news stories in episodes of *The View* and *ABC News*. This study will analyze the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the difference in content and quantity of news covered on *ABC World News with Diane Sawyer* and *The View*?

RQ2: What is the difference in content and quantity of political news covered on *ABC World News with Diane Sawyer* and *The View*?

RQ3: What is the difference in the style and delivery of the news covered on *ABC World News with Diane Sawyer* and *The View*?

Method

This study used a quantitative content analysis to investigate the research questions about the content, quantity, and style of news on *The View* and *ABC News*. The census sample encompassed a 2 week period of the first 30 minutes of weekday episodes of 2 television shows.

Specifically, the research focused on first 30 minutes of *The View* episodes and entire 30 minute episodes of *ABC World News with Diane Sawyer* from Wednesday, October 13, 2010 to Tuesday, October 26, 2010, excluding weekends, that were taped and coded. This sampling approach emerged after accessibility limitations were assessed with regard to *The View*. The limited access of past episodes of *The View* will be discussed in the conclusion. Although a census sample is not the most common method, it has been successfully used in previous studies concerning similar subject matter. One study entitled *The Family Business: Entertainment Products and the Network Morning News Shows* (Cleary & Adams-Bloom, 2009) used a one month period of weekday network morning news shows to compare entertainment and news content. In addition to the sample technique, many other components of *The Family Business* study were also used in this study.

The unit of analysis was the individual story within each thirty minute episode. A story was defined as a different topic introduced by an anchor or co-host. Variables within the units of analysis were divided into three categories: Show and story title, segment and story categorization, and anchor/co-host variables. Specifically, the study's variables were: show title, story title, segment, time allotted, category, story dateline, use of humor, and use of opinion.

Titles of the show were coded as either *The View* or *ABC World News with Diane Sawyer*. Story titles were created with general and minimal wording based on the most important aspect of the story. Segments were defined as show content that occurred between two commercial breaks. In some cases, one story comprised an entire segment while other segments included multiple stories. Time allotted was coded in intervals ranging from less than 30 seconds to more than 5 minutes. Story datelines included international, Washington D.C., national, regional, and

other and were coded based on the origin of the story. As an example, if the story originated from a foreign country, it was coded as international. In another example, a story that originated in New York was coded as regional.

Twenty two general news categories were used including politics, economics, foreign-non U.S., U.S. foreign affairs, crime, environment, health and medicine, lifestyle, entertainment news (i.e. news about upcoming movies, television shows, etc), celebrity news, education, military, profile (non-celebrity), religion, science, sports, technology, transportation, weather, tease, business, and other. If the primary content was unable to be determined due to two categorical representations, all applicable categories were marked.

Humor was coded as anything within the story that included laughter or prompted audience members, anchors or co-hosts to laugh. Humor was then further defined in how it was presented. If the story material (i.e. video, audio, something read from cards or a teleprompter) was the origin of the laughter, it was coded as humor inherently present. If the actions of the anchors or co-hosts was the origin of the laughter, it was coded as presented with humor. Likewise, the presence of opinion was coded. Opinion was defined as anything other than fact offered with a subjective viewpoint. Opinion was further coded to differentiate instances when opinion was given by the anchors or co-hosts or when opinion was given by celebrities other than the anchors or co-hosts.

A single coder was responsible for the coding of 20 episodes. The coding was completed using Qualtrics survey software to record all variable information. Episodes of both shows were taped and viewed on a digital video recorder. A total of 20 episodes were coded, producing 157 individual stories.

Limitations of this study are focused primarily on the sampling, most notably due to the preference of random sampling by scholars. However, for the purposes of this study a census sample produced significant and material results that enabled appropriate analysis on the subject of news content, quantity, and style.

Results

Comparison of Overall Content and Quantity

RQ1 inquired about the content and quantity of news on both *The View* and *ABC News*, specifically examining how they compared to each other. The sample consisted of 10 episodes per television show, of which only the first 30 minutes of the hourlong show *The View* was included. The sample did not include commercial breaks. The 20 episodes collectively produced 157 stories which were individually coded. As seen in Table 1, the stories produced little comparability between the two shows. *ABC News* had a higher number of stories but also had a higher number of short (30 seconds or less) stories. Although *ABC News* had most of its stories in the 2 to 2:30 minute range, 29 percent of the stories aired on the show lasted less than 30 seconds. Over 50 percent of stories on *The View* ranged from two and half minutes to 4 minutes. *The View* had the same number of stories in the first and second segments and would have presumably done the same in the following segments if the show had not been cut off at 30 minutes. *ABC News* differed from this formula by completing over half of its stories in the first segment. The next three segments varied, with the third segment receiving the second highest number of stories.

