DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 374 497 CS 508 708

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TITLE Product News versus Advertising: An Exploration within a Student Population.
PUB DATE Aug 94
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (77th, Atlanta, GA, August 10-13, 1994).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Advertising; Comparative Analysis; Higher Education; *Information Sources; Mass Media Effects; Media Research; News Reporting; *Student Attitudes; Student Surveys; Undergraduate Students

ABSTRACT

An exploratory survey (part of a larger study) examined the relative effectiveness of news versus advertising as sources of product information. Subjects, 140 undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory public speaking course or a course in visual communication, completed a 5-page media interest survey. Results indicated that news rates favorably, based on belief and attitudinal measures. However, mixed results were obtained when respondents were asked to specify which sources of information they were likely to use when purchasing a product or service. Findings suggest that although individuals might be positively predisposed toward news versus advertising, the effect is probably conditional in nature. The next stage of the research project is designed to test claims about the superiority of news within the context of a variety of variables that might moderate its effects in a controlled setting. (Contains 44 references and 5 tables of data.) (RS)

PRODUCT NEWS VERSUS ADVERTISING:

AN EXPLORATION WITHIN A STUDENT POPULATION

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Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
Atlanta, August 1994

This research was funded, in part, by a dissertation fellowship awarded to the researcher by the Public Relations Society of America College of Fellows, whose support is gratefully acknowledged.

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Abstract

This paper reports findings of an exploratory survey among college students (N=140) conducted prior to an experiment designed to examine the relative effectiveness of news versus advertising as sources of product information. The results suggest that news rates favorably, based on belief and attitudinal measures. However, mixed results were obtained when respondents were asked to specify which sources of information they were likely to use when purchasing a product or service. Directions for future research and implications for claims about publicity's third-party endorsement are discussed.

PRODUCT NEWS VERSUS ADVERTISING:

AN EXPLORATION WITHIN A STUDENT POPULATION

Marketers lament that many people avoid, resist or discount advertising because they believe the sponsor is trying to sell them something. As an alternative, marketers point to the *credibility* of public relations and its communications component, *publicity*.

Levitt (1969:200) writes, "If advertising's very abundance creates a high coefficient of agnosticism, then public relations has a special claim to merit. Its distinction is the greater credibility of its message." Marketing scholars have expressed similar views (Kotler, 1993; Balasubramanian, 1991), and this conventional wisdom is repeated in the professional literature of marketing, advertising and public relations (cf Blyskal and Blyskal, 1985).

Public relations practitioners ascribe this advantage to publicity's *implied third-party endorsement* effect. Counselors routinely promote this advantage over advertising in selling their services (Burger, 1962; Cushman, 1988, 1990; Rotman, 1973; Softness, 1976).

The assumed credence of publicity has been acknowledged by social scientists as well. Doob (1948:367) observed:

> Commercial and other interests sometimes resort to publicity rather than advertising not only to solve the perceptual problem [about the commercial intent of advertising] and thus secure a wide audience but also to strike that audience when it is in a more receptive mood. An item about a company that appears in a news column or program is "good publicity" for both these reasons. The propagandee feels he is reading or listening to an objective version of the truth. He may know that there are such phenomena as publicity agents, but it is unlikely that he will be acquainted with their machinations at a given moment. A favorable criticism of a book by a reviewer is usually much more valuable in promoting its sale than many inches of advertisements stressing its magnificent style or its world-trembling ideas.

More recently, McGuire (1973:231) states, "favorable material introduced as 'news' by a public relations expert is more influential than advertisements clearly labeled as such." Schudson (1984:101) writes, "if an item appears as news, it has a legitimacy that advertising does not have. Consumers discount or discredit advertising, to some extent, because they know it to be from an

interested source. A news story is not so easily discounted." Alcalay and Taplin (1989:116) state public relations "has a high degree of 'third-party' credibility because it is attributed to a nonbiased 'news' source." Reeves, Chaffee and Tims (1982:298), referring to media vis-à-vis other sources generally, observe "an understandable tendency to place more faith in information from media, which are professionally organized to validate and edit their content...."

