

# **The Internet and the Threat It Poses to Local Media:**

## *Lessons from News in the Schools*

A Report from the Carnegie-Knight Task Force on the  
Future of Journalism Education



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**Knight Foundation**

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## *Lessons from News in the Schools*

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The Carnegie-Knight Task Force is one element of the Carnegie-Knight Initiative on the Future of Journalism Education which was launched in 2005 and focuses on developing a vision of what journalism schools at major universities can be. The Carnegie-Knight Task Force aims to carry out research and create a platform for educators to speak on journalism policy and education issues. All of these efforts grew out of a partnership involving the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the deans of four of the nation's leading journalism schools—Orville Schell, Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism, University of California at Berkeley; Nicholas Lemann, Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University; John Lavine, Dean of the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University; Geoffrey Cowan, Dean of the Annenberg School of Communication, University of Southern California—and Alex S. Jones, Director of the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

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## **Executive Summary**

Internet-based news is trumping both television news and the daily newspaper as a mode of classroom instruction. Furthermore, national and international news sites, such as nytimes.com and bbc.com, are trumping local news sites in America's schools. These conclusions stem from a recent national survey of 1,262 social studies, civics, and government teachers, who reported on their use of news in the classroom, including trends in their use of particular media. The survey reveals a strong movement in the classroom toward Internet-based news and away from print and television news, with the trend unlikely to abate in the foreseeable future. A parallel national survey of 253 Newspaper-in-Education (NIE) directors indicates that most newspapers are only partly aware of the threat that the Internet poses to their in-school programs. Indeed, most newspapers continue to promote hard-copy newspapers at a time when teachers and students are moving on-line.

These developments threaten not only the economic viability of local news outlets but also the special contribution they make to American democracy. Their reporting has never consistently equaled the quality of the best news organizations, which have far greater resources. What local news organizations bring to the mix is the local angle—the community's story. Since the nation's founding, the community's story has been an everyday part of Americans' experience. It will continue to be a part but, if current trends persist, it will be a demonstrably smaller part. This development could substantially weaken local communities as places where self-government is practiced.

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## **The Internet and the Threat It Poses to Local Media: *Lessons from News in the Schools***

Despite the pressure of mandatory standardized testing, news is being widely used in the nation's classrooms.\* Not all sources of news are doing equally well in the schools, however. Internet-based news is trumping both television news and the daily newspaper as a mode of classroom instruction. Furthermore, national and international news sites, such as nytimes.com and bbc.com, are trumping local news sites. If these trends are an indicator of broader developments, local news media face an uncertain future, one that could adversely affect American democracy.

This report describes the changing pattern of news use in America's classrooms and explores the implications. One source of evidence is a national survey of 1,262 teachers in grades 5 through 12 that we conducted through the Internet during the fall of 2006. The respondents were chosen randomly from Market Data Retrieval's file of more than 30,000 social studies, civics, and government teachers in middle and high schools throughout the country. The sampling error associated with this survey is plus or minus 2.7 percent. A second source of evidence is a national survey of the directors of Newspaper-in-Education (NIE) programs. These programs—many of which have been in place for more than two decades—are the vehicle through which U.S. newspapers provide free or reduced rate copies of their paper for classroom use in order to enhance students' civic education and encourage them to become lifelong newspaper readers. We contacted nearly one thousand NIE directors through the Internet during the fall of 2006, and 253 of them responded, resulting in a sampling error of plus or minus 5.3 percent. (Additional information about the teachers' survey and the NIE directors' survey is provided in the appendix).

\*Our recently released report on this topic, "Mandatory Testing and News in the Schools: Implications for Civic Education," is available at [www.shorensteincenter.org](http://www.shorensteincenter.org).

### **The Rise of the Internet in America's Schools**

Roughly four-fifths of the teachers in our national survey said they were making as much or more use of news today than a few years ago. Three-fourths of those who have increased their news use said they had done so because "recent news events are so important that my students need to be aware of them." Second on their list of reasons for an increase was the Internet. Sixty-seven percent of teachers claimed "the Internet has made news use in the classroom easier and better." A nearly identical percentage of teachers who plan to increase their classroom use of news cited Internet-based news as a leading reason for the change.

Though still in an early stage, Internet-based news is already the dominant news medium in America's classrooms. Fifty-seven percent of teachers said they use Internet-based news in the classrooms with some frequency—roughly twice the proportion that rely on national television news (31 percent) or the daily newspaper (28 percent) with some frequency. Local television news (13 percent) is at the bottom of the list. One teacher said: "I would use the newspaper more but that takes more time than watching television news. [But] television news is difficult because it has so much fluff. The Internet makes it easier to pick and choose." Another teacher noted: "The Internet has caused me to drop subscriptions to local papers. With the Net, I like the depth and quality of reporting."

The Internet's lead in America's classrooms is certain to widen. A third of teachers said they are not yet making much use of Internet-based news because their classrooms are not equipped for it. Of teachers that have used Internet-based news in the classroom, only 1 percent said they have stopped using it, compared with the 14 percent who no longer order newspapers for their students.

