



# Selected Survey Results: Impact Measurement for Mission-Driven Media

Survey URL: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=lnQlxWLFQ0T8MsyvrSbefw\_3d\_3d

Questions? Contact Jessica Clark at jessica@buildtheecho.net

A note on methodology: 20 organizations fully responded to the survey; some skipped certain questions. Percentages are calculated according to total answers per question. Respondents included:

Air America Media Applied Research Center (ARC) Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc. Brave New Films Center for Independent Media (CIM) Democracy Now! Gotham Gazette GRITtv In These Times (ITT) Link TV Ms. Magazine (Ms) Mother Jones (MoJo) The Nation Making Contact/National Radio Project (NRP) The American Prospect (TAP) New Voices in Independent Journalism (NVIJ) rabble.ca The SuperSpade The UpTake Workers Independent News (WIN) The Young Turks

### METRICS

1. What financial benchmarks do you use to measure your organization's impact? Please mark all that apply:

- donations: 81%
- grants: 61.9%
- subscriptions: 52.4%
- advertising revenue: 42.9%
- memberships: 19%
- sales of related merchandise: 19%
- Other:
  - CIM: "The Center consistently tracks on a monthly basis the scope and impact of the stories produced by New Journalist Fellows by using "key performance indicators".
  - The UpTake: "Video viewership"
  - The Young Turks: "Number of views on our You Tube channel. The number of people that come to our website. The number of people that listen to our XM radio show."
  - TAP: "Web traffic and monetization"
  - MoJo: "These aren't all "financial" per se, but: subscriptions, web traffic, email newsletter subscribers, newsstand sales, media appearances, in-bound links... More qualitatively, we like to see our stories become part of the narrative -- for instance, our bureau chief David Corn was the first to report John McCain's comment that it was 'fine" with him if US troops were in Iraq "for a hundred years." Within 48 hours of David's blog post, subsequent pick up by HuffPo, etc., that comment was everywhere."
  - Berrett-Koehler: "Newsletter mailing list; sales (to bookstores, universities, organizations and, individually, via website, Amazon, etc.)"

- 2. What tools do you use to measure your primary audience?
  - Common answers include subscriptions, newsstand sales, how many stations pick up the show (GRITtv), Arbitron, reader surveys, etc...
  - 6 outlets mention web traffic as an important indicator, 3 use Google Analytics (MoJo, Rabble.ca, Berrett-Koehler), *The Nation* uses ComScore, and the Young Turks rely on YouTube estimates.
  - Other noteworthy responses:
    - WIN: "Arbitron in major commercial markets; donations on community radio stations"
    - *Ms* pays special attention to women-oriented platforms: "memberships, distribution at women's conferences, use in women's studies classrooms"
    - Link: "audience and impact are measured by annual national survey of Link viewers"
    - The Young Turks: "XM does do ratings but they give us no details as to how they acquire those ratings and listener numbers. You Tube does their own audience and demographic breakdowns that are laid out well on their website"
    - Democracy Now! says: "...We have no way of counting the numbers who actually watch/listen, but estimate that we have an audience of million. Our host, Amy Goodman, is recognized wherever she goes."
    - Rabble.ca: "Google analytics, AW Stats and feedburner"
    - NRP: "By 1. surveying our stations (the weekly and occasional ones) and using their stats and membership info 2. For those stations who don't have good stats we use radio locator to gauge signal coverage, population and take a very small percentage of that as estimate."
- 3. Do these tools offer an accurate picture of your audience?
  - 78.6% say yes
  - 21.4% say no
  - 4 n/a, explained:
    - GRITTV: "Only in terms of numbers. Demographics are harder to pin down."
    - TAP: "Partially"
    - rabble.ca: "More or less, we think!"
    - NRP: "We'd like a much more accurate picture"
- 4. If no, how would you improve these tools to offer a more accurate picture of your audience?
  - WIN: "The news product is too short to accurately measure audience on community radio; not sure how to do go about getting better numbers"
  - TAP: "Seeking ways to capture total "readership" beyond subscription and newsstand sales."
  - Democracy Now!: "Since we will never be able to get numbers of actual audience since we are on so many different stations, most of which have no sort of Arbitron, the best we could do is to ask everyone who watches or hears the show to send us an email to let us know they are listening, but that would probably on get a small percentage of response."
  - Air America: "Relatively accurate for a 40 year-old technology."
  - NRP: "We need the people-power to more effectively engage with our station partners. Non-commercial stations need to use Arbitron etc. more consistently"

5. What tools do you use to measure your online audience?

(For example: Google Analytics, Alexa, proprietary software packages, etc...)