Despite effusive claims, little comparative research has been done that attempts to examine the relative effectiveness of news versus advertising. A literature search reveals only six studies, none of which attempted to address the problem in a comprehensive way (Schwarz, Kumpf and Bussman, 1986; Anderson and Abbott, 1985; Salmon et al., 1985; Cameron, 1994; Hennessey and Anderson, 1990; Maheswaran and Chaiken, 1994). Regarding the third-party endorsement claim commonly found in public relations, Detwiler (1974:10) notes that the argument is "devoid of research support" and is a "still for the most part an article of faith." Hunt and Grunig (1993:383) point out that there is little evidence that editorial copy has greater credibility than advertising copy and recommend caution in assuming or making claims about such effects.

It was against this backdrop that a research program was launched to investigate the comparative effectiveness of news versus advertising. This study reports findings from research designed to validate assumptions about the superiority of news versus advertising. It was conducted as the first stage of a larger project which will include a multi-factor experiment intended to compare the effectiveness of news versus advertising under controlled experimental conditions.

Conceptualizing and Measuring Differences Between Product News and Advertising

Advertising is defined here as the purchase by a sponsor of time or space in the mass media (newspapers, magazines, radio and television) to present product information. Publicity involves the presentation of the same product information in the news or editorial portions of those media. Space prohibits a more thorough examination of the considerable strategic and tactical differences in using these two approaches.

Advertising and news, along with entertainment, represent the principal types of content found in most mass media. These can be conceptualized as different *content classes*. Media researchers have devoted little theoretical or empirical attention to cross-content class issues. However, content class, as a means of

categorizing media variables can be distinguished from *mode* (print/broadcast), *medium* (newspaper/magazine/radio/television), *institution or property* (comparisons between specific media organizations), *content format* (e.g. full/half/quarter page ad), *content genre* (e.g. spot news story/feature story/case study, etc.). Other variables that might be used in analyzing content might include content *frames* (routinized portrayal structures) and *formal features* (distinguishing characteristics of a format, e.g. visual or audio elements).

Content class closely parallels what Anderson and Meyer (1988) have termed *master identities* for media content, which they state "appear at the intersections of the institution, genre, medium, codes of workmanship and the like" (p. 91). Each master identity also represents a separate type of *contract* with the audience as to how the content is to be understood. Under the entertainment or *fantasy contract*, people suspend belief. Under the *reality contract*, applicable to news, Anderson and Meyer suggest that people understand that the content is real and important. Under the *advertising contract*, the audience is assumed to be forewarned with knowledge of the source's intent to sell, which justifies the use of puffery and/or possible deception.

Hallahan (1994) proposed that knowledge of the differences in the news and advertising contracts serve to bias the cognitive processing of news and advertising. Knowledge about differences between news and advertising are part of an individual's *media literacy* (J. Anderson, 1981; Rice, Huston and Wright, 1982), acquired through media and consumer *socialization* (Ward, 1975; Ward, Klees and Wackman, 1990). This knowledge is hypothesized to be stored in an individual's *semantic* (versus episodic) *memory* (Tulving, 1972, 1983), and serves as a control mechanism or *control schema* (Wright, 1987; Friestad and Wright, 1994) to guide processing of information. This content class knowledge is hypothesized to be stored in the form of a series of schemas and sub-schemas (e.g. a news schema, an advertising schema, an entertainment schema), which operate independently of the schemas that might be extant in episodic memory related to the actual content of the message.

Each time that an individual shifts from one type of media content to another, the individual uses *contextual cues* (e.g. breaks in a TV episode) and *formal features* of a message (e.g. an advertising headline) to *categorize* a message as news, advertising or entertainment. This occurs instantaneously during the *pre-attention* stages of processing, prior to focal attention, comprehension or elaboration (Greenwald and Leavitt, 1984). This content categorization process is a form of *automatic processing* which *biases* the subsequent processing through a process of *priming*, i.e. making one of the content-class related schemas more

accessible (Higgins, Bargh and Lombardi, 1985). Using the most accessible schema, individuals will then process the message according to the rules that proven successful for them in the past.