When teachers were asked about “future use,” the Internet was far and away the medium of choice (see Table 1). Teachers were twelve times more likely to say they intend to make greater use of Internet-based news than to say they plan a reduction. In contrast, teachers were nearly as likely to say they would make less use, as opposed to greater use, of the newspaper and television news in coming years.

Contributing to teachers’ shift to Internet-based news is their belief that students like it best (see Table 2). Teachers themselves prefer the newspaper as an instructional medium. The Internet is their second choice, although it ranks first among teachers with five years or less of experience. Television news is a distant third choice among teachers. Students’ news preferences, as teachers see it, are markedly different than their own. Teachers say their students prefer the Internet, followed by television news, and then by the newspaper. Indeed, only 8 percent of teachers identify the newspaper as their students’ preferred classroom medium, while 75 percent place it at the bottom of the student list. Said one teacher: “Students do not relate to newspapers at all, any more than they would to vinyl records.”

### **Local vs. National and International: The Transforming Effect of the Internet**

Since the nation’s founding, daily news has been primarily local in its base. Broadcasting brought

national news organizations into existence in the early 1900s, but local outlets continued to dominate the market. Even today, the United States has fifteen hundred local newspapers and a thousand local television stations with a combined audience easily exceeding that of national print and television outlets.

Conventional wisdom holds that the Internet is contributing to an increasingly fragmented news audience. This claim is true in a narrow sense. The number of news sources has increased, spreading the audience across an increasingly larger number of providers. Taken by itself, however, the Internet-news system has a less dispersed audience than does the traditional news system. Although there are thousands of websites with news, a tiny number of them—such as [cnn.com](http://cnn.com) and [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com)—attract the bulk of the audience.

America’s classrooms reflect this pattern. As teachers have turned to the Internet, they have switched from hundreds of local news outlets to a small number of national ones. As Figure 1 shows, Internet-based news in the classroom is dominated by a few top news organizations including CNN, PBS, and the *New York Times*. Among teachers that use Internet-based news in the classroom, nearly two-thirds said they “frequently” rely on the websites of nationally known news organizations, including [cnn.com](http://cnn.com), [pbs.org](http://pbs.org), and [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com). Only one in seven teachers who use Internet-based news said they

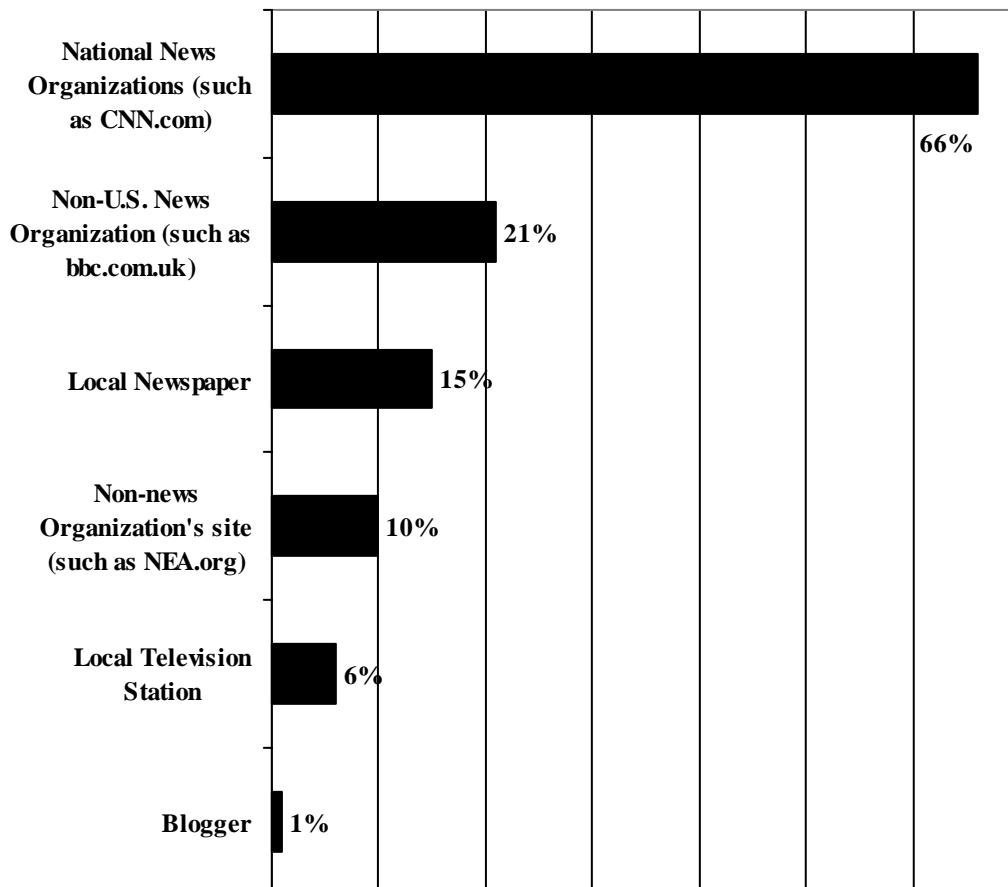
**Table 1: Teachers’ Projections of Future Use of News Media in the Classroom**

<b>News Source</b>			
<b>Likely to Use the Source</b>	Internet	Newspaper	TV News
More	58%	23%	20%
Less	5	21	21
No change	37	56	58
	100%	100%	100%