- Almost all use Google Analytics, some also use more google tools like stat counter, GRITtv uses BlipTV's analysis of their traffic.
- Other answers of note:
  - "Link TV uses a number of analytic tools to measure our online audience. Urchin(v6) and AW Stats web analytic programs are used to monitor and analyze our entire site traffic, with particular attention to the some 3 million visits per month to our video RSS feeds. Link TV

has developed a website Content Managements System that logs the daily performance of individual videos that are launched by a "click" to play. Google Analytics is used to track non-RSS feed content performance, including referring traffic and user behavior/attributes. To gain modest insight into comparative performance characteristics of other sites in our sectors, we use the free services of Compete.com."

- The Young Turks: "Google analytics for our website. And the numbers our partner sites provide us, like AOL and You Tube."
- MoJo: "Google Analytics. We do look at Alexa; it seems deeply flawed but is presently the only basis for easy comparative information with other sites. (By the way, we don't think of either the magazine readership or online readership as our "primary" audience -- they are both our primary audience. Our secondary audience would be, for instance, the folks who see David Corn on TV or a post about a MJ story.)"
- The Nation: "Google Analytics, Quantcast, comScore"
- Berrett-Koehler: "Google Analytics, Aweber auto-responder technology, Constant Contact"
- 6. Do these tools offer a satisfactory picture of your online audience?
  - 13 (72.2%) said yes
  - 5 (27.8%) said no
  - 2 n/a
    - The UpTake: "Tracking our video views on sites like Blip.tv and YouTube currently give us the best picture of our audience."
    - MoJo: "I would like mo' better comparative information..."
- 7. If no, how would you improve these tools to offer a more accurate picture of your online audience?
  - GRITtv: "It's very difficult for us to know who is watching the show. Again, we have numbers but beyond that very little information."
  - Link TV: "We would like to have analytic tools that can help us better answer two key questions: which visits to our video RSS feeds result in downloads of associated video content; and which visits to our site's video content players results in clicks that launch the videos. Regarding RSS video downloads, we are experimenting with paid hosting of select video feed content with Amazon's new S3 service. These experiments should allow us to establish benchmarks to estimate our video RSS feed download performance from our free host services, that does not provide such metrics. Regarding better understanding video player user click-to-play performance, we are searching for a means to create an event generator within our site's Flash video player whose output will be logged by our Google Analytics service. This function would allow Google Analytics to track which visits to specific video player pages result in the video being launched. Further, this capability would allow for more meaningful performance tracking of our GoogleAd and other online marketing campaigns."
  - The UpTake: "Since video can and should live in more places than just one website, tracking views is difficult. We need to develop better tracking tools for video views. Right now it's all done by tracking multiple sources by hand."
  - Air America: "These tools are about 70 percent accurate, at best. Google Analytics seems to be the strongest with respect to accurate site traffic information, but it is a big challenge to find good analytics for demographic information at a reasonable cost."

### INFLUENCE

- 1. Please rate the importance of the following indicators in measuring your outlet's reputation:
  - Least popular indicator is awards; most popular indicator is reprints/syndication.
  - Other:

