

Sweeps Ratings Project Hybrid Experiment - Spring 2010

Thanks for your interest in helping evaluate student performance during this ratings period. This Ratings Packet PDF you have downloaded is an experiment to see if a "paper/electronic" hybrid approach makes participation easier for some volunteers who have problems with the purely "online" ratings system and its streaming video.

This packet contains...

- Ratings Period announcement to students
- 2-page Explanation, Release & Demographic data form (*must be returned*)
- Five (5) blank 2-page Daily Ratings Sheets (*must be returned*)

The goal of the students' *News 7* operation is to be THE local television newscast for the 14 Vermont towns and the four New Hampshire towns served by the Charter Cable TV system out of Danville. We don't expect their broadcasts to be "network" quality, but we do expect them to compare favorably with other local television newscasts (Channels 3, 5, 22 & 44). Instructors will examine the broadcasts with a fine tooth (and very technical) comb. We'd like you volunteers to give the students feedback from the perspective of "real-world" television viewers.

For instance...

- Do you understand the stories? Are they clear, concise, engaging, and make sense? Is there something missing that would help with your comprehension?
- What about the pictures and sound? Do they serve the story-telling goals?
- What do you think about the weathercast?
- What's your overall impression of the broadcast? Give us a short sentence along with a letter grade or number.

"A" would be high-quality coverage & broadcast (90 to 100 pts) - *"You're giving the pro's a run for their money."*

"B" would be good coverage & broadcast (80 to 90 pts) - *"Solid effort, needs more polish."*

"C" would be average coverage & broadcast (70 to 80 pts) - *"Adequate effort, I'll watch because it's local."*

"D" would be bad coverage & broadcast (60 to 70 pts) - *"Whew, this one was bad, but I'll give 'em another shot."*

"F" would be unwatchable (0 to 59 pts) - *"Sorry, can't look. I'm flipping the dial."*

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Print-out, fill-out & sign *Release & Demographic* data form
- 2) Print-out a 2-page *Daily Ratings Sheet* for every newscast you score
- 3) Watch the newscast...
 - a) Online anytime at www.lyndonstate.edu/news7/archive.htm
 - b) On KATV Charter Cable 7 at 5:30p or 10p the day of the newscast

THEN

- 4a) Mail completed *Release* and *Ratings Sheets* to...

Tim Lewis - Television Studies
Lyndon State College
1001 College Road - PO Box 919
Lyndonville, VT 05851

OR

- 4b) Sign-up and log-in to the Online Ratings page and use your paper notes to enter the data electronically at (<http://155.42.126.4/news7/index.php>)

SPRING '10 MID-SEMESTER RATINGS PERIOD

15 March – 19 March 2010

WELCOME TO WEEK 8! The News 7 team experiences the first ratings period for Spring 2010. Your newscasts will be evaluated for content, quality and execution by a very select audience; your instructors & community volunteers! This will be the time to show us what you can do - both individually and collectively. Besides figuring into your final grades, these shows should provide us with material that can be entered into contests and/or resumes.

→ Here's the stuff you've heard before BUT it still stands!!! -trl

• "LOCAL, LOCAL, LOCALIZE..."

When it comes to news in 21st century, the Radio Television News Directors' Association says, "Localism won't be your station's strongest brand, it'll be the only brand." Therefore, we will be looking for local content generated by the News 7 team. There should be very little, if any, CNN content in our programs that is not directly tied to our viewing area (via reaction, sidebar, or total package overhaul, etc.)

• "GET ME RE-WRITE!"

The Associated Press wire generally carries old news - rewrites of stories already published in papers, or aired on other stations. Therefore, wire stories should be advanced. If they can't be advanced, and must be used, they must be re-written so they are not recognized as the same stories viewers heard on WSTJ, VPR, or other AP outlets.

In the same vein, News 7 stories found in the *Caledonian Record* or other newspapers should be advanced or re-written for 5:30pm and illustrated with quality video.

• "SHOW ME THE VIDEO" & "TELL ME A STORY"

• **WHAT'S BAD?** Regurgitated AP copy & Cal Record stories; jump cuts; factual errors; cuts on zooms; swallowing press releases hook, line & sinker; flash frames; lack of natural sound; straight SOT's; wallpaper video; pictures that don't relate to the words being read; Voice-Overs that don't end smoothly.

• **WHAT'S GOOD?** Exclusive News 7 stories; video promo's; stories with sequences and a beginning, middle & end; video for the 5:30 opening; Good follow-ups of local stories; some VO before a bite – building exteriors, production shots of News 7 reporters talking with sources & interview subjects; Natural sound package's; varied focal lengths on different bites from the same talking head; good video under credits or varied tech shots; snappy NewsBreaks with 3 pieces of video; Local sports coverage - team and people features & game video.

HOW TO DO IT WELL? Review all directives & suggestions made during the semester by instructors (production quota's, for instance!) - Do some story research – Put some material in the can by getting secondary bites while out on stories – Think outside "the box" and inside "the coverage squiggle" to come up with some nifty pieces for "Sweeps Week."



GOOD LUCK!

