

Michigan snapshot...

Typical 30 Minute Broadcast Breakdown

Category	Five State Avg.*	Detroit	Lansing
Total Advertising	9 min 46 sec	10 min 8 sec	10 min 55 sec
*Political Advertising	4 min 24 sec	4 min 18 sec	NA
*Avg. Number of Political Ads	8.81	8.59	NA
Sports and weather	6 min 58 sec	9 min 20 sec	7 min 30 sec
Crime	2 min 20 sec	1 min 46 sec	2 min 3 sec
Other	2 min 13 sec	1 min 26 sec	1 min 3 sec
Local interest	1 min 54 sec	1 min 28 sec	1 min 25 sec
Teasers, bumpers, intros	1 min 51 sec	1 min 42 sec	1 min 53 sec
Election coverage	1 min 43 sec	1 min 23 sec	1 min 46sec
Non-campaign gov't news	1 min 2 sec	30 sec	59 sec
Business, economy	47 sec	1 min 11 sec	1 min 17 sec
Health	45 sec	37 sec	39 sec
Foreign policy	27 sec	19 sec	25 sec
Unintentional injury	14 sec	10 sec	4 sec

*Note: The five-state average does not include data from Lansing because advertising data was not available for the market.

- Between October 7 and November 6, the UW NewsLab found that 213 election-related stories aired in Detroit, while 333 election-related stories ran in Lansing during the early- and late-evening newscasts captured in the study. These included stories that were primarily about campaigns and elections and stories that either tangentially included elections or that mentioned a candidate running for office
 - Within the timeframe, 953 paid political ads ran during Detroit newscasts captured in the study.
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- In coverage of elections, 76 percent of stories in Detroit focused on strategy and horserace, while 12 percent of stories focused on issues. In Lansing, 68 percent of stories focused on strategy and horserace, while 20 percent of stories focused on issues.

- 54 percent of election stories in Detroit were aired in the final week before Election Day. In Lansing, 48 percent of stories aired in the final week.

Statement from Rich Robinson of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network

This is a classic "good news - bad news" story. The good news is that local newscasts increased their coverage of election campaigns in the last month before Election Day compared to what they had done in the previous month. The bad news is that during those newscasts, viewers were exposed to roughly three times as much paid political advertising as coverage of the election, and the news coverage was seldom ambitious enough to take on substantive issues rather than "horse race" coverage such as polling and fundraising.

The objectionable part of all this is that the broadcasters are getting free use of a public asset - the broadcast spectrum - and they are supposed to be required to serve the public interest. Michigan broadcasters sold more than \$50 million of air-time this year to the gubernatorial campaigns alone. By any reasonable standard, the public is getting shortchanged in this bargain and the broadcasters need to do a better, more substantive job of covering political campaigns.

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