Pew Research Center

Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment

During the early days of the administration, similar storylines covered across outlets, but types of sources heard from and the assessments of Trump's actions differed

BY *Amy Mitchell, Jeffrey Gottfried, Galen Stocking, Katerina Matsa and Elizabeth M. Grieco*

About Pew Research Center

Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It does not take policy positions. The Center conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis and other data-driven social science research. It studies U.S. politics and policy; journalism and media; internet, science and technology; religion and public life; Hispanic trends; global attitudes and trends; and U.S. social and demographic trends. All of the Center's reports are available at www.pewresearch.org. Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder.

Table of Contents

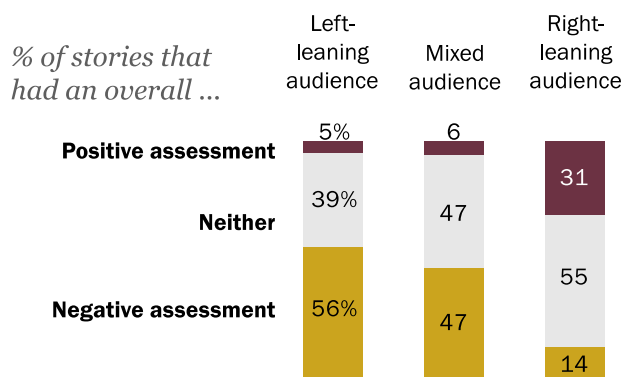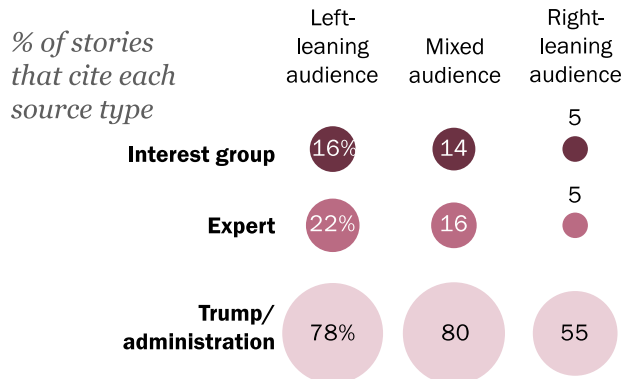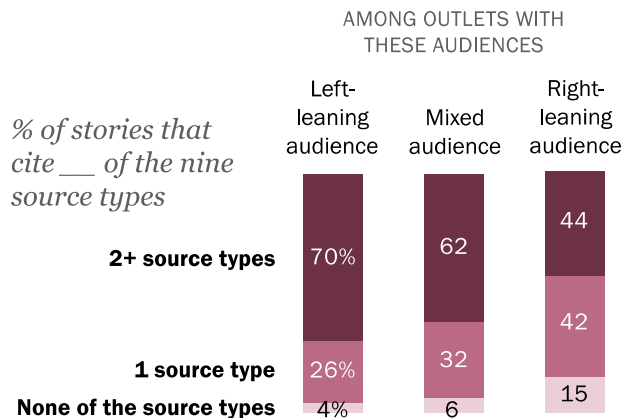# Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment

During the early days of the administration, similar storylines covered across outlets, but types of sources heard from and the assessments of Trump's actions differed

In an era when Americans' choices about whom to turn to and trust for news are often divided along political lines, a new Pew Research Center study of media coverage of the early days of the Trump administration finds those preferences can be significant.

News outlets whose audience leans to the left politically, those whose audience leans to the right and those appealing to a more mixed audience covered a similar news agenda and mostly framed their coverage around character and leadership rather than policy. But the types of sources included in the stories and the assessments of the administration's words and actions often differed, according to this study of more than 3,000 news stories during the first 100 days of the Trump presidency across 24 media outlets with content from television, radio and the web.

