

Independent News Outlets have Outsized Impact

Today, [Science magazine](http://science.sciencemag.org/content/358/6364/776) is publishing a study run by the Media Consortium and directed by Harvard Professor Gary King which shows that  even small independent news outlets can have a dramatic effect on the content of  national conversation.

In “How the News Media Activate Public Expression and Influence National Agendas” King, along with his now former graduate students Ben Schneer and Ariel White, found that if just three outlets write about a particular major national policy topic – such as jobs, the environment or immigration – discussion of that topic across social media rose by as much as 62.7 percent of a day’s volume, distributed over the week.

Over 60 percent of the participating outlets were members of the Media Consortium. The Media Consortium outlets that had the highest participation rates in the Science study were, in order: Truthout, In These Times, Bitch Media, The Progressive, Earth Island Journal, Feministing, Generation Progress, Ms. Magazine and Yes! magazine. The median outlet size was The Progressive, with about 50,000 subscribers. This study proves is that when independent news outlets work together to co-publish stories on the same topic in the same week, they can have a mighty effect.

Media Consortium Director Jo Ellen Kaiser: “We expected independents would have a big impact on national conversations. Independents have strong and loyal followers who are eager to talk about the content they read and view at their favorite outlets.”

Funded by a generous grant from Voqal, this study also marks the first time that academic researchers have been able to conduct a randomized study with journalists. The reason they were able to do so was because of the participation of the Media Consortium, a network founded in order to build a high-impact collaborative network.

For more information on the Media Consortium’s role contact:

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