Assuming that these separate contracts exist, and that individuals actively categorize messages by content class, it is important to understand the degree and the nature of the differences that exist between news and advertising schemas. Short of a controlled experiment, in which it is possible to control for the numerous extraneous variables that might influence the processing of any particular message, researchers have several alternatives when exploring the cognitive components related to news versus advertising.

Beliefs. One is to examine audiences' *knowledge and beliefs* about the two content classes. A belief is defined here as a statement deemed to be true, based on an individual's personal experience. Among key beliefs of concern here are those related to the credence of messages, beliefs related to past experience, and beliefs related to the intent of the source. Knowledge of attributes about news and advertising represent the foundation for content class schemas. If beliefs are considered schematic in nature, content class knowledge is assumed to consistent in nature because individuals strive for cognitive consistency.

Attitudes. Distinct from beliefs, *attitudes* refer to predispositions toward particular content classes, favorable or unfavorable, and combine cognitive and affective elements. The Fishbein expectancy-value model of attitudes (Fishbein and Azjen, 1975) suggests that an attitude is a function of a) beliefs about the attitude object, defined as the subjective probability that the attitude object has each attribute and b) the evaluative aspect of these beliefs, defined as the evaluation of each attribute. Simply stated, people come to hold positive attitudes toward things they think have good attributes and negative attitudes toward things that they have bad attributes.

In examining attitudes toward content classes, it is possible to consider the two constructs, *advertising* and *news*, in the abstract. However, such approaches can be misleading if the intent is to try to predict attitudes (or behaviors) toward any particular source. Robinson and Kohut (1988) suggest, for example, that researchers get very different results when they ask audiences about media credibility in general and when they pose the question in the context of specific media. Thus, it is also useful to examine attitudes toward specific sources.

Intentions. Finally, researchers can gain additional insights by using reported *intentions* as a proxy to predict actual behavior. Azjen and Fishbein's theory of reasoned action (1977) states that

a behavioral intent measure will predict performance of a voluntary act unless intent changes prior to the performance, or unless the intention measures do not correspond to the behavior criterion in terms of action, target, context, time-frame or specificity. By asking audiences the degree to which they might use advertising or news, it is thus possible to better understand the potential implications of beliefs and attitudes for behavior.

Method

In a preliminary effort to understand differences regarding beliefs, attitudes and intentions related to the use of product news versus advertising, a survey was conducted among students at the University of North Dakota. The population was chosen as part of pre-testing process for a larger experiment to be conducted within the same population.

A total of 140 students completed a five-page questionnaire, which was administered in sections of the University's introductory public speaking course (required for many majors) and in a course on visual communication. These courses closely approximate the student profile for the course from which the experimental subjects are expected to be drawn.

The five-page Media Interest Survey, which was completed by students in about 10-12 minutes, asked students about their media use habits and collected key demographic data pertaining to gender (female/male), major (communication/other), home town size (urban over 1 million population/smaller city over 10,000 population/rural under 10,000 population), and grade point average (nine check-off ranges in 25-basis point intervals, from 3.75-4.00 to below 2.00).

The sample included 77 males and 62 females, 49 communication majors and 77 other majors. The sample was skewed with a heavier preponderance of female majors in communication, versus males in other majors ($\chi^2=6.15$, df=1, p=.049). No other statistically demographic patterns were discerned (p>.05).

Table 1 (page 12) summarizes reported media use. Respondents were asked to indicate the number of hours or minutes they read, listened to, or watched the four principal public media. Respondents reported spending a mean of 18.5 minutes reading a newspaper, 20.9 minutes reading a magazine, 134 minutes listening to radio, and 130 minutes watching television. Communication majors reported significantly higher newspaper readership, but no other statistically significant pattern differences. Females reported significantly higher listenership for radio, while males reported significantly higher viewership of television. Grade point average was virtually unrelated to use of print, but was

strongly and negatively correlated to broadcast use. Students were also asked to make a self-assessment of their use of media on a four-point scale, in which 1=spend a lot of time with mass media, and 4=never spend time with the mass media. The mean score as 2.18, with no significant differences related to gender, major or GPA.