Specifically, outlets with a right-leaning audience cited fewer types of sources in their reporting, offered more positive and fewer negative evaluations of President Donald Trump and his administration, and had reporters who were less likely to challenge something the president said than outlets

News outlets differed in the sources they cited and assessments of Trump/administration

AMONG OUTLETS WITH THESE AUDIENCES

% of stories that cite ___ of the nine source types

	Left-leaning audience	Mixed audience	Right-leaning audience
2+ source types	70%	62	44
1 source type	26%	32	42
None of the source types	4%	6	15

% of stories that cite each source type

	Left-leaning audience	Mixed audience	Right-leaning audience
Interest group	16%	14	5
Expert	22%	16	5
Trump/administration	78%	80	55

% of stories that had an overall ...

	Left-leaning audience	Mixed audience	Right-leaning audience
Positive assessment	5%	6	31
Neither	39%	47	55
Negative assessment	56%	47	14

Note: Stories coded as positive had at least twice as many positive as negative statements; negative stories had at least twice as many negative as positive statements. All other stories are coded as neither. Not all source types studied shown. Multiple source types may appear in one story. N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

whose audience leans to the left or those with a more evenly distributed audience.

Seven-in-ten stories from outlets with a left-leaning audience and 62% from those with a more mixed audience included at least two of nine types of sources evaluated, such as a member of the administration, a member of Congress, or an outside expert. That was true, however, of less than half the stories (44%) from outlets with a right-leaning audience. In particular, outlets whose audience leans right of center were less likely to include Trump and his administration, outside experts or interest groups as sources. They were also about half as likely to include voices from *both* Democratic and Republican members of Congress (7% of stories vs. 14% for outlets with a left-leaning audience and 15% for outlets with a more mixed audience).

 Within a news story, the statements from the sources cited – and what reporters choose to quote from them – as well as the reporter's own language formulate the overall assessment of the Trump administration. During the time period studied, stories from outlets with a right-leaning audience were at least five times more likely to carry an overall positive evaluation of Trump's words or actions (defined as stories that contained at least twice as many positive statements as negative ones) than stories from outlets with a left-of-center or more mixed audience (31% vs. 5% and 6%, respectively). They were also at least three times less likely to carry negative assessments (14% vs. 56% and 47%, respectively). Still, most stories from outlets with a right-leaning audience (55%) carried neither a positive nor negative assessment of the president.

Another area of difference is the degree to which the reporter of a story directly refuted or corrected a statement by President Trump or a member of the administration. Overall, this occurred in one-in-ten stories, but it was about seven times as common in stories from outlets with a left-leaning audience (15%) than right-leaning ones (2%), while outlets with a more mixed audience fell in the middle (10%).

Outlets with a left-leaning audience more likely to refute a statement made by Trump/administration

% of Trump administration stories that refuted a Trump/administration statement

Outlets with a right-leaning audience — 2%

Outlets with a mixed audience — 10

Outlets with a left-leaning audience — 15
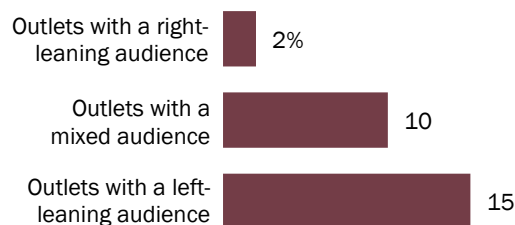
Note: N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

For this study, researchers categorized 24 news outlets into three groups by the political makeup of their *audiences*: Outlets whose audience – as measured using Pew Research Center surveys – consists of two-thirds more members who are right of center politically than left, two-thirds who are more left of center than right, and outlets with a more evenly distributed audience base. (For more details on the outlet selection process and groupings see the box below or the methodology.)

The selection and grouping of news outlets

Researchers selected outlets for inclusion in the study based on audience reach. For all online outlets, researchers selected sites with at least 20 million average unique monthly visitors during November and December of 2016 and at least 15 million from the first quarter of 2017, according to comScore data. From that list, researchers excluded sites that did not largely focus on political or general news. For newspaper websites, five top tier newspapers – based on total circulation according to the Alliance for Audited Media – that offer daily coverage of national affairs and met the same website traffic thresholds were included. For cable, four evening programs from each of the three networks (CNN, Fox News and MSNBC) were selected. Broadcast television includes the nightly news from all three networks plus PBS. Within radio, researchers selected the top two talk radio shows by ratings, according to Talkers.com, as well as the morning and afternoon news programs from NPR. Websites for TV and radio outlets were also included if they met the same threshold as digital-native outlets. The volume of content sampled for each outlet was based on factors such as audience reach and the amount of news content produced on a daily basis.