Table 1 <i>Comparison of Content and Quantity</i>			
	<i>The View</i>	<i>ABC News</i>	Difference
Total Stories	62	95	33
Stories under 30 seconds	11.2%	29.4%	18.2%
Stories under 2 minutes (including 30 seconds)	30.6%	51.5%	20.9%
Stories over 2 minutes	67.7%	48.4%	19.3%
Stories in first segment	38.7%	51.5%	12.8%

Another comparison showed that out of ten days, only on six days did any stories match between the shows, resulting in only 11 percent (18 of 157) of stories actually directly matching in content. The stories each show produced were put into categories that allowed for comparison. Both shows had most stories in the political category, with each show accounting for a quarter of all news content in the political category. Beyond politics, the similarities were few. The next most frequent news categories for each show were completely different. Figure 1 highlights this difference by showing politics as one of a very few categories where the percentages were even close between the shows. The second and third most frequent news categories for *The View* were entertainment news (22.5%) and celebrity specific news (14.5%). These top three categories accounted for nearly 63 percent of all of the show’s stories. *ABC News* split the remainder of its news more evenly. The second and third most frequent news categories for the show were health and medicine (16.8%) followed by the economy (9.4%). The three top categories combined accounted for less than half of the show’s total stories. Both shows aired stories predominantly in

the national dateline, with *The View* reporting 87.0 percent of its stories in the national dateline while the same dateline accounted for 55.7 percent of stories from *ABC News*.