- The UpTake: "Audience, member participation"
- TAP: "Readership and subscription benchmarks"
- NRP: "how we define 'newsmakers' is different than most"
- 2. What external coverage coverage of your organization do you track, if any?
  - Common responses: excerpts, reprints, Facebook friends, referring/inbound links, references in other writings, Twitter, YouTube views, blogosphere references. Other:
    - Democracy Now! " reprints, numbers of newspapers running Amy's column, sales of Amy's books, inclusion of our work other news outlets on-line, on radio and TV"
    - MoJo: "media appearances for MoJo editors/writers/reporters, RSS feed subscribers"
- 3. Please rank the importance of the following indicators when evaluating your public profile online:
  - Overall Traffic is the highest ranked indicator
  - Interestingly, "stickiness" is lowest ranked indicator
- 4. What are the difficulties in tracking or understanding your organization's reputation or influence?
  - WIN: "accurate account of stations that use our material (non profit and community)"
  - CIM: "Dealing with online news it is difficult (although improving everyday) to track the demographics of your users, or to know how the reader may or may not be benefiting from your site."
  - GRITtv: "Very hard to know how large our online audience actually is. Given that the show exists in various formats it is difficult to measure the net impact of the show."
  - The UpTake: "When pushing a distributive model, i.e. when posting videos in as many places as possible, tracking the success can be very difficult. We rely on our many partnerships to track our perceived reputation."
  - TAP: "Not all impact is attributed. Very often news outlets source our content but fail to offer attribution"
  - The Young Turks: "When you do a radio or internet show, it's very hard to tell exactly how much influence you have. It's easier to track a written piece if others quote it or reference it. But did we really have some influence on a topic because a lot of people heard or saw something on our show and it stayed with them? That's a hell of a thing to track. We do our best and hope that it winds up affecting some people and leading them in the right direction."
  - TAP: "Limited resources to commission studies; limited participation in self-generated surveys"
  - ARC: "Tracking according better demographics."
  - Democracy Now!: "Not much difficulty. Mentioned earlier Amy approached by listeners constantly, recipient of numerous awards, asked to appear as guest on mainstream TV shows as spokesperson, books on best sellers lists, hundreds of invitations to speak each year, raises millions of dollars for the stations who air us each year audience donations to their local stations as a result of our program."
  - MoJo: "Reputation is just such a squishy thing to measure -- and that's the difficulty. For instance, I would bet any amount of money that opening a DC bureau (and bucking the downsizing trend in newsrooms), hiring David Corn to be bureau chief, making a big deal of that news for both PR and fundraising, and then coming through with multiple big stories this year have had a hugely positive impact on Mother Jones' reputation, particularly on the East Coast. But don't ask me to prove it."
  - Rabble.ca: "Money and time are two of our primary challenges. Tracking how pieces—stories or podcasts—are reprinted or distributed is very difficult."
  - Berrett-Koehler: "No way to measure word of mouth. We are very concerned with creating "Units of Change" but, as yet, have found no way to measure this effect."
  - The Nation: "Don't know the demographics of web users."

- 5. Please give us a brief example of an external response that changed your internal planning or projects:
  - Ms, "contacts from readers on particular subject matters indicating intense interest influences editorial decisions"
  - WIN: "meetings with union activists who indicated that commercial radio was the place for us most members neither use the web, not are they listeners to non commercial radio"
  - Center for Ind Media, "We have realized from past experiences that using polls on our site is a great tool for knowing who our audience is."
  - GRITtv: "We have a large email subscriber list and for a number of weeks we were sending out a daily email about that day's show. We started losing subscribers and cut the group email to twice a week. After we reduced the number of emails we stopped losing subscribers."
  - Link TV: "requests from teachers and students for curriculum around Link TV programs led us to get a Knight grant to build KnowTheNews.tv, an online toolset which uses our global news programs to teach news literacy."
  - The UpTake: "Originally we had not planned to do so much live video coverage, instead focusing on produced video stories. The popularity of our live video features, tracked by audience views and direct responses, drove us to invest more time and energy in more live coverage. Now we get asked regularly by more traditional media outlets if we are going to be covering events live or not. Some media outlets are deciding to send one of their correspondents to an event or not depending upon if we cover it live. This additional external response about our live feeds proves the success we are having in building relationships with traditional media."
  - The Young Turks: "When people respond to our interviews (by posting them on their website or quoting them), it pushes us to have more newsmakers on. This is a case where you can see the impact a segment on our show has on the national conversation. So, that naturally encourages us to do more along those lines."
  - ARC, "A recent comment asked for greater analysis and less new briefs, so we added more analysis to our daily news."
  - Democracy Now, "suggestions from audience of ways to improve our web site and offer increased functionality."
  - Berrett-Koehler, "We do a lot of this. For all of our books, we poll BK stakeholders—authors, investors, staff, readers, community members—before choosing both title and cover image. For our new Whitepaper Series, we polled this same group before deciding on both title and pricing. Additionally, every five years we hold a "Future Search" meeting, whereby all stakeholders are invited to contribute their thoughts on where Berrett-Koehler is and should be going which, in turn, is reflected in our business plans."
  - NRP: "the favorable response to certain events on Facebook have caused to make useful adjustments beforehand—moving to a larger venue for instance."