To be included in the sample, stories needed to be at least 50% about the president and his administration and more than 100 words or at least 30 seconds long. Digital stories were selected based on their prominence and position on the home page. For television and radio, every third qualifying story during the first half hour of a program was studied. Specified editorial or opinion sections or segments were not included, but individual opinion stories not set apart in a designated opinion section were included.

Each news outlet was placed in one of three groups based on the profile of its audience: outlets whose audience leans to the left politically, outlets whose audience leans to the right politically, and outlets appealing to a more mixed audience. The audience data came from one of two recent Pew Research Center surveys in which U.S. adults were asked if they regularly got news about the election or politics from each outlet. An outlet was classified as left-leaning if its audience included at least two-thirds more liberal Democrats than conservative Republicans. Conversely, if the audience had two-thirds more conservative Republicans than liberal Democrats, the outlet was categorized as right-leaning. If neither liberal Democrats nor conservative Republicans made up at least two-thirds more of the audience than the other, the outlet was included in the mixed-audience group. This resulted in 12 outlets with a left-leaning audience, five with a right-leaning audience and seven with a more mixed audience.

Details on the inclusion process, content sampled and the full list of outlets can be found in the Methodology.

Overall, five specific topics dominated coverage about Trump and the administration

Looking at the total coverage across all 24 outlets, five topics accounted for two-thirds of the coverage during this time period (Jan. 21-April 30): stories about the president's political skills (17%), immigration (14%), presidential appointments and nominations (13%), U.S.-Russia relations (13%), and health care (9%). None of the remaining 39 topics accounted for more than 4% of stories.

Stories of the president's political skills spanned a wide range of issues and events, such as the delivery of his first speech to a joint session of Congress and his management of White House staff. The president's executive order limiting the entry of travelers from certain countries and the legal challenges to it constituted a large portion of stories about immigration.
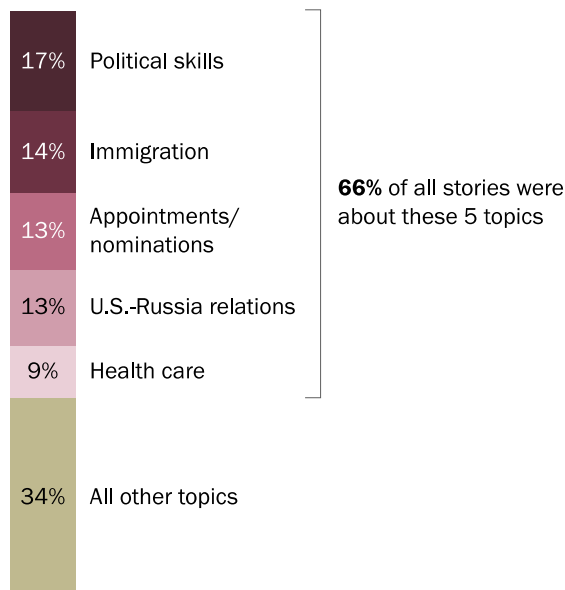
Allegations about Russia and the 2016 election tied to Trump and his administration, as well as the White House's relationship with Moscow, dominated stories on U.S.-Russia relations. Appointments and nominations included stories about various cabinet members and Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch. Health care coverage often addressed efforts by Trump and the Republicans to move health care legislation through Congress. A more detailed look at coverage of these most prominent topics occurs below.

When reporting on any event, a reporter can choose any number of ways to orient the storyline. This study classified stories into one of two main frames: the president's leadership and character *or* his core ideology and policy agenda. Overall, journalists structured their narratives far more around President Trump's leadership and character than his policy agenda (74% vs. 26%, respectively).