**Table 2: Teachers' Classroom News Preferences and What They See as Their Students' Preferences**

News source	Most Preferred Medium		Least Preferred Medium	
	Teachers	Students	Teachers	Students
Internet-based news	33%	49%	29%	10%
Television news	18	42	49	14
Newspaper news	49	9	22	76
	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Figure 1: Percentage of Teachers that Use Internet News in the Classroom Who "Frequently" Use Particular Websites**



“frequently” rely on their local newspaper’s website and a mere one in seventeen “frequently” employ a local television website. Remarkably, one in five Internet-using teachers said they “frequently” employ a non-U.S. website—in other words, sites such as [bbc.com.uk](http://bbc.com.uk) have a larger classroom audience than do the websites of either local newspapers or local television stations.

The Internet is a larger threat to local media than even these figures suggest. A fourth of the teachers that now make less use of news said the Internet’s non-news content serves their instructional purposes better than the news does. Younger teachers were particularly likely to express this view, perhaps because of their greater familiarity with the web’s array of historical, geographical, cultural, and public affairs sites. Local news organizations also face classroom competition from organizations that are not in the news business but display news on their websites. Ten percent of the Internet-using teachers in our survey said they “frequently” access news through the website of an organization such as MoveOn, the Christian Coalition, the National Education Association (NEA), or the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Classroom usage of such sites, which is likely to increase in future years, currently exceeds that of local television websites.

### **The Great Disconnect: What Is Happening in America’s Classrooms Is Not What Local Newspapers Think Is Happening**

As this report’s introduction noted, our survey of the nation’s teachers was paralleled by a survey of the nation’s Newspaper-in-Education (NIE) program directors. Although half of the NIE directors said their newspaper’s commitment to its news-in-the-school program had not changed during the past few years and 12 percent said their paper had cut back on its program, nearly 40 percent said their paper had recently put more resources into its program.

NIE directors’ claim that their programs are stable or growing does not match what has been reported about several high-profile programs. For example, after the *Los Angeles Times* in early 2006 raised the price—from 9 cents a copy to 45 cents a copy—that it charges schools for

classroom copies of the newspaper, the average weekday in-school circulation fell by two-thirds. Much smaller declines were reported in 2006 by the *Des Moines Register* and *New York Times*, among others. Nevertheless, many of America’s newspapers continue to support their NIE programs in the hope of bolstering circulation and gaining future readers. Among NIE directors who said their paper had put more resources into its program, 87 percent claimed that a prime reason for the increase was the belief that the program is “one of our best ways to attract new readers at a time of declining newspaper circulation.”

However, America’s NIE program directors are only vaguely aware of the Internet’s inroads on newspaper use in the classroom. Among NIE directors who said their paper has recently pumped more resources into its school program, only one in eight cited Internet competition as a major reason for the change. Further, although nearly all of the newspapers we surveyed have an on-line edition, few promote its use in the classroom. Eighty-seven percent of the NIE directors said their newspaper encourages teachers to use the paper version. Less than 2 percent said they steer teachers to the on-line version. Daily papers with circulations in excess of 100,000 copies are more likely to promote their on-line edition but, at that, less than 5 percent do so.

When NIE directors were asked whether the Internet-based news has made it “easier or harder” to convince teachers to use the newspaper, less than one in five said it had made their task “harder.” Slightly more than half said the Internet had made it “neither harder nor easier” while a fifth said they were not sure of the effect. A tenth of the NIE directors claimed even that the Internet had made it “easier” to persuade teachers to adopt the newspaper. NIE directors at larger-circulation newspapers were as likely as the NIE directors at smaller-circulation newspapers to hold these opinions (see Figure 2).

Nor are NIE directors keenly aware of the competition posed by non-local websites. When asked whether “Internet news offered by national or international providers such as the BBC and *New York Times*” had made it “harder or easier” to get their newspaper into the classroom, only 9 percent of NIE directors said it had made their

task "harder." They did not claim it had made their task "easier"—only 2 percent felt this way. But 63 percent said that the news offered by national and international providers had made it "neither harder nor easier" and 27 percent said they were unsure of the impact.

NIE program directors underestimate the erosion in their newspaper's position in the classroom. When asked whether "most schools in your area have shown more, less, or about the same interest in the newspaper-in-the-school program" during the past few years, 62 percent claimed there was more interest in their program and only 7 percent said interest had declined. Claimed one NIE director: "Newspapers-in-Education {programs} in many ways debunk the 'fact' that young people are less interested in newspapers than they were in the past."