### MISSION

- 1. What is your media outlet's business model?
  - 14 non-profit
  - 4 for-profit (Young Turks, Air America, Berrett-Koehler, The Nation)
  - 2 combos (WIN, GRITtv)
- 2. How do YOU define your organization's mission? Examples below:
  - GRITTV: "To create participatory media and a forum for progressive voices every week."
  - Link Media: "Link deals with root causes, helping Americans make connections between their own lives and the greater world, inspiring viewers to take action."
  - The UpTake: "The UpTake has advanced the frontier of news gathering through social media. ...

The site is built on a social networking and video publishing platform that allows us to scale our coverage and organize our citizen journalists. We use ...cell phone cameras loaded with live broadcasting software to instantly publish our reports to the web."

- Democracy Now! says it "has pioneered the largest public media collaboration in the country." for "media reforms that protect free speech and public media"
- ARC: "To popularize the need for racial justice and prepare people to fight for it. By telling the stories of everyday people, ARC is a voice for unity and fairness in the structures that affect our lives."
- MoJo will use "whichever media platforms will get the impact job done."
- BNF: one word—"activism"
- Air America: "We are a progressive and profitable multimedia company with an entertaining independent voice. Our mission is to to take a leadership role and become the most relevant, provocative, entertaining and independent voice that people listen, read and view through multiple distribution systems"
- Berrett-Koehler: "A major theme of our books is 'Opening Up New Space.' They challenge conventional thinking, introduce new ideas, and foster positive change...At the core of our approach is stewardship, which we define as a deep sense of responsibility to administer the company for the benefit of all of our 'stakeholder' groups: authors, customers, employees, investors, service providers, and the communities and environment around us."
- WIN: "The news will be a source of hope and inspiration because it will enable listeners to hear from people and groups who are actively addressing their concerns." And repeatedly mentions building community.

3. Please rate the following social and political goals in terms of importance to your organization's overall mission:

- Most of the options we listed were ranked "very important"
- Building audiences is a generally important theme, suggesting that old standards remain true. The most popular "very important" answer was "reach/influence/build progressive audiences" with 17 out of 20 respondents ranking that "very important"; reaching/influencing both general and targeted audiences were ranked as "very important" by 14 respondents:
- Other highly ranking very important answers: create new models and opportunities for media distribution (15); affect policy (14)
- Only one outlet marked an answer "not important." ARC said "create new models and opportunities for media distribution" was not important.
- Two new goals
  - The UpTake: "train and organize anyone to become citizen journalists"
  - Jay Harris of MoJo wrote "affect other media -- very important"

4. Please give us a brief example from the past year of a story or media project from your outlet that successfully met your social/political goals?

- Ms: Kathy Spillar gave example of their investigative report on anti-affirmative action campaigner Ward Connerly. Their report was picked up by PBS and "other national media outlets" and "Connerly was defeated in Colorado and blocked from ballot in 3 states."
- WIN's coverage of nonunion construction worker death had the goal of changing rules for housing rehab and resulted in "better construction, safer workplaces"
- Link's daily program *Mosaic* is an interesting new model. It "draws from 30 different national TV newscasts in the Middle East to present a cross-section of perspectives on the region that are not available in the US media." They also say it serves a global audience.
- The UpTake's "coverage of the Republican National Convention proved our model of collaborative journalism. During the 5 days of the RNC, our team of many dozens of citizen journalists produced

more than 160 videos" and their videos were viewed by over 1 million people.