What's more, only about one-in-ten stories (11%) delivered an overall positive assessment of the administration's words or actions. Four times as many (44%) offered a negative assessment, while the remaining 45% were neither positive nor negative.

Five topics accounted for two-thirds of all coverage of the early days of the Trump administration

% of Trump administration stories that were about each topic

17%	Political skills
14%	Immigration
13%	Appointments/ nominations
13%	U.S.-Russia relations
9%	Health care
34%	All other topics

66% of all stories were about these 5 topics

Note: N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The study also found that, overall, Trump and his administration played a large role in the stories that ended up getting reported on each day. Nearly half the time (45% of all stories) the reporter produced the piece in response to something the president or his staff said or did. The news media itself spurred 19% of stories, either through self-initiated investigative reporting or through an action or statement by a member of the news media.

When choosing who to include as voices in a story, journalists cited the president or a member of his administration more frequently than any other source type. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of all stories included at least one source from the administration. The next most common type of source, though occurring about half as frequently, was another news organization or journalist (35%), followed by Republican and Democratic members of Congress (26% and 21%, respectively). Sources outside of government and media were less common, with experts cited in 16% of stories, interest groups in 13% and citizens in just 5%.

Trump/administration initiated the most coverage, was the source type most cited

% of Trump administration stories produced as a result of a statement or action by ...

	%
Trump/administration	45
News media	19
Congressional Rep. or Dem.	10
Other government	15

% of Trump administration stories that cited each source type

	%
Trump/administration	74
News media	35
Congressional Rep.	26
Congressional Dem.	21
Expert	16
Interest group	13
Citizen	5
Poll	4
Trump organization/family member	1

Note: "Other government" includes other federal, state and local actors. Trigger categories below 10% are not shown here. Multiple source types may appear in one story. N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Overall, a majority of coverage (62%) included at least two of the nine types of sources studied, but just 29% included three or more.

Another nuance in the findings highlights the relationship between the number of different source types included in a story and the assessment of the administration. Overall, stories with two or more source types were more likely than stories with fewer source types to have an overall negative assessment – about half (51%) of stories with two or more source types, compared with about a third (34%) of those that had zero or one source type. In other words, stories with a greater mix of voices were more likely to have an overall negative sense of the president's actions or statements.

Finally, amid America's experience with a president who regularly uses Twitter as a way of communicating directly with the public, roughly one-in-six stories (16%) contained a direct tweet from President Trump.

Stories with multiple source types most likely to have a negative assessment of Trump/administration

% of Trump administration stories that cited ____ source types that had an overall ...
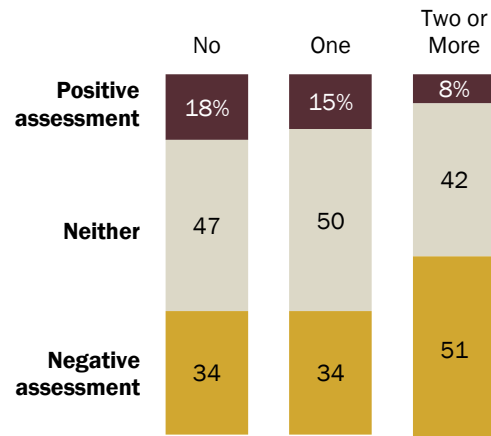
Note: Stories coded as positive had at least twice as many positive as negative statements; negative stories had at least twice as many negative as positive statements. All other stories are coded as neither. Numbers may not add up to 100% because of rounding. N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"
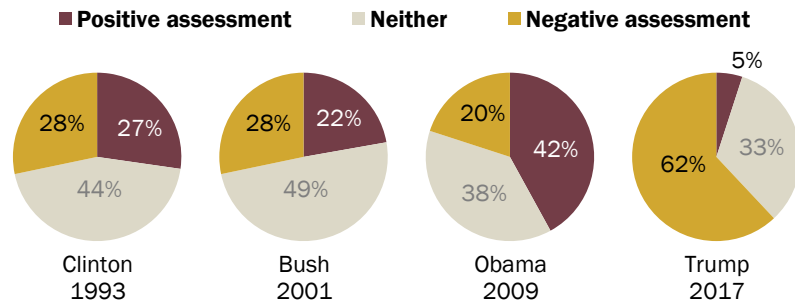
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Compared with past administrations, coverage of Trump's early days focused less on policy and was more negative overall