Results

Survey respondents were asked to respond to four sets of questions pertaining to beliefs, attitudes and intentions to use various media sources. In an effort to reduce sensitization to the purpose of the study, question sets were presented so that the most general ones (pertaining to intent) were answered first and the more specific one (pertaining to beliefs) were presented last.

Beliefs. Eighteen statements intended to measure beliefs about news and publicity were presented in random order as the last question bank on the survey. Statements were reversed in valence in some cases to include both positive and negative statements about both news and advertising.

Table 2 (pages 13-14) contains the actual statements, which are organized into three categories outlined above. Among the statements pertaining to the credence of advertising and publicity, the predicted superiority of news over advertising was clear when the first items (statements a, b and c) are compared to the next three items (statements, d, e, and f). Respondents thought that news contains valuable information people need to know, gives products stature, and believe that reports would not run a story that is not accurate. On the other hand, they agreed less with the statement that ads are intended to provide valuable information, don't appear to think ads are very truthful, and disagree with the suggestion that news is less believable than advertising.

Among statements pertaining to their experiences with product information, the most notable result was that respondents seem to have little difficulty in discerning the difference between news and advertising (statement m), and disagree when asked if they would prefer to obtain product information in the form of advertising versus news (statement l). They seem ambivalent about whether there is too much news coverage about products and whether product publicity is the same thing as advertising (statements i and j). Significantly, students didn't report avoiding ads simply due to their promotional intent (statement k). They enjoyed seeing products and that they use when their appear in the news or are shown in movies or on TV shows (statement g).

The final set of statements (n-r) deal with beliefs about sources. Respondents only slightly agreed with the statement (p)

that a positive news story about a product or service is essentially a recommendation to buy it -- the essence of the third-party endorsement claim. News workers were viewed as generalists who were not experts about what they cover (statement n), while advertisers are viewed as knowledgeable (statement o) about their products. Students were ambivalent about whether news reporters try to get them to accept their points of view (statement q). Perhaps the most telling results was the confusion (or cynicism) among respondents about whether positive product stories appear in the press because sponsors pay for them.

Attitudes Toward News and Advertising. Two measures were used to analyze attitudes toward news and advertising. One approach asked respondents to rate 17 potential sources of product information on the degree to which these represented *expert and trustworthy* sources of information -- the two traditional components of *credibility* (Hovland and Weiss, 1951). A mix of different items representing media, content class, and specific media organizations were included in keeping with the approach suggested by Robinson and Kohut (1988).

Table 3 (page 15) shows that news sources were consistently rated higher than advertising. The highest rated source was the *New York Times*, followed by national television newscasts, local television newscasts, news in the average U.S. newspaper, magazine articles, and radio news reports. Even *Rolling Stone* (presumed here to mean the editorial content, not the advertising), rated higher than the highest-rated advertising source, advertising in the average daily U.S. newspaper. Significantly, when specific media are excluded from the analysis, while national television newscasts ranked highest, TV commercials ranked lowest among sources for expertness and trustworthiness. (Note: The *New York Times, Rolling Stone, MTV* and *National Enquirer* were of no theoretical interest to the researcher, but were included to provide comparison benchmarks and to divert attention as to the true purpose of measure.)

As an additional way to measure attitudes toward advertising and news, students were asked to complete 10-item, 7-point semantic differential scales for *Advertising in General* and *News in General*. The bipolar adjectival pairs (half of which were reversed in direction on the survey) included: *interesting/boring, trustworthy/not trustworthy, relevant/not relevant, accurate/not accurate, believable/not believable, informative/not informative, involving/not involving, useful/not useful, unbiased/biased, and convincing/not convincing.*

Table 4 (page 16) compares the mean scores for each of the ten items and shows that news compared favorably to advertising on all ten of the adjectival pairs (paired sample t-tests all

significant at p<.01, df=139, 95% confidence level). In light of contentions of media bias (and the potential ambiguity of the term), it was not surprising that the unbiased/biased item behaved significantly differently than the others. With biased/unbiased eliminated, the researcher than combined the nine remaining items to develop an *Attitude toward the Message* index, which showed an adequate level of reliability (Cronbach's alpha=.86). Respondents' *Attitude toward News in General* (M=5.517, SD=.675) was more favorable than their *Attitude Toward Advertising in General* (M=4.572, SD=.793) at a significant level (paired t-tests, t=-13.32, df=139, 95% CL).