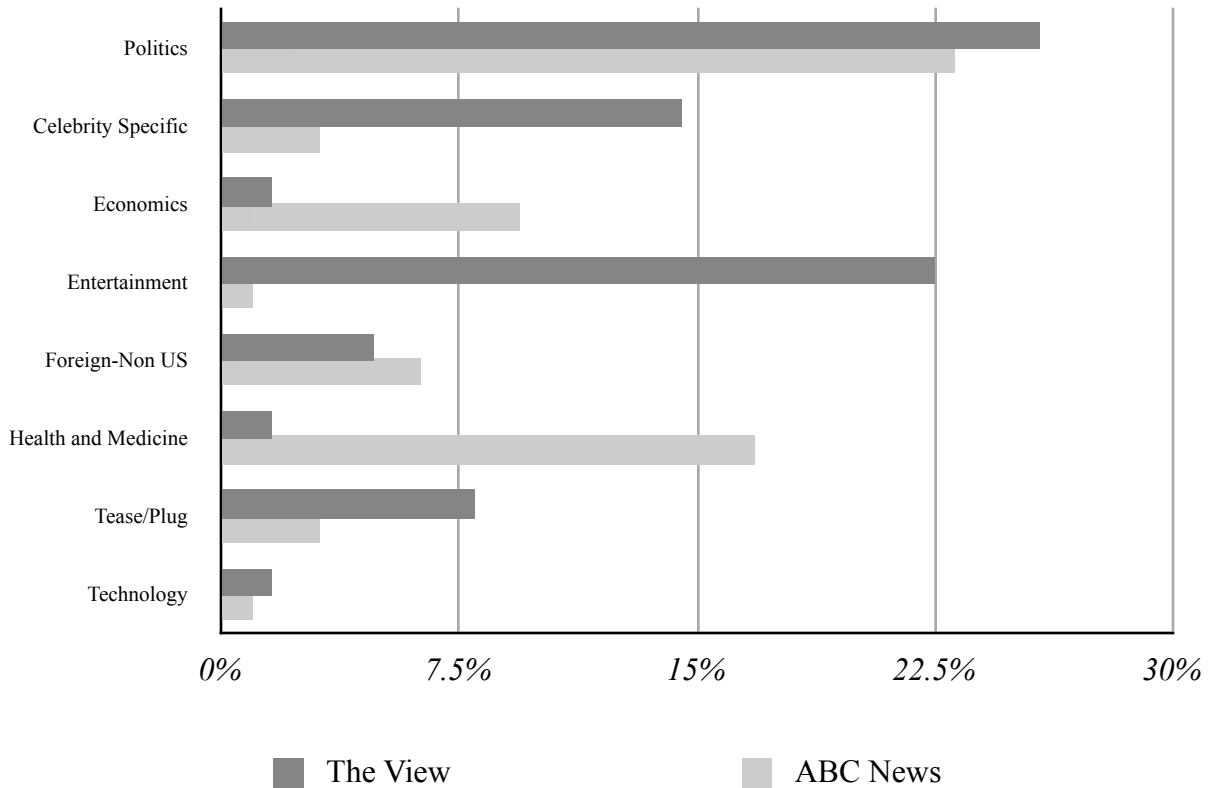


Figure 1. Comparison of News Categories

The result of RQ1 is that, excluding politics, there is no significant comparison in content or quantity of news between *The View* and *ABC News*. There were significant differences, such as subject matter reported and story totals and length of stories.

Comparison of Political Content and Quantity

RQ2 inquired about the content and quantity of political news on both *The View* and *ABC News*. The sample reflected that this particular subject is where the shows have the most in common. Table 2 highlights the similarities by showing that 3 out of the 4 comparisons between

the shows had a difference of 4 percent or less. As previously mentioned, politics was the most frequent news category for both shows. On *The View*, 25 percent of their stories were of a political nature while *ABC News* came in slightly lower at 23 percent. Moreover, all but one of the stories that matched were about politics. Political stories were also the number one news category that both shows used in their first segment. *The View* placed 43 percent of its political stories in the first segment and out of all of the stories in the first segment, 29 percent were in the political category. *ABC News* placed 72 percent of its political stories in the first segment and out of all the stories in the first segment, 32 percent were in the political category. Both shows spent over 2 minutes on their political stories over 75 percent of the time.

Table 2 <i>Comparison of Political Content and Quantity</i>			
	<i>The View</i>	<i>ABC News</i>	Difference
Political Stories	25.8%	23.1%	2.7%
Political Stories placed in first segment	43.7%	72.7%	29%
First segment stories that were in the politics category	29.1%	32.6%	3.5%
Political stories over 2 minutes	81.2%	77.2%	4%

The result of RQ2 is that *The View* and *ABC News* are similar in content and quantity of political stories.

Comparison of Style

RQ3 inquired about the style and delivery of news covered on both *The View* and *ABC News*. The sample reflected a dramatic difference in the style of each show. Co-hosts on *The View* presented stories with opinion 83 percent of the time and with humor 80 percent of the time. Out of 95 stories, *ABC News* only presented with humor once and with opinion five times. While *ABC News* used humor after a story package was completed, the co-hosts on *The View* were often talking over each other to make their jokes, many of which were obviously crafted prior to the show. Only a mere 12 stories escaped punchlines from the co-hosts, three of which are stand-up comedians. Typically on *The View*, the news story was presented in one or two lines by co-host Whoopi Goldberg. From there the co-hosts, seated together around a table, chimed in with opinions, jokes or both. For many stories the co-hosts drew upon life experiences, especially with stories pertaining to families and raising children. Interestingly, when *ABC News* ventured to give an opinion, it happened in a similar fashion as it did on *The View*. After a story package was complete, Diane Sawyer turned to guests seated around her news desk and asked for their opinion. These guests were usually experts of some kind in relation to what they were discussing.

The result of RQ3 is that *The View* and *ABC News* are dramatically different in their style of reporting. However, on the few occasions when *ABC News* did use opinion, it was presented in a similar format as seen on *The View*.

Discussion

Although those dedicated to traditional journalism might believe a sigh of relief is in order based on these results, they should pause before doing so. It does appear a significant gap remains between a traditional nightly news program like *ABC News* and an entertainment show like *The View*, yet the similarities are much more interesting to examine. The results indicate that the line between journalism and entertainment is increasingly blurred, which requires the immediate attention of journalists.

Specifically, the results showed that *ABC News* had an overall higher number of stories over ten episodes than did *The View*. There are two possible explanations for this finding. First, *The View* is actually a one hour long show and only the first thirty minutes were coded. That may explain the second reason for a smaller amount of stories: *ABC News* completed almost a third of its stories in under 30 seconds. Basically, on *The View*, stories were generally longer, which resulted in less stories overall. In question is the significance of this finding. Is it better to have several more stories, even if they are very short and do not contain a substantial amount of information? Or is it better to go in depth on each story, exploring many avenues of its significance? This study did not examine those questions, though they ought to be considered for future research.