The Center has also conducted similar analyses for the early months of the three prior administrations: those of Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton. But for each succeeding president, the media universe has expanded dramatically. While today, for example, about nine-in-ten U.S. adults (89%) get at least some news online, just 14% of Americans even reported using the internet in 1995 during Clinton's first term. Thus, in addition to the examination of how the broad news media landscape covered and assessed the first 100 days of the Trump administration, the study also looked for historical

Coverage of Trump's first 60 days delivered greater share of negative assessments than coverage of previous presidents

% of stories from the first 60 days of each presidency that had an overall …

■ **Positive assessment**   ■ **Neither**   ■ **Negative assessment**

Clinton 1993	Bush 2001	Obama 2009	Trump 2017
28% / 27% / 44%	28% / 22% / 49%	20% / 42% / 38%	5% / 62% / 33%

Note: Stories coded as positive had at least twice as many positive as negative statements; negative stories had at least twice as many negative as positive statements. All other stories are coded as neither. Not shown: 1% of stories in 1993 and 2001 that were coded as satire. Numbers may not add up to 100% because of rounding. 2017 N=326 stories. Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national print newspapers, Newsweek, and network TV shows covering the first 60 days (Monday-Friday) of each administration.
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

comparisons of coverage of the first 60 days across a smaller universe of outlets that existed during all four time points, representing a mix of print publications and network evening news.

Compared with the three prior presidencies, coverage of Trump's early days in office moved further away from a focus on the policy agenda (31% of stories, compared with 50% for Obama, 65% for Bush and 58% for Clinton) and toward character and leadership. And the evaluations of President Trump were far more negative and less positive than those of his predecessors.

Elements of coverage studied

This study examined how the news media covered the first 100 days of President Trump and his administration from Jan. 21 through April 30, 2017. Researchers coded stories from the 24 news outlets – with content pulled from more than 40 specific programs or websites – for a number of measures:

Trigger: This measure identifies the actor responsible for the action, event or editorial decision that initiated a story's production. For instance, a story about health care may have been triggered by a speech by the president or a new bill written by a Republican member of Congress. In the first case, the trigger would be the Trump administration, while in the second it would be congressional Republicans. There were 12 different types of triggers identified in this study.

Topic: News stories were first coded as being about one of 44 specific topics or storylines (the most prominent topic within each story was coded as the story's overall topic), which then were grouped into three broad topic categories: 1) Domestic issues 2) foreign affairs and 3) the president's management and political approach.

Frame: When reporting a story about a specific topic, there are various frames that journalists can use to orient the narrative. This study classified stories into one of two main frames (whichever accounted for more than 50% of the story): 1) the president's leadership and character or 2) his core ideology and policy agenda. For example, an article or segment about health care could be framed around the legislative differences in what the administration is proposing versus members of Congress (thus coded as core ideology and policy agenda). Or, such a story could be framed around the evaluation of the president in terms of his outreach to and relationship with members of Congress, which would then be coded as leadership and character.

Source types: The study also measured nine different types of sources that might be cited in a story: 1) Trump or a member of the administration, 2) the Trump organization or a family member (not in the administration), 3) a congressional Democrat, 4) a congressional Republican, 5) an issue-based group or interest group, 6) an expert, 7) a poll, 8) a journalist (other than the reporter or anchor of the story) or news organization, and 9) a citizen. This measure identifies the presence of a *type* of source in any given article, not the total number of individual sources. There could be more than one source within any source category, such as quotes from two members of the administration. There may also have been sources used outside the types listed above that were not captured in this study.

Assessment of the Trump administration: In this analysis, each statement in a story (made by a source or the reporter him or herself) was analyzed to determine how, if at all, it assessed President Trump and his administration's actions or words. Within a story, there needed to be at least twice as many positive as negative statements for a story to be considered positive and vice

versa to be considered negative. If this threshold was not met, stories were coded as neither positive nor negative.