Intention. Finally, students were asked to assume that they were interested in purchasing a product or service, and to indicate the likelihood or probability that they would look to one of 10 potential sources if they wanted information about the product or service. The sources were listed randomly and scored on a 7-point scale (7=extremely likely, 1=extremely unlikely to use), and included news and advertising in daily newspapers, magazines, radio, television and college newspapers. This measure was used a potential measure of intention, although the lack of specificity about a particular product might limit its reliability.

Table 5 (page 17) reveals a mixed pattern regarding media and content class. No single pattern of likelihood for news versus advertising emerged.

College media and radio represented the least likely sources that would be used. Significant differences in likelihood of using college media could only be found among majors in the case of advertising. Communication majors (M=4.71, SD=1.43) were significantly more likely to use college media advertising than other majors (M=3.622, SD=1.54; t=2.26, df=139, p=.026). The direction was the same for communication majors being more likely to use college newspaper news, but the difference was not significant.

Radio showed a significant difference in terms of their use of radio news versus advertising. Students were significantly *less* likely to use news (M=3.62, SD=1.54) rather than advertising (M=3.99, SD=1.43) at significant levels (paired t-test, t=2.85, 139 df, p=.005). Communication majors said they would use radio news or advertising about equally, but other majors were far more likely to cite advertising over news.

News compared favorably with advertising within the two print media categories. Respondents reported that they were more likely to use magazine news (M=4.71, SD=1.50) versus magazine advertising (M=4.39, SD=1.47; t=2.51, p=.01). The same trend was found for newspapers: newspaper news (M=4.48, SD=1.55) compared favorably to

newspaper advertising (M=4.23, SD=1.32), but fell just short of significance at the alpha=.05 level (t=1.89, df=1.89, p=.06)

Television was cited as the most likely source. TV commercials and TV news were essentially equal in likelihood ratings (M=5.06, SD=1.42 for advertising and M=5.02, SD=1.51 for news).

A further analysis of means in Table 5 reveals a pattern in which non-majors, who were predominantly males, showmed a tendency to rely upon on radio advertising far more than radio news, while they also appeared to rely far less on television news compared to the student populations as a whole. At the same time, although no significant gender differences emerged related to us of news, men were far less likely than females to rely on either print or newspaper advertising. The difference was significant based on gender for newspapers, and based on major for magazines. No significant interactions emerged, however, upon performing an analysis of variance.

Discussion

These data are limited as to their generalizability because of the limited scope of the sample, which was not stratified in a way to proportionately incorporate males and females, majors and non-majors. Yet, the data are insightful nonetheless.

First, when asked in several different ways, for their opinions about news versus advertising, respondents generally favored news over advertising. This was especially evident in the attitudinal measures about sources they considered expert and trustworthy, in the measures on attitude toward advertising in general and attitude toward news in general, and in assessments of media sources based on beliefs.

Second, when likelihood of using particular sources was examined, significant differences emerged based upon demographic data. These data would suggest that researchers need to consider potential individual differences, particularly gender.

Third, these data suggest differences exist relative to the particular mode or medium involved. When asked about the likelihood of using particular sources, news did <u>not</u> score universally superior to advertising. News rated higher than advertising in the case of print media (where mean daily usage was comparatively less), but no difference was found for television, and the opposite was found for radio (i.e. respondents indicated they were more likely to rely upon radio advertising rather than radio news). This suggests that the potential superiority of news

versus advertising is predicated upon media usage overall and the availability of messages representing alternative content classes.

These data are consistent with the proposition that preferences for news versus advertising are schema-based and that individuals view these content classes differently. McLeod, Pan and Rucinski (1988) provided some evidence that news and advertising are processed differently, but their results were inconclusive. The research question thus becomes *how* content class affects message processing.