- The Young Turks claim they have changed the dialogue about Fox News, mainstreaming the idea that the outlet is not fact- but opinion-based. Says Cenk "we have made significant headway into stopping conservative hit pieces disguised as news from entering the mainstream media bloodstream through Fox."
- TAP says they were first to recognize the importance of budding media starlet Rachel Maddow. When they gave her a cover story, "an extensive amount of media flowed from the anointing of her mantle."
- Democracy Now! cites Jena 6 as a turning point. Says Julie Cosby, "Democracy Now! was widely credited for shifting the spotlight on the Jena Six from an episode of small town racial injustice to a national battle for civil rights as hundreds of protesters from around the country gathered in Jena to show their support for the arrested teens."
- Mojo's Jay Harris cites several successful stories of 2008 and says "that's the point of having a staff of good reporters: if indy media can weigh in frequently in ways that draw notice, the tenor of the discussion changes."
- NVIJ's Linda Jue mentions using a collaborative model to interesting ends: "NVIJ is a founding leader in the collaborative investigative reporting project, Chauncey Bailey Project, involving several dozen media outlets and institutions to investigate the murder of an Oakland journalist and finish the stories that got him killed."
- Rabble.ca's Kim Elliot mentions their coverage of Canadian peace rallies using new media: "We used a new media tool: Mogulus video, to live broadcast from rallies in three cities across the country, using both our own journalists and activists to report and comment. We also invited activists in other parts of the country to share their video"
- Air America Media's Michael Basslk said "Air America Media provides a real alternative to conservative talk radio."
- Berrett-Koehler's Bonnie Kaufman says: "We are currently working on the publication of a Digital Primary Product titled *The Little Book of Big Ideas* by the Progressive Ideas Network. This brings together many members of the progressive community who are working towards policy change, spearheaded by Barry Kendall of the Commonweal Institute. This meets many of our goals: creating a new model for media distribution; reaching/building/influencing progressive audiences; alliance-building; new, collaborative model."

## ENGAGEMENT

1. Rate the usefulness of the following measures in evaluating audience reception of a story or media project:

- Two most highly rated indicators:
  - How many times the piece has been referenced by other outlets via links, quotations or discussions.
    - Somewhat important: 10.5%
    - Important: 21.1%
    - Very important: 68.4%
  - How many times the piece has been viewed or downloaded.
    - Important: 36.8%
    - Very Important 63.2%
- Lowest rated indicator: How many times the piece has been recommended on Digg, Reddit, Tumblr or other social media sites
- Other answers:
  - TAP: "References or use by policymakers, elected officials"

• MoJo: "Different stories pop in different ways, so over the course of a year, these are all important."

2. How do you encourage audience members to further engage with your content? Please mark all that apply.

- requests for financial contributions: 84.2%
- opportunities to post or collaborate on content: 63.2%
- prompts to take action--i.e., send letters to policymakers, join protest: 52.6%
- prompts to send email/letters to outlet: 52.6%
- polls: 47.4%
- contests: 31.6%
- petitions: 26.3%
- audience-arranged events/meet-ups: 21.1%
- Other:
  - WIN: "Daily email to potential listeners, stations, news makers"
  - GRITTV: "We encourage our viewers to subscribe to our email list."
  - The UpTake: "Trainings"
  - MoJo: "Comments, and soon, a comments section that will allow/encourage readers to propose actions. Some of the other things on the list above are, I hope, TK."
  - Making Contact/NRP: "need to check more boxes above :-)!"

3. What strategies do you use to encourage the growth of the online community on your outlet's own website?

- CIM: "We have open commenting systems with no registration on a majority of our sites to allow the easiest access to all people to add to the discussion. We participate in a variety of promotional tools geared to adding as many new visitors to view our work on display, such as reddit, stumbleupon and digg we use social networking tool"
- GRITtv: "This is primarily done through distribution to other web sites that then drive traffic to our web site. We also encourage television viewers to visit grittv.org. And we collaborate with other online outlets such as AlterNet, Fire Dog Lake, The Nation, Current TV, BLIPtv, and Brave New Films."
- The UpTake: "Our site is built upon a social networking platform, so we encourage everyone to join one of our "news groups" with focus coverage and discussion on either issues or regions."
- The Young Turks: "We allow everyone to set up their own pages on our website and we encourage to blog on the site. We also have a live chat during the show for people to talk to one naother while the show is in progress. The host often quotes the viewers blogs or chat comments or e-mails on-air to let people know we are listening to their input."
- ARC: "User-generated video and stories"
- Rabble.ca: "We host a very popular discussion board, babble, which is a strong on-line community. We also have spaces on Flickr.com, Twitter and Second Life"
- Berrett-Koehler: "We are currently planning lots in this department. We currently provide a link to our Facebook page, as well as discussion guides and groups for many of our book titles"
- The Nation: "Web letters. Contests."