Refutations: The news media can play a fact checking role in its coverage of politics and, in the course of that fact checking, can sometimes indicate that a statement is inaccurate or a misrepresentation. Accordingly, this measure identifies any instance in which the journalist directly challenges a statement made by Trump or a member of his administration, by saying it is incorrect.

Trump tweets: This measure identifies whether a story included a direct tweet from President Trump, either cited in text or repeated verbally.

1. Coverage from news outlets with a right-leaning audience cited fewer source types, featured more positive assessments than coverage from other two groups

Americans' news habits are diversifying, and where people turn for their political news often differs by their own political leanings. This study examines coverage of the Trump administration's first 100 days and what impact differences in media choices can have on the news Americans may receive.

The 24 news outlets studied here were organized into three groups based on their audiences' political orientation: outlets with two-thirds more audience members who are right of center than left (according to Pew Research Center surveys), those with two-thirds more left of center than right, and outlets with a more evenly distributed audience base. In these surveys, respondents were asked whether they regularly got news about the 2016 election or about politics from each outlet.

Overall, the study found that Americans tended to hear about a similar mix of topics from the news media, whether or not those outlets had a left-leaning audience or a right-leaning audience. Similarly, a good deal of the coverage across outlets was framed around the president's leadership and character rather than policy.

But there were also differences across outlets based on the ideological composition of their audiences. In particular, the balance of positive or negative assessments made about the administration's words or actions varied, as did the voices that were featured in stories. It was primarily the outlets with a right-leaning audience that differed from those with a left-leaning and a more mixed audience, which were more similar to each other.

It is important to note that there are differences in the coverage across the three platforms studied. For example, stories appearing on a digital platform were overall much more likely to name multiple source types than stories from both television and radio. Even so, there are large differences within platforms across the outlet groupings. For number of source types, three-quarters of digital stories from outlets with a left-leaning audience cited multiple sources, 17 percentage points higher than those from outlets with a right-leaning audience (58%). The same pattern holds for both television and radio. This suggests, then, that platform may be a small part of the story, but is not the full story. There are still decisions made within news organizations that impact the content audiences receive.

General topics covered and overarching frames were similar across outlet groups

During the first 100 days of the Trump administration, news outlets covered a very similar mix of topics and were united in framing their stories much more around leadership rather than policy debates. This was true across the three key groupings of news outlets based on the ideological leaning of their audience.

Outlets with a more left-leaning audience, those that lean more to the right and those with a more mixed audience were about as likely to focus the bulk of their coverage on the same five specific topics: the president's political skills, immigration, appointments and nominations, U.S.-Russia relations and health care. And rolling up all 44 of the topics studied into three broad areas shows similar proportions of

Outlets with a left-leaning, right-leaning and mixed audience covered similar topics, used similar frames

% of Trump administration stories that were about …

	Outlets with a left-leaning audience	Outlets with a mixed audience	Outlets with a right-leaning audience
	%	%	%
Broad topic categories			
Domestic issues	40	37	43
President's management and political approach	35	32	33
Foreign affairs	24	31	24
Top 5 specific topics			
Political skills	16	16	21
Immigration	12	15	15
Appts./nominations	15	13	10
U.S.-Russia relations	12	15	10
Health care	11	8	8

% of Trump administration stories that were framed as …

Leadership and character	72	75	76
Ideology and agenda	28	25	24

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100% because of rounding. N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

coverage around each: domestic issues, president's management and political approach, and foreign affairs (though outlets with a more mixed audience put slightly greater emphasis on foreign affairs).

Stories from outlets appealing to a right-leaning audience cite fewer source types – including fewer experts, issue groups and the administration

Beyond the similar topic and frame of stories, however, other differences emerge. A majority of stories from outlets with a left-leaning and a more mixed audience included at least two of nine different types of sources assessed (70% and 62%, respectively). That was true, however, of less than half (44%) of stories from outlets appealing to a right-leaning audience.