In recent years, a significant research paradigm has emerged among behavioral scientists interested in persuasive communications. It suggests moderating variables can be classified according to whether they impact the *motivation, ability* or *opportunity* to process (Batra and Ray, 1986; Chaiken, 1980; Petty and Cacioppo, 1981).

The presence of a persuasive communication in the form of news versus advertising itself can be viewed as a motivational factor. Indeed, under the uses and gratifications research tradition in mass communication, media audiences engage in media consumption for a variety of different purposes; these can include -- but are not limited to -- gleaning useful information from news and/or entertainment. In the same way, individuals who distrust or dislike advertising, can be seen as being *negatively* motivated to process advertising messages. However, the content class in which a persuasive message is delivered is not the only motivational factor that might must be examined. Other might include an individual's *need for cognition*, *situational involvement* (i.e., the need to make decision) or *enduring involvement* related to the personal relevance of the subject matter itself (Houston and Rothschild, 1977).

Ability to process can further impact the potential effect. The significant and negative correlation between GPA and television viewership found among students, coupled with the greater likely of relying on radio advertising and the lesser likelihood of using television news, suggests that in addition to being less motivated, some audiences might be less able to process certain persuasive messages, due either to limited capability or the failure to acquire the necessary media literacy skills. Media use patterns might only serve to reinforce this inability.

Finally, opportunity relates to the mere accessibility of messages. One explanation for the differences found here is that within the overall smaller amount of print media consumption, the relative influence of news versus advertising is accentuated; however, as the overall amount of media consumption increases, and the proportion of news content decreases relative to advertising

content, the effect might become diffused.

For researchers interested in the examining the superiority of news versus advertising, these data suggest that although individuals might be positively predisposed toward news versus advertising, the effect is probably conditional in nature. In keeping with Greenwald et al's (1984) charge to behavioral scientists, the challenge is to focus on *under what conditions* news might be more effective than advertising.

Merely measuring individual's beliefs and attitudes towards news versus advertising is not sufficient. Researchers need to test claims about the superiority of news within the context of a variety of variables that might moderate its effects, and need to do so in a controlled setting in which they can focus on how content class influences cognitive processing and acceptance of actual messages. The next stage of this research project will be designed to do this.

Table 1

MEDIA USE BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Self-Report of Minutes Spent with Media on an Average Day, With Pearson r correlation for GPA

People spend varying amounts of time reading, watching or listening to media. Some people spend a lot of time with certain media, but not others. Others don't pay much attention to media at all. Please estimate the number of hours or minutes that you spend on the average day engaged in the following activities: [Blanks provided for *a) Reading a daily newspaper, b) Reading magazines, c) Listening to radio, d) Watching television.*]

Means	**Sample**	**By Gender**		**By Major**		**GPA**
	All	**Males**	**Females**	**Commun.**	**Other**	**Pearson**
	(N=140)	(n=77)	(n=62)	(n=49)	(n=90)	r=
Newspaper	18.5	17.0	20.7	22.8++	16.4	-.04
Magazine	20.9	19.6	22.7	24.3	19.2	-.11
Radio	134	104	170**	128	136	-.30##
Television	130	144	113**	122	135	-.32##
All Media	304	285	327	298	307	-.42##

** Significant at p=.062 (t=1.88, df=137). Other gender items not significant.
++ Significant at p=.025 (t=2.27, df=136). Other major items not significant.
Significant at p=.000. Other GPA correlations not significant.

Self-Assessment of Overall Time Spent With Media

Please check the statement that best describes your use of media overall:
1= __ I spend a lot of time with mass media.
2= __ I spend a moderate amount of time with media--but not a lot.
3= __ I spend a very small amount of time with media
4= __ I never spend time with media.

Means	**Sample**	**By Gender**		**By Major**		**GPA**
	All	**Males**	**Females**	**Commun.**	**Other**	*r=*
Media Use	2.18	2.25	2.10	2.25	2.31	-.01

Note: Counts vary due to one record missing demographic data.