Another interesting trend found in the results was the second and third categories each show had the most stories in. For *ABC News* those categories were health and medicine and the economy. *The View* had entertainment come in second and celebrity specific news come in third. The first assumption would be to link these results to the perception of each shows' audience. A

closer look examines that possibility. *ABC News* boasts a large number of viewers, holding consistently above seven million. But only about a quarter of those viewers are between the ages of 25-54, the key demographic for ratings (Abcnews.com, 2010). *The View* has a much smaller amount of viewers, though it is probably fair to assume daytime ratings are always significantly lower than evening ratings. Out of its over three million viewers, the same amount (about 27 percent) are women in the 25-54 age bracket (abcmedianet.com, 2010). The distinction between viewers in general and women viewers might explain the difference in news content the two shows have. A further study into the ratings might find that the remaining viewers of each audience might tip significantly differently on either side of that 25-54 bracket. Because ratings were not a focus of this study, the conclusions based on them cannot be properly analyzed, though future research would benefit to examine the subject.

The most significant finding of this study was the similarity of political coverage the two shows had. That politics was not only the most covered category but also the category most led with (as in the first segment) shows that both *The View* and *ABC News* recognize the importance and newsworthiness of the topic. Although *The View* fell short in reporting other news as much as *ABC News* did, they did not do so in the most important news category. Additionally, the time similarity in placement and time allotment show either that *The View* is adopting traditional journalism practices or that politics has transcended news and moved into the entertainment realm. Regardless, the similarity in this subject shows that the two formats are growing closer together. Is it the sole point of convergence for the two formats, ie does the buck stop here? Or is this a precursor to entertainment shows taking on more and more traditional news stories? Future research might address that question in order to more adequately fill the research gap.

Overall, this study is consistent with findings from other studies. For instance, one study that compared content in nightly news programs and *The Daily Show* found that there was a similar amount of political content, though *The Daily Show* was less informative (Fox, Koloen, Shain, 2007, 223). Although the political content of both televisions shows in this study were not measured on how informative they were, the two shows did have similar, sometimes identical, political coverage. This finding, along with another previous study that found soft news informed society to a minimal acceptable level necessary for responsible voting, shows that the public, regardless of the format, is learning about politics at an acceptable level. Political coverage is the one area that transcends almost all outlets, highlighting its significance. But the importance of political coverage is not a new discovery for journalists. The most successful way of presenting that information is, however, what is new and what must be further researched. Journalists must pay attention to the ways the public prefers to receive its information about politics so that it does not get left behind in an ever-changing market.

Extremely apparent was the use of humor and opinion on *The View*. This correlates with research conducted by Fox, Koloen and Shain (2007) which found that humor and laughter were used to deflect the negative nature of the story content on *The Daily Show*. Over 80 percent of stories on *The View* were also presented with humor. The use of humor might make it easier for the audience to absorb the often disheartening political reports, which might also explain the continued success of both shows.

One study that did not correlate with the findings in this study was Ferri's 2010 study which highlighted a new phenomena in which shows use celebrity opinion in their news stories.

This study found that even on the entertainment show, celebrity opinion was only used 11 percent of the time while on the news show it was used only 5 percent of the time. Researchers did not consider this a significant trend in the sample that was coded. This study also did not find a significant amount of entertainment news being reported on the traditional news program, dodging yet another common concern from journalists and researchers.

Although *The View* may join the ranks of other television talk shows that scholars dislike, it is important to note that *The View* has set itself apart both in ratings but also in being so sensational that they often appear in other newscasts across television. That is to say, scholars may dislike *The View*, but they certainly cannot ignore it.

One of the biggest concerns for scholars concerning entertainment shows presenting news has been the ethics of doing so. Shows like *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* use comedic and satirical methods that often purposefully misrepresent or take news out of context, creating questions about integrity and factuality. These issues are less present on *The View*. Although the co-hosts have certainly lost any air of objectivity, the factuality of their reports is less abused than on the other shows, mostly because they rely on stand-up type of comedy, which means they tend to comment on the news rather than change or create it. It is true that the journalistic value of objectivity has been discarded on *The View*, but some might argue that it has been replaced by an authenticity that audiences prefer. However, considering that *ABC News* used opinion only once in the commentary, it is fair to say that objectivity is still alive and well among traditional news shows. Yet, the one similarity in style between the shows was the format in which it was presented. Both shows presented opinion most often as part of a group around a table, apparently imitating the intimacy of viewers' conversations with family and friends.

Although it is only a small correlation between the styles of the two shows, it is interesting that opinion is given in the same way on both shows. Does this indicate that the audience prefers opinion en masse or could it perhaps indicate that anchors and co-hosts are more comfortable giving opinion as part of a group in a conversational style?