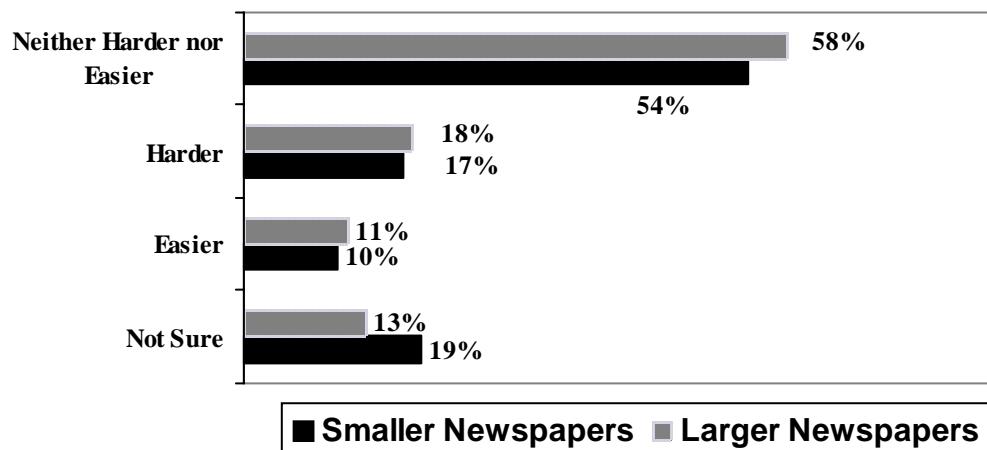
NIE programs have also been slow to respond to the Internet's capabilities. Although 90 percent of NIE programs provide teachers with instructional materials like lesson plans and student handouts, nearly half of them produce this material in paper form only and not also as web content. In contrast, CNN, the *New York Times*, and some other national news organizations

devote whole sections of their website to this material, updating it daily. Although most teachers do not yet avail themselves of on-line instructional material, those who do so rely mainly on the websites of pbs.org (23 percent), cnn.com (23 percent), and nytimes.com (15 percent). One teacher claimed: "PBS and CNN have done a great job providing news-related lesson plans for use in the classroom." Only 7 percent of teachers who obtain instructional aids from a website rely on their local paper's website for this material. Indeed, most local papers do not make a large effort to steer teachers to this instructional resource. Among newspapers that have both paper and on-line versions, only one in five encourages teachers to use the on-line version.

### **The Challenge Ahead: Strengthening Local Media**

Despite years of effort by America's newspapers to build a special relationship with local schools—including providing free copies to students and having reporters visit classrooms—teachers are overlooking thes papers' on-line offerings as they transition to Internet-based

**Figure 2: Opinions of NIE Directors of Larger and Smaller Newspapers on Whether the Internet Has Made It Harder or Easier to Get Teachers to Use the Newspaper in the Classroom**



news. In the classroom and elsewhere, local media are losing the Internet-news revolution to “brand name” news organizations like CNN, the BBC, and the *New York Times*.

Local media are not entirely to blame for their plight but, like other established industries threatened by a new technology, they have clung to the old one. From a certain perspective, their response has been perfectly sensible. On a user-by-user basis, the sale of hard-copy newspapers is vastly more profitable than drawing people to the paper’s website. It has been estimated that a newspaper needs to attract several dozen new Internet users to make up—profit-wise—for the loss of a single paper customer. On the other hand, local news organizations—television stations as well as newspapers—are mortgaging their future by failing to adapt more quickly to the Internet revolution.

Some local newspapers have responded to the challenge. Within the past two years, the *Denver Post* and the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, at considerable expense and with substantial fanfare, have launched e-editions of their papers for classroom use. More recently, the *Idaho-Press Tribune* started a program that aims to get its e-edition into half of the middle and high schools within its circulation area. But such efforts are atypical of how America’s newspapers have addressed the movement of readers to on-line sources.

America’s schools are not the primary battleground in the struggle for audience loyalties, but they offer a clear lesson. As students learn in the classroom to rely on websites such as [cnn.com](http://cnn.com) and [bbc.com.uk](http://bbc.com.uk), they will become accustomed to using these sites outside the classroom, thereby contributing to a permanent movement of audience away from local news outlets.

It can be argued that this development is not altogether bad and might even be good. The quality of news reporting is generally higher on the websites of major news organizations than those of local media. Exposed to higher quality news, citizens presumably will have a keener understanding of public affairs. This view, however, overlooks the special contribution that local news organizations make to our democracy. Their reporting has never consistently equaled the quality of the best news organizations, which

have far greater resources. What local news organizations bring to the mix is the local angle—the community’s story.

Since the nation’s founding, the community’s story has been an everyday part of Americans’ experience. It will continue to be a part but, if current trends persist, it will be a demonstrably smaller part. Scholars have not closely studied the contribution that vibrant local news organizations make to local communities, but it is surely substantial. Just as surely, a weakening of that contribution will weaken local communities as places where self-government is practiced.

# Appendix

## Survey of Teachers

The teachers surveyed for this study were randomly sampled from Market Data Retrieval's list of more than 30,000 social studies, civics, and government teachers and were contacted through the Internet between late August and early November 2006. Each respondent was contacted up to three times in an effort to obtain a high response rate. Among teachers who opened the e-mail request, roughly a third responded.

Nearly 100 of the respondents were teachers that do not teach or no longer teach a social studies, civics, or government course. These respondents were eliminated from the analysis, leaving a total of 1,262 respondents. The sampling error for a random sample of this size is plus or minus 2.7 percent. The sample included teachers in grades 5 through 12, reflecting a research decision to limit the study to middle school, junior high, and high school teachers. The sample was weighted toward the higher grades, such that two-thirds of the respondents teach grades 9 through 12.