Table 2

BELIEFS ABOUT ADVERTISING AND PRODUCT PUBLICITY

For each of the following statements, circle the number that best describes the extent to which you agree or disagree.

Statements 7=Strongly Agree, 1=Strong Disagree	**Mean**	**St.Dev.**
About the credence of advertising and publicity		
a. The news contains product information that is valuable for people to know.	4.86	1.25
b. Seeing positive information about a product in the news gives it stature and importance in my mind.	4.84	1.08
c. When I read news, I feel confident that reporters have researched the facts and would not run a story that is not accurate.	4.71	1.17
d. Ads are intended to provide valuable information that I need to know.	3.70	1.33
e. I believe that ads are always truthful and are reliable source of information.	2.64	1.29
f. Information that appears as news is less believable than information that appears in the form of an ad.	2.61	1.47
About experiences with product information		
g. I enjoy seeing products that I use when they appear in the news or are shown in movies or on TV shows.	4.58	1.48
h. I often hear interesting information about products and services in the news when I don't expect to.	4.53	1.16
i. There is too much news coverage about products in the media.	4.12	1.32

Table 2 (Continued)

j.	I discount a lot of the news I see about products because product publicity is the same as advertising.	3.99	1.27
k.	I avoid ads because I know sponsors are trying to sell me something I don't want or need.	3.96	1.51
l.	I prefer to obtain product information in the form of advertising instead of news.	3.24	1.55
m.	I sometimes have trouble telling the difference between advertising and news stories.	2.60	1.36
	About the sources of product information		
n.	Most news reporters and editors are not experts on the topics they cover.	4.79	1.68
o.	The people who produce advertising are knowledgeable about the products they promote.	4.53	1.44
p.	A positive news story about a product or service is essentially a recommendation to buy it.	4.35	1.30
q.	News reporters are always trying to get me to accept their point of view.	4.14	1.34
r.	Positive stories about products appear in the press because sponsors pay for them to appear.	4.10	1.56

Footnote to Table 2. Analysis of variance on the 18 items using gender, major and hometown size revealed few significant differences. Males were less likely to admit difficulty in telling the differences between news and advertising ($M=2.35$, $SD=1.28$, compared to 2.90, $SD=1.39$ for females, $t=-2.42$, $df=137$, $p<.01$). Males were more likely to think that reporters wanted them to accept their points of view ($M=4.38$, $SD=1.26$, compared to $M=3.88$, $SD=1.40$ for females, $t=2.06$, $df=136$, $p=.046$). Males were also more likely to agree with the statement that publicity and advertising were the same ($M=4.19$, $SD=1.27$, compared to $M=3.72$, $SD=1.23$ for females, $t=2.19$, $df=137$, $p=.03$). Two significant two-way interactions were discovered. Males who were communications majors were more likely to agree with the statement that advertising always tells the truth (F 1,135=4.85, $p=.056$), while males who were not majors were more likely to agree with the statement that there was too much news about products in the news (F 1,135=8.348, $p=.027$).

Table 3

ASSESSMENTS OF EXPERTNESS AND TRUSTWORTHINESS AS SOURCES FOR INFORMATION ABOUT PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

The following is a list of some major media in the United States. For each one, indicate how you would rate it as a source of expert and trustworthy information about products and services....

Source	**Mean**	**St.Dev**
7=Highly expert and trustworthy, 1=Not at all expert or trustworthy		
News-Related Sources		
New York Times	5.83	1.17
National television newscast	5.66	1.30
Local television newscast	5.32	1.15
News in the average daily newspapers in the U.S.	5.08	1.09
Magazine articles	4.73	1.15
News in the daily newspaper in your home town	4.73	1.27
Radio news reports	4.59	1.31
Rolling Stone	4.35	1.43
Advertising-Related Items		
Advertising in the average daily newspaper in the U.S.	4.28	1.18
Radio commercials	4.14	1.21
Advertising in the daily newspaper in your home town	4.13	1.34
Magazine advertising	4.06	1.25
TV commercials	3.49	1.41
Other Sources (For Comparison)		
Your college newspaper	3.68	1.30
MTV	3.21	1.32
National Enquirer	1.45	1.16

Footnote to Table 3. Analysis of variance performed on each of the expertness/trustworthiness items showed no significant differences related to gender or major. Students from rural areas (population less than 10,000) put less stock in their hometown newspaper (M=4.40) for the smallest group, compared to M=5.00 for students from small cities and M=5.02 for students from large urban areas). Rolling Stone was rated as significantly more expert or trustworthy by students from the largest areas (M=4.81), compared to the smallest group (M=4.01) only.

