



## PROJECT FOR EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM

### **PEJ Releases News Coverage Index Data Set**

The Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ) is pleased to launch a new aspect of its research: raw data sets made available to scholars for further research analysis. The first set to be released is that of the 2007 News Coverage Index. It is available for download on PEJ's website, [www.journalism.org/by\\_the\\_numbers/datasets](http://www.journalism.org/by_the_numbers/datasets).

The PEJ News Coverage Index captures and analyzes some four dozen news outlets in real time to determine what is being covered and what is not in the national U.S. news media. The Index launched in January of 2007 and has run continuously since. Weekly findings are released every Tuesday in a concise narrative that charts the top stories of the week, trajectory of the coverage, and differences among media sectors.

PEJ is now making the first year's worth of data available to other researchers. The 2007 data set totals 70,737 stories: 6,559 newspaper stories, 6,520 online stories, 21,320 stories from network television, 22,823 stories on cable news, and 13,515 stories from radio programs. The data set is offered in SPSS through the use of zip files and is accompanied by the coding scheme and other explanatory material.

In the future, PEJ will make data sets of the Index available in six-month increments, starting six-months after the time period analyzed. Thus, data from the first six months of 2008 will be available in January of 2009.

In all, in 2007, the Index sample includes 48 outlets (35 each week-day with some rotation), every Sunday through Friday. The key variables include source, story date, big story, broad story topic, placement, geographic focus, story word count, and duration of broadcast story. The outlets studied come from the five main sectors of mainstream media—print, network TV, cable, online, and radio. They include evening and morning network news, several hours of daytime and prime time cable news each day, newspapers from around the country, the top online news sites, and radio, including headlines, long form programs and talk.

The News Coverage Index was designed by PEJ Director Tom Rosenstiel and Deputy Director Amy Mitchell and an advisory team of nine academic and commercial researchers, including Steve Lacy of the Michigan State University, Esther Thorson of the University of Missouri—Columbia and Dan Riffe of University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill. It required the creation of proprietary software and a new website. The index report is written by PEJ Associate Director Mark Jurkowitz. The coding team of thirteen professionals works 24 hours behind the news cycle. They work with content supervisor, Paul Hitlin, and a supervising research methodologist, Hong Ji.

PEJ is non-partisan and non-political and is a part of the Pew Research Center in Washington, D.C., a "fact tank" funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.