The questions asked in the survey are as follows:

1. Do you teach full-time?
  - No
  - Yes, although I also have some administrative duties
  - Yes
2. How long have you taught?
  - 1-2 years
  - 3-5 years
  - 6-10 years
  - 11-20 years
  - More than 20 years
3. Which subject do you teach the most? (You may check two or more if your teaching time is evenly divided.)
  - Social studies
  - Civics/Government
  - Math
  - Science
  - Physical education/health
  - Foreign language
  - English
4. What grade level are most of the students that you teach?
  - 12
  - 11
  - 10
  - 9
  - 8
  - 7
  - 6
  - 5
  - Less than 5
5. Do you teach any advanced placement courses?
  - Yes
  - No
6. What state is your school located in?
7. At what type of school do you teach?
  - Public
  - Private
  - Parochial
8. What type of community is your school located in?
  - City
  - Suburb (or other community near a city)
  - Town (away from a city and population larger than 10,000)
  - Rural area or isolated town of less than 10,000 people
9. What is the family income of most of the students at your school?
  - Most are from higher-income families
  - Most are from families with average incomes
  - Most are from lower-income families
  - Not sure
10. Roughly how many students attend your school? (This question refers only to your immediate school rather than the entire school district.)
  - Less than 100
  - 100 to 299
  - 300 to 499

- 500 to 999  
• 1000 or more
11. About how many of your students speak English as a second language?  
• Most  
• About half  
• About a fourth  
• Less than a fourth but more than a few  
• None or very few
12. To what extent does preparing students to pass mandated standardized tests (“teaching to the test”) affect your teaching?  
• It dictates most of my teaching  
• It substantially affects my teaching  
• It slightly affects my teaching  
• It has little or no impact on my teaching
13. How often do you make use of the news as a teaching tool?  
• Nearly every day  
• A few times a week  
• About once a week  
• Once or twice a month  
• Less than once a month or not at all
14. How do you typically make use of news in your teaching?  
• I mostly integrate news into my curriculum  
• I mostly set class time aside to discuss news  
• I use both of these approaches about equally
15. Which type of news content do you use most often in the classroom?  
• Government and public affairs news  
• Science-related news  
• Health-related news  
• Sports-related news  
• Business-related news (such as the stock market)  
• Other
- . 16. Please indicate how frequently you make use of the news for the following purposes:  
a) As a basis for class discussion  
b) As a basis for homework assignments  
c) As a basis for student folders, scrapbooks, journals, etc.  
d) As a basis for your lesson plans  
e) As a basis for tests or quizzes
17. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.
- a) News in the classroom is one of the best ways to teach skills such as reading and writing  
b) News in the classroom is one of the best ways to prepare students for mandated standardized tests  
c) News in the classroom is something that most teachers think is a good idea  
d) News in the classroom is something that my district school administrators think is a good idea  
e) News in the classroom is something that my local school administrators think is a good idea  
f) News in the classroom is one of the best ways to prepare students for their role as citizens  
g) News in the classroom is one of the best ways to get students interested in a class and its subject
18. Has your use of news as a teaching tool changed over time?  
• Use it more  
• Use it less  
• No change
19. What is the main reason or reasons you're now making more use of the news in the classroom? (Please check as many main reasons as apply in your case. Please do not check marginal reasons.)  
• It's something I'd been planning to do and I finally did it  
• The Internet has made news use in the classroom easier and better  
• Students are now more interested in news than they were before  
• News organizations through their services have made it easier for teachers to use news in the classroom  
• My school administrators have encouraged teachers to use news in the classroom  
• Exposure to news helps students to do better on mandated standardized tests  
• Other teachers have encouraged me to use news as a teaching tool  
• Recent news events are so important that my students need to be aware of them  
• Other

20. What is the main reason or reasons you're now making less use of the news in the classroom? (Please check as many main reasons as apply in your case. Please do not check marginal reasons.)
- It's something I have been planning to do and I finally did it
  - The Internet has made available other types of information content that are better for teaching purposes than news
  - Students are now less interested in news than they were before
  - News organizations have been cutting back on their support of the use of news in the classroom
  - My school administrators have suggested cutting back on the use of news and similar content in the classroom
  - Mandated standardized tests have made it harder for me to find the classroom time to make use of the news
  - Other teachers have discouraged use of the news as a teaching tool
  - News has become so sensationalized and trivialized that it's become less useful as a teaching tool
  - Other
21. What's your best estimate about your future use of news as a teaching tool?
- Likely to use it more
  - Likely to use it less
  - No change anticipated
22. What is the main reason or reasons you expect to make more use of the news in the classroom in the future? (Please check as many main reasons as apply in your case. Please do not check marginal reasons.)
- It's something I have been planning to do and I am finally going to do it
  - The Internet is making news use in the classroom easier and better
  - Students are now more interested in the news than they were before
  - News organizations through their services are making it easier for teachers to use news in the classroom
  - My school administrators have encouraged teachers to use news in the classroom
  - Exposure to news helps students to do better on mandated standardized tests
  - Other teachers have encouraged me to use news as a teaching tool
23. What is the main reason or reasons you plan to make less use of the news in the classroom in the future? (Please check as many main reasons as apply in your case. Please do not check marginal reasons.)
- It's something I've been planning to do and I am finally going to do it
  - The Internet has made available other types of information content that are better for teaching purposes than news
  - Students are now less interested in news than they were before
  - News organizations have been cutting back on their support of the use of news in the classroom
  - My school administrators have suggested cutting back on use of news and similar content in the classroom
  - Mandated standardized tests have made it harder for me to find the classroom time to make use of the news
  - Other teachers have discouraged use of the news as a teaching tool
  - News has become so sensationalized and trivialized that it's become less useful as a teaching tool
  - Other
24. What's your best estimate about future use of the news as a teaching tool?
- Likely to use it more
  - Likely to use it less
  - No change anticipated
25. How about Internet-based news particularly? What's your best estimate about your future use of Internet-based news as a teaching tool?
- Likely to use it more
  - Likely to use it less
  - No change anticipated
26. Now the newspaper particularly. What's your best estimate about your future use of the newspaper as a teaching tool?
- Likely to use it more
  - Likely to use it less
  - No change anticipated
27. Now television news particularly. What's your best estimate about your future use of television news as a teaching tool?