The study was limited in that episodes and transcripts of *The View* are not available beyond the most recent episodes, usually about five in total. Although some clips are available online through websites such as YouTube, entire shows are not. The same cannot be said about *ABC News* because they offer transcripts and, with certain research subscriptions, past episodes can be made available. Another limitation of the study was that the specific content in each unit of analysis (story) was not studied. Only the most basic information about each story was recorded, leaving a gap to discern very specific differences between the shows.

Future research could focus on learning about these specific differences in news on *The View*. For example, it would be beneficial to know details in how news is presented on *The View*. Is the content factual, objective or ever taken out of context? Furthermore, how exactly does the content match up to what is offered from a traditional news outlet? Is there a difference or skew to how it is presented? These questions would better examine the journalistic value of news offered on *The View*. Scholars would also benefit by knowing what sort of journalism commentary is present on the show and if it relates to the way shows like *The Daily Show* are criticizing journalists.

As previously mentioned, there are many tipping points for further research that this study has provided. Exploration of these topics will more adequately fill the research gap. This study has provided a baseline for future research into *The View* and other entertainment shows.

On October 14, the words of *The View* co-host Whoopie Goldberg summed it up best. “The president’s approval ratings may be in the toilet, but not ours.” The quote encompasses two principal reasons research about *The View* is important. The show has enjoyed 14 years of success and currently shows no sign of slowing down. They have excellent ratings and are often the subject of the news themselves based on the conversation they so artfully create on their show. They are also pioneering a new way of covering politics that, at least in quantity, is similar to that of traditional news outlets. These reasons, among many others, highlight the need for research about the show and its methods. This study began that research by comparing the content, quantity, and style of news on *ABC News* and *The View*. Although the stark differences that were found may be a comfort to some, it is important to recognize the similarities. In a time of unprecedented competition presented by bloggers, cable news channels, citizen journalists, and now entertainment shows, journalists must find a way to identify new trends and consumer needs in order to adapt to them. It is not the first time they have had to do so, and it will not be the last. Although caution is advised, remaining unchanged is not. In the wise words of the American Poet Peter Viereck, “Reality is that which, when you don’t believe it, doesn’t go away.” These changes are not going away, it is up to journalists to find the best way to capitalize on them while remaining true to their proud history and tradition.

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Appendix 1

View vs. News Unit of Instrument Survey

Q1 What date did the story air?

- Oct 11 (6)
- Oct 12 (7)
- Oct 13 (8)
- Oct 14 (9)
- Oct 15 (10)
- Oct 18 (11)
- Oct 19 (12)
- Oct 20 (13)
- Oct 21 (14)
- Oct 22 (15)
- Oct 25 (16)
- Oct 26 (17)

Q2 Which show?

- The View (1)
- ABC News with Diane Sawyer (2)

Q3 What time segment did the story appear?

- First Segment (1)
- Second Segment (2)
- Third Segment (3)
- Fourth Segment (4)
- Fifth Segment (5)

Q4 How much time did the story receive?

- < 30 seconds (1)
- >31 seconds but < 60 seconds (2)
- >61 seconds but < 90 seconds (3)
- > 91 seconds but (4)
- >121 seconds but (5)
- >181 seconds but (6)
- >241 seconds but (7)
- >301 seconds (5min) (8)

Q5 Which news category did the story fall under?

- Politics (1)
- Economics (2)
- Foreign-Non US (3)
- U.S. Foreign Affairs (4)
- Crime/Law (5)
- Environment (6)
- Health and Medicine (7)
- Lifestyle (8)
- Entertainment (books, movies, television) (9)
- Celebrity specific (10)
- Education (11)
- Military (12)
- Profile (non celebrity) (13)
- Religion (14)
- Science (15)
- Sports (16)
- Technology (17)
- Transportation (18)
- Weather (19)
- Tease/Plug (20)
- Business (21)
- Other (22)
- Family (23)
- Food (24)

Q6 What was the story dateline?

- International (1)
- Washington D.C. (2)
- National (3)
- Regional (4)
- Other (5)

Q7 What was the story title?

Q8 Was the humor inherently present in the story, i.e. not solely reliant on the humor of the presenters?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q9 Was the story presented with humor of the presenters?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q10 Was the story presented with the opinion of the presenters?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q11 Was the story presented with the opinion of celebrities other than the presenters?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)