Outlets appealing to a right-leaning audience less likely than other outlet groups to cite multiple source types

% of Trump administration stories that cited _____ source types

■ No   ■ One   ■ Two or more

	No	One	Two or more
Outlets with a right-leaning audience	15%	42%	44%
Outlets with a mixed audience	6	32	62
Outlets with a left-leaning audience	4	26	70

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100% because of rounding. Numbers may not add up to 100 because of rounding. N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
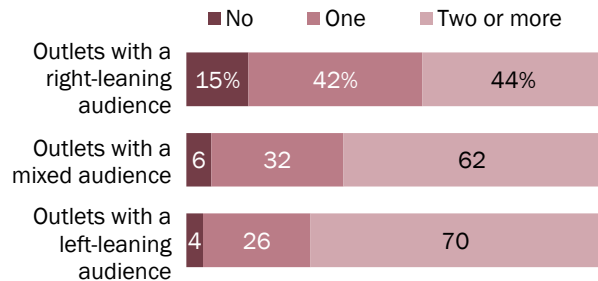"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The specific types of sources cited less frequently by outlets with a right-leaning audience were members of the Trump administration, outside experts and interest or issue groups.

Outlets with a right-leaning audience were roughly one-fourth as likely as outlets with a left-leaning audience to cite at least one outside expert in their stories (5% compared with 22%) and about one-third as likely to do so as outlets with a more mixed audience (16%).

Similarly, statements from issue groups such as the Sierra Club, National Rifle Association or U.S. Travel Association appeared in just

Outlets appealing to a right-leaning audience less likely to cite administration, experts, interest groups

% of Trump administration stories that cited each source type

Outlets with a …
■ Left-leaning audience ■ Mixed audience ■ Right-leaning audience

	Trump/admin	News media	Cong. Rep.	Cong. Dem.	Expert	Interest group	Cong. Rep. AND Dem.*
Left-leaning	78	39	29	22	22	16	14
Mixed	80	25	26	22	16	14	15
Right-leaning	55	41	18	17	5	5	7

*Includes stories that cite both a Republican and Democratic member of Congress.
Note: Not all source types studied shown. Multiple source types may appear in one story. N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
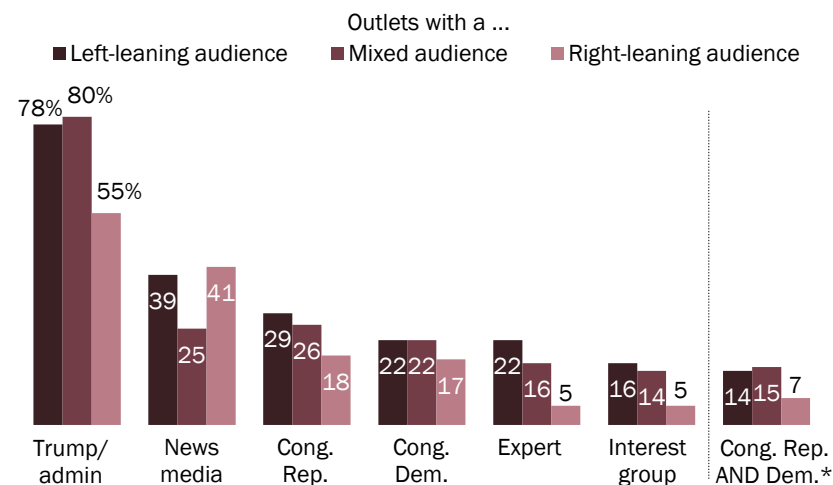"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

5% of stories from outlets with a right-leaning audience, compared with 16% of those with a left-leaning and 14% of those with a more mixed audience. And while roughly eight-in-ten stories from outlets with a left-leaning (78%) or more mixed audiences (80%) cited Trump or another member of the administration, that was the case for closer to half (55%) of stories from outlets with a right-leaning audience.

Additionally, coverage from outlets appealing to a right-leaning audience was half as likely as coverage from the other two groups to cite *both* a Democratic and Republican Congress member in the same story – 7%, versus 14% among outlets with left-leaning and 15% among outlets with a more mixed audience.