- Likely to use it more
  - Likely to use it less
  - No change anticipated
28. Now a few questions on particular news media
- a) Which medium do you like best as a way of bringing news into the classroom?
  - b) Which medium do your students like best as a way of bringing news into the classroom?
  - c) Which medium do you like least as a way of bringing news into the classroom?
  - d) Which medium do your students like least as a way of bringing news into the classroom?
29. Does your school have Channel One? (Channel One is a daily 10-minute television newscast with 2 minutes of commercials designed specifically for use in schools. Schools that have Channel One are provided television monitors and other equipment for agreeing to show Channel One news programs to their students regularly.)
- Yes
  - No, although the school had it at one time
  - No
  - Not sure
30. Does one or more of the classrooms in which you teach have a TV set so that you could show your students television news if you wanted to?
- No
  - Yes, but I rarely or never use television news as a teaching tool
  - Yes
31. Do you make use in your classroom of national television news (such as news produced by CNN, Fox, MSNBC, Channel One, PBS, or the ABC, CBS, and NBC networks)?
- No or rarely
  - No, but I used to do it
  - Yes
32. Which national television news outlet do you use most frequently in your classroom?
- Channel One
  - CNN
  - Fox
  - MSNBC
  - PBS
33. Do you make use of local television news content during class?
- No or rarely
  - No, but I used to do it
  - Yes
34. Does the local daily newspaper make copies of its paper available either free or at a charge for use by students in the classroom?
- Yes
  - No
  - Not sure
35. What's the newspaper's pricing policy on copies used in the classroom?
- Copies are free or nearly free
  - A limited number of copies are free or nearly free but additional copies require a payment
  - Copies are available for the most part only by paying for them
  - Not sure
36. What's the name of the daily newspaper that's available for classroom use by students? (Please provide city and banner name—for example, the *Chicago Tribune* as opposed to just "Chicago" or just "the Tribune.")
37. Do you get copies of the local paper for each student to use in class?
- No or rarely
  - No, but I used to do it
  - Yes
38. Can you access the Internet in one or more of the classrooms in which you teach?
- Yes
  - No
39. Do you use Internet news in your classroom?
- No or rarely
  - No, but I used to do it
  - Yes
40. When accessing the news through the Internet for class use, how often do you use the following types of websites?
- a) Local newspaper's website
  - b) Local television station's website
  - c) A blogger's website

- d) National news organization's website (such as CNN.com or MSNBC.com or New York Times.com)
- e) Website of an organization that is not a news organization but includes news on its site (such as NEA, AFT, MoveOn, or Christian Coalition)
- f) Non-US news organization website (such as the BBC)
41. Does one or more of the classrooms in which you regularly teach have a projector that allows you to show Internet content to your students? 46.
- No
  - No, but students have computer access at their desks
  - Yes
42. Some news organizations (for example New York Times, Channel One, CNN, and some local newspapers) have a special section on their website that provides teachers with instructional materials, such as lesson plans, quizzes, student handouts and simulations. How often, if at all, do you use these supplemental instructional materials?
- Nearly every day
  - A few times a week
  - About once a week
  - Once or twice a month
  - Less than once a month
  - Not at all
43. At which website do you usually obtain these supplemental instructional materials?
- Your local newspaper's website
  - New York Times's website
  - Another newspaper's website
  - PBS's website
  - Local television station's website
  - Channel One's website
  - CNN's website
  - Other cable news network's website
  - AFT, NEA, or other teacher organization's website
  - Other
44. Does your school have a student newspaper?
- Yes
  - Yes, and I have been an advisor for the paper
  - No
  - Not sure
45. Finally, we'd like to ask just a few personal questions. What is your gender?
- Female
  - Male
- What is your general level of interest in politics and public affairs?
- High
  - Moderately high
  - About average
  - Moderately low
  - Low
- How many days in an average week do you spend at least 15 minutes of the day:
- a) Watching local news on television?
- b) Watching national news on television?
- c) Reading the news section of a newspaper?
- d) Listening to the news on radio (such as on NPR or an all-news station)?
- e) Getting news through the Internet? (Please think only of news content and not other Internet-based content.)