Tim Lewis



News 7 Sweeps Ratings Project – Mid-SPRING 2010

Monday, March 15th through Friday, March 19th, 2010

Tim Lewis
M.A. Education/Broadcast Journalism
Associate Professor of Television Studies
Lyndon State College

PURPOSE:

We are inviting Charter Cable television and Internet subscribers to participate in this research project because we would like to give LSC-TV students feedback from real viewers about the students' nightly news reports. These reports are broadcast on Charter Communication's Cable Channel 7 at 5:30pm and available over the internet at www.lyndonstate.edu/news7. We want to see whether there is a valid and reliable way to assess the quality of local news coverage by using audience members.

PROCEDURES:

Those agreeing to participate will watch *News 7* broadcasts during one week at 5:30pm (when it is presented live on Channel 7); at 10pm (when it is replayed on tape) or streamed over the Internet. Each viewer may select and rate up to 5 stories and the weathercast from within each broadcast. The segments will be rated by indicating (via checkmark) the quality of the item (from 5=*Great* to 1=*Bad*). Participants will be asked to identify the story selected and when possible, the reporter of the story. Viewers may also make comments about the stories they select. Viewers may choose not to rate any individual story, but **MUST** give the newscast they watch an Overall Rating using either a letter grade, or by giving a numerical grade. General comments about the newscast and story suggestions will be solicited.

PARTICIPATION & BENEFITS:

All participation is voluntary. No possible risks are anticipated. There is no compensation. There may be no personal benefit for participating in this study. However, it is hoped that future broadcast journalism students could benefit from this study by having a better understanding of how their efforts are perceived by viewers. There is no penalty to anyone who decides not participate. Nor will anyone be penalized if he or she decides to stop participation at any time during the research project.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Records of participation in this research project will be maintained and kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Participants will be asked to fill out a demographic profile to go with their Daily Ratings Sheets. However, all identifying information will be removed when results and comments are tabulated and posted for student review, or published in a report. In the event of any report or publication from this study, the identity of participants will not be disclosed.

QUESTIONS:

Questions are encouraged. If there are any questions about this research project, please contact: Tim Lewis at (802) 626-6209. Questions about the rights of research subjects may be addressed to the Human Subjects Office, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Lyndon State College.

Viewer Name (printed): _____

(Signature of Viewer)

(Date)

(Signature of Legally Authorized Representative *if necessary*)

(Date)

(++ Over ++)

FAIR INFORMATION PRACTICES ACT:

I have discussed the above points, including the information required by the Fair Information Practices Act, with the subjects or their legally authorized representative, using a translator when necessary. It is my opinion that the subjects understand the risks, benefits, and obligations involved in participation in this project.

Tim Lewis

(Signature of Investigator)

3/15/2010
(Date)

News 7 Ratings Demographic Profile

Viewer/Rater

Name _____

Female

Address _____

Male

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-Mail: _____ Phone: _____

Date of Birth: Month _____ Year _____

or

- Age: (0-13 years)
- (14-19 years)
- (20-34 years)
- (35-54 years)
- (55-64 years)
- (65+ years)

Occupation: _____

CODE NUMBER:

LSC-TV News 7 Daily Ratings Sheet

5:30pm Newscast for...

Code Number: _____

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

_____ Date

_____ Date

_____ Date

_____ Date

_____ Date

Individual Stories *(optional)*

• Please select & rate up to 5 stories by checking a square to indicate quality (5=great to 1=bad) - Please identify the story selected & reporter (when possible) - At a minimum, the **Overall Newscast Rating** section on the reverse must be completed. *Thanks!*

1) Story _____ Reporter _____

Interesting?

Very Not

 5 4 3 2 1

Clear & Concise?

Very Not

 5 4 3 2 1

Audio/Visuals?

Great Bad

 5 4 3 2 1

Comments:

2) Story _____ Reporter _____

Interesting?

Very Not

 5 4 3 2 1

Clear & Concise?

Very Not

 5 4 3 2 1

Audio/Visuals?

Great Bad

 5 4 3 2 1

Comments:

3) Story _____ Reporter _____

Interesting?

Very Not

 5 4 3 2 1

Clear & Concise?

Very Not

 5 4 3 2 1

Audio/Visuals?

Great Bad

 5 4 3 2 1

Comments:

4) Story _____ Reporter _____

Interesting?

Very Not

 5 4 3 2 1

Clear & Concise?

Very Not

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Audio/Visuals?

Great Bad

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5) Story _____ Reporter _____

Interesting?

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Great Bad

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Comments:

LSC-TV News 7 Daily Ratings Sheet

OVERALL NEWSCAST RATING

(MANDATORY)

Please use letter grade (+ or -) or numerical grade

"A" or _____ points
High-quality coverage & broadcast (90 to 100 pts)
"You're giving the pro's a run for their money."

"B" or _____ points
Good coverage & broadcast (80 to 90 pts)
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"C" or _____ points
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"D" or _____ points
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"Whew, this one was bad, but I'll give 'em another shot."

"F" or _____ points
Unwatchable (0 to 59 pts) - *"Sorry, I'm flipping the dial."*

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5 4 3 2 1

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Great Bad

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Comments:

Other General Comments on Newscast and/or Anchors:

- What breaking stories did not appear on tonight's broadcast?

- What important local issues or interesting people should *News 7* cover?

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Audio/Visuals?

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Comments:

4) Story _____ Reporter _____

Interesting?

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Clear & Concise?

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Audio/Visuals?

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