Table 4

SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL ITEMS COMPARING ADVERTISING IN GENERAL AND NEWS IN GENERAL

Below are two key terms related to the media, followed by some pairs of adjectives that might be used to describe them. For each pair of adjectives, make an "X" or check the space that most closely approximates how you describe the term shown in bold. For example, if you thought that COLLEGE TEXTBOOKS were neither good nor bad, you would make an "X" in the center as follows: (Example followed using good/bad, with X in center).

ADVERTISING IN GENERAL
NEWS IN GENERAL

Means 7=Positive Valence, 1=Negative Valence	**News**	**Advertising**	**Difference**	**t-value**
Informative/not informative	6.036	4.820	-1.215	-10.22
Useful/not useful	5.700	4.828	- .871	- 8.56
Believable/not believable	5.592	4.207	-1.385	-10.75
Reliable/not reliable	5.500	4.428	-1.072	- 8.14
Accurate/inaccurate	5.45	4.33	-1.111	- 9.54
Trustworthy/not trustworthy	5.414	3.935	-1.478	-13.29
Interesting/boring	5.385	4.992	- .392	- 2.86
Convincing/unconvincing	5.378	4.900	- .478	- 3.82
Involving/uninvolving	5.192	4.700	- .499	- 3.66
Unbiased/biased	3.835	2.592	-1.242	- 7.83
Combined 9 Items, except Unbiased/biased	5.517	4.572	- .942	-13.32

All t-tests significant at p.<.01, df=139. Half of the items were reversed on the survey and later recoded for consistent valence.

Table 5

LIKELIHOOD OF USING SPECIFIC SOURCES WHEN PURCHASING A PRODUCT OR SERVICE

Assume you are interested in purchasing a product or service. For each of the following types of media, circle the number that represents the likelihood or probability that you would look to that particular source if you wanted information about the product or service you were buying.

Means 7=extremely likely, 1= extremely unlikely to use	**Sample**	**By Gender**		**By Major**		**GPA**
	All (N=140)	Males (n=77)	Females (n=62)	Comm. (n=49)	Other (n=90)	Pearson r.=
College Newspaper						
Advertising	3.82	3.63	4.08	4.22+	3.62+	-.09
News	3.85	3.72	4.01	4.10	3.72	-.15
Public Media						
Radio						
Advertising	3.99a	3.96	4.06	3.77	4.13	-.23#
News	3.62a	3.76	3.43	3.75	3.53	-.12
Newspapers						
Advertising	4.23b	4.05*	4.48*	4.38	4.16	-.10
News	4.48b	4.38	4.61	4.65	4.40	-.03
Magazines						
Advertising	4.39c	4.22	4.62	4.77+	4.22+	-.15
News	4.71c	4.72	4.72	4.81	4.67	-.05
Television						
Advertising	5.06	5.00	4.16	5.12	5.05	-.20#
News	5.02	5.03	5.00	5.36	4.38+	-.11
Four Public Media						
Advertising	4.42	4.31	4.61	4.51	4.39	-.24#
All Media	4.46	4.48	4.44	4.65	4.36	-.09

a Significant at p=.005 (paired t-test, t=2.85, 139 df)
b Significant at p=.062 (paired t-test, t=1.89, 139 df)
c Significant at p=.013 (paired t-test, t=2.51, 139 df)
* Significant at p=.055 (t=1.93, 137 df). Other items not
+ Significant at p=.05.
# Significant at p=.02 or less.
All other differences not significant.

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