## **Survey of NIE Program Directors**

The Newspaper-in-Education program directors surveyed for this study were identified through several sources, including the web sites of individual newspapers. A total of 967 NIE directors were contracted up to three times by e-mail to solicit their participation in the survey. The questionnaire was completed by 253 NIE directors, resulting in a sampling error of plus or minus 5.3 percent. Their responses about their newspaper's ownership, circulation, and so on suggest that the sample is reasonably representative of U.S. newspapers as a whole.

The questions asked in the survey are as follows:

1. Does your newspaper have a newspaper-in-the-schools program that is, a program aimed at getting local schools to include the newspaper as part of their classroom instruction?
  - Yes
  - No
2. When did your paper end its newspaper-in-the-schools program?
  - One year ago or less
  - Two to three years ago
  - More than three years ago
3. Why did your paper end its program? (Please check all reasons that were important in your case. Please do not check marginal reasons.)
  - Budget cutbacks at the newspaper
  - Today's students don't have much interest in using the newspaper
  - Teachers have to devote so much time to preparing students for standardized tests that they have less time for news in the classroom
  - We felt the program was not producing enough long-term readers of the paper to justify its cost
  - Increased competition from the Internet for teachers' attention
  - We have new managers that weren't interested in keeping the program
  - Other
4. Please use the box below if you have thoughts you would like to share with us about why your paper terminated its program.
5. What do you think is the likelihood your paper will reinstate its newspaper-in-the-schools program in the future?
  - Likely
  - Unlikely
  - Not Sure
6. Do you work on the newspaper-in-the-schools program full-time or nearly full-time, or is your work time divided between this program and other duties at the newspaper?
  - Full Time or nearly Full Time
  - Divide my time between this program and other duties
7. How long have you worked on your paper's newspaper-in-the-schools program?
  - 2 years or less
  - 3-5 years
  - More than 5 years
8. How long has your paper had its newspaper-in-the-schools program?
  - More than 20 years
  - 10 to 20 years
  - 3-9 years
  - Less than 3 years
9. As director of your paper's newspaper-in-the-schools program, to whom at the newspaper do you report?
  - Publisher
  - Editor
  - Circulation director
  - Promotion Manager
  - Other
10. What types of schools are included in your program? (Please check as many as apply)
  - Public Schools
  - Private Schools
  - Parochial Schools
11. Which statement best describes your paper's newspaper-in-the-schools program?
  - It's relatively small and not a particularly high priority at the paper

- It's relatively small but nonetheless a reasonably high priority at the paper
  - It's quite substantial but not a particularly high priority at the paper
  - It's quite substantial and a reasonably high priority at the paper
- 12. Do you have a training program for teachers who want to participate in the newspaper-in-the-schools program?
  - No
  - Yes, but it's not mandatory
  - Yes, and it's mandatory if they want to be part of the program
- 13. In which if any of the following ways does your paper support the newspaper-in-the-schools program? (Please check as many as apply.)
  - Making reporters available for classroom talks
  - Holding workshops for teachers
  - Creating special school-related inserts to put in the paper
  - Sponsoring special opportunities for students
  - Other
- 14. What's been the direction of your paper's newspaper-in-the-schools program during the past few years?
  - We've been cutting back on the program
  - We've been putting more resources into the program
  - We're putting about the same resources into it now as in earlier years
- 15. Why has your paper been cutting back on its program? (Please check all reasons that are important in your case. Please do not check marginal reasons.)
  - Budget cutbacks at the newspaper
  - Today's students don't have much interest in using the newspaper
  - Teachers have to devote so much time to preparing students for standardized tests that they have less time for news in the classroom
  - We feel the program is not producing enough long-term readers of the paper to fully justify its cost
  - Increased competition from the Internet for teachers' attention
- 16. Why has your paper been putting more resources into its program? (Please check all reasons that are important in your case. Please do not check marginal reasons.)
  - We have new managers that are less supportive of the program than the previous managers were
  - Other
- 17. What's your best estimate about the future of your paper's newspaper-in-the-schools program?
  - Likely to get fewer resources
  - Likely to get more resources
  - No change anticipated
- 18. Why do you think your paper will be devoting fewer resources to its program? (Please check all reasons that are important in your case. Please do not check marginal reasons.)
  - Budgets are getting tighter at the newspaper
  - Today's students don't have much interest in using the newspaper
  - Teachers have to devote so much time to preparing students for standardized tests that they have less time for news in the classroom
  - We feel the program is not producing enough long-term readers of the paper to fully justify its cost
  - Increased competition from the Internet for teachers' attention
  - We have new managers that seem less supportive of the program than the previous managers were
  - Other
- 19. Why do you think your paper will be devoting more resources to its program? (Please check all reasons)