4. Does your outlet use external social networking platforms like Facebook or Youtube?

- Yes: 89.5%
- No: 10.5%

5. If you answered "yes," why does your outlet use those external social networking platforms? Please mark all that apply.

- To build audience: 100% of social networking users (Most Popular Response)
- To host content: 62.7%
- To solicit recommendations: 37.5%
- To form new groups: 31.3%
- To influence rankings: 12.5%
- More specifics:
  - WIN: "to acquire content"
  - The Young Turks: "Also, for money. It's often times a different audience, which is terrific, but also brings in different streams of revenue as well."
- 6. Please give us a brief example of a particularly meaningful response from an audience member.
  - Ms.: "feedback on how an article in Ms has changed public policy or institutional practices"
  - WIN: "Conversations at a new York construction site—workers were listening to our news brief on 1010 WINS; they knew who we were, told me they appreciated the news—I stopped at the work site in mid morning, unexpected, and workers stopped work to talk to me about the news."
  - ITT: "A national labor union circulated a story by David Moberg to its officials."
  - CIM:"Overall having a comment section on all of our sites has allowed us to get positive and negative feedback which we take extremely seriously. Also when our sites sponsor other progressive events in the states, we have always received extremely positive feedback."
  - GRITtv: "We had a very positive and encouraging article written by Mike Whitney, a regular viewer, for Counterpunch about GRITtv titled: "A Glimmer of Light in Television Wasteland." We have also received encouraging messages and responses from viewers via twitter and email."
  - LinkTV: "I just wanted to express my gratitude to you for all the rich information that you provide me everyday. Because of you I have learned a lot about the world, I have opened my mind, and I have met many incredible people who have inspired me to read more, listen more and judge less. I have become a Link TV addict and I promise to keep watching, spread the word and keep my donations up too."
  - The UpTake: "Through working with many social networking sites we've met and developed relationships with many influential people. One is Jay Rosen of NYU. We asked for an interview via Twitter and produced this video of Jay's definition of Citizen Journalism: <u>http://is.gd/SDf</u>"
  - TAP: "a solid letter to the editor suggesting an alternative POV."
  - The Young Turks: "A member of the armed forces called us on election night in 2006 and told us he and his wife drove all the way from their base in San Diego back to their home state of Kentucky to vote because he had been listening to our show online in Iraq and thought it was so important to get the Republicans out of office (he said he used to be a Republican until a friend of his in the military got him to start listening to our show)"
  - ARC: "On a recent post on post-racialism:Another GREAT analysis from ARC/ColorLines/RaceWire. This is an absolutely crucial educational moment about how very UNpostrace this country is, and I hope everyone who reads this and other ARC online pieces will email them to as many contacts as possible. We need to be proactive in framing what is really going on about race, especially in the next six months. Say it loud and say it proud: We are racial justice activists whose time has COME, not gone."
  - Democracy Now!: "I wanted to say how thankful and grateful I am that I was able to have the opportunity to hear Amy speak. Through out the speech I kept getting chills, the effect was just amazing. Never before have I been so inspired to participate. Already I have begun to become a lot more active in speaking out against the war."
  - MoJo: "The audience reaction when we posted our "School of Shock" cover story online was truly surprising and gratifying."
  - NVIJ, "Someone read Roberto Lovato's writings, produced while he was a fellow in our program

and decided to organize a conference on race based on those writings, with Roberto as keynote. Gov. Elliot Spitzer's office called one of our fellows about an article she wrote for the Nation about predatory lending and congratulated her for it."

- Rabble.ca, "Thank you for the article and the analysis. For some reason, your analysis was different from that of the Globe & Mail editorial! Thank you as well for the website, which I've bookmarked. The collection of columnists includes the cream of informed (i.e. left wing) journalists in the country."
- Making Contact/NRP, "Listeners write us about how a program changed their thinking or prompted them to action."
- Berrett-Koehler, We currently have open a page on the BK Blog where readers/viewers of The Five Secrets (You Must Discover Before You Die) -- both a book and a mini-movie -- can contribute their own life secret. The response to this has been overwhelming, with truly thought-out and heart-felt secrets coming in from people all over the world."
- The Nation, "50,000 readers signed an open letter to obama asking him to stand strong on progressive commitments."