- that are important in your case. Please do not check marginal reasons.)
- The paper's financial condition is improving
  - We feel the school program is one of our best ways to attract new readers at a time of declining newspaper circulation
  - Schools seem increasingly interested in having students exposed to news as part of their instruction
  - Our need to compete more strongly with the Internet for teachers' attention
  - We have new managers that seem more supportive of the program than the previous managers were
  - Other
20. If a teacher requests it, does your paper provide personal copies of the newspaper for each student in the class?
- No
  - Yes, but with some restrictions or conditions
  - Yes, without restrictions or conditions
21. What's your paper's pricing policy when teachers want to order classroom copies for use by their students?
- An unrestricted number of free or nearly free copies are provided
  - A reasonable number of free or nearly free copies are provided, but thereafter copies are provided at or near the market price
  - All or nearly all copies are provided at or near the market rate except in special cases
22. Has there been a change in this pricing policy during the past few years?
- No change in pricing
  - We now charge more for copies than in the past
  - We now charge less for copies than in the past
23. Does your paper have an online version of its news?
- Yes
  - No
24. Does your paper have an online version of its news?
- Yes
  - No
25. In trying to get teachers to use your paper in the classroom, do you encourage them to use the regular copy of the paper or the online version of the paper?
- Regular copy of the paper
  - Online version of the paper
  - Either version, as long as they use it
26. How interested in classroom use of your paper do each of the following groups appear to be?
- Grade-school teachers
  - Middle-school (jr. high) teachers
  - High school teachers
  - District-level school administrators
  - School-level school administrators
27. Some newspapers develop things such as teachers guides, current affairs quizzes, and student handouts for use with the newspaper in the classroom. Does your newspaper provide teachers with paper copies of instructional materials of this type?
- Yes
  - No
28. Does your paper's website have a section devoted to schools where teachers can get special instructional materials such as online quizzes, lesson plans, student handouts and the like?
- Yes
  - No
29. Does your paper's website have a section devoted to schools where teachers can get special instructional materials such as on-line quizzes, lesson plans, student handouts and the like?
- Yes
  - No
30. When it comes to instructional supplements such as lesson plans and student handouts (as opposed to copies of the newspaper itself), do you encourage teachers to use the online version of the supplements or the paper copies of the supplements?
- We prefer that they use the online supplements
  - We prefer that they use the paper supplements
  - We do not really care which version they use
31. During the past few years have teachers shown more, less or about the same level of interest in using your paper's supplement instructional materials?
- More interested in using these materials
  - Less interested in using these materials
  - About the same level of interest as in the past
  - Not sure
32. In the past few years, has your paper put more or fewer resources into the instructional materials it makes available to teachers?

- We've been cutting back in this area
  - We've increased our efforts in this area
  - We've kept our effort at about the same level
  - Not sure
33. In preparing instructional materials, do you take into account mandated tests and curriculum requirements?
- No
  - Yes, but only in the general sense that we're aware of these requirements
  - Yes, and in the sense that we make a deliberate effort to build the requirements into our materials
34. Now here are some factors that might have made it harder or easier for you to get teachers to use your paper in the classroom. Based on your own experience please indicate how each factor has affected your efforts. On the basis of your own experience, please indicate how each factor has affected your efforts.
- a) Mandatory standardized tests (teaching to the test)
  - b) The Internet generally, including both its news and non-news content
  - c) Internet news offered by national or international providers such as the BBC and New York Times
  - d) School-centered television news, such as that provided by Channel One
  - e) Controversial issues such as the Iraq war
  - f) School district policies on course content
  - g) The fact that students today are apparently less interested in newspapers than they once were
35. Please indicate how effective you have found each of the following arguments to be in your effort to get schools and teachers to use your paper in the classroom.
- a) Newspaper use prepares students to be better citizens
  - b) Newspaper use prepares students to get jobs
  - c) Newspaper use prepares students for college
  - d) Newspaper use improves students reading and writing skills
  - e) Newspaper use improves student performance on mandatory standardized tests
  - f) Newspaper use creates interest in the class and its subject
36. Overall, during the past few years, would you say that most schools in your area have shown more, less, or about the same interest in the newspaper-in-the-schools program as previously?
- More interest
  - About the same interest
  - Less interest
  - Not Sure
37. How significant is the newspaper-in-the-schools program in your paper's efforts to deal with the problem of declining newspaper circulation?
- Not very significant
  - Somewhat significant-it's a modest part of our effort to deal with the problem
  - Very significant-it's a large part of our effort to deal with the problem
38. Overall, how would you describe your ownership's support of your paper's newspaper-in-the-school program?
- Very strong support
  - Strong support
  - Neither strong nor weak support
  - Weak support
  - Very weak support
  - Not sure
39. We have just a few background questions to complete the survey. Which state is your newspaper located in?
40. Is your newspaper publicly or privately owned?
- Publicly owned
  - Privately owned
41. Is your paper part of a chain or independent?
- Independent
  - Part of a large chain (six papers or more)
  - Part of a small chain (five papers or less)
42. What's the approximate daily circulation of your paper?
- 500,000 copies or more
  - 250,000 – 499,000 copies
  - 100,000—249,000 copies
  - 50,000 – 99,000 copies
  - 25,000 – 49,000 copies
  - Less than 25,000 copies
43. What is your core circulation area?
- A larger city and its suburbs
  - Suburbs but not the city proper
  - A smaller city or town and its regional area
44. Does your core circulation area have a relatively

high proportion of low-income people?

- Yes
- No

45. How would you describe the quality of most schools in your main circulation area?

- Above the national average
- About average compared with most schools nationally
- Below the national average

46. If you have additional thoughts or ideas about the newspaper-in-the-schools program that you would like to share with us, please use the space below.

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