One area where outlets with a more mixed audience differed from the others was in the use of journalists as sources. While members of the news media were cited in about four-in-ten stories from both outlets with a right- and left-leaning audience (41% and 39%, respectively), they appeared in just a quarter of stories from outlets with a more mixed audience. This is in sync with the lower tendency of this group to produce stories that stemmed from a journalist's own statement, action or investigative reporting.

Outlets with left-leaning and more mixed audiences offer more negative assessments of Trump and the administration's words or actions; those with right-leaning offer more positive

The statements made by the sources in a story as well as the reporter him- or herself determine whether a story overall has a positive, negative, or neither positive nor negative evaluation of the subject matter of the story. During the first 100 days of the Trump presidency, the tenor of the assessments of the president and his administration's words and actions differed markedly in outlets with a right-leaning audience compared with the other two groups.

The tone of coverage from outlets with a left-leaning audience and those with a more mixed audience was far less positive and more negative toward the Trump administration than coverage from those with a right-leaning audience.
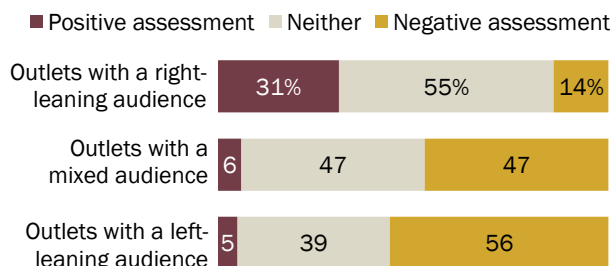
In these first two groups – those with a left-leaning audience and those whose audience is more mixed – stories with an overall negative assessment outweighed those with a positive assessment by at least seven-to-one. More than half (56%) of stories from outlets with a left-of-center audience offered a negative evaluation of the president and his administration, compared with just 5% that offered a positive one. Among outlets with a more mixed audience, the balance was 47% negative to 6% positive.

Outlets with a right-leaning audience had far more stories with a positive assessment of Trump/administration

% of Trump administration stories that had an overall ...

■ Positive assessment ☐ Neither ■ Negative assessment

	Positive	Neither	Negative
Outlets with a right-leaning audience	31%	55%	14%
Outlets with a mixed audience	6	47	47
Outlets with a left-leaning audience	5	39	56

Note: Stories coded as positive had at least twice as many positive as negative statements; negative stories had at least twice as many negative as positive statements. All other stories are coded as neither. N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

One example of a story with a negative assessment appeared in a [Los Angeles Times story](#) about a march in Mexico City demonstrating against Trump and his policies. "'We are not against the American people. This is about Trump, who is spreading hate and division,' said Maria Garcia, a former resident of Chicago who carried an unflattering, papier-mache likeness of the U.S. president as she marched through the Mexican capital. 'The United States and Mexico are natural friends and allies, but Trump is destroying this,' added Garcia, who later publicly burned the Trump effigy."

In contrast, among the outlets with a right-leaning audience, about twice as many stories carried a positive assessment of the president (31%) as a negative one (14%). Most (55%) were neither clearly positive nor negative.

In <u>one example from IJR</u>, the journalist praised Trump's pick of Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster for national security adviser: "President Trump is adding a brilliant and capable military man to his staff of national security advisers."

Assessment across outlet groups by topic

The tendency of outlets with a left-leaning or a more mixed audience to deliver a greater amount of negative coverage than those with a right-leaning audience extended across the five most prominent topic areas covered.

In fact, in outlets appealing to a left-leaning audience and those with a more mixed audience, negative coverage exceeded positive or neutral coverage for four of the five main topic areas: the president's political skills, immigration, U.S.-Russia relations and health care. The exception was coverage of presidential appointments and nominations, which contained equal portions of stories with neutral and negative assessments. Across all five topics, positive assessments made up no more than 8% of stories.

Among the outlets appealing to a right-leaning audience, on the other hand, the largest portion of stories tended to carry neither a clearly positive nor clearly negative assessment. Furthermore, though never a majority share of coverage, positive assessments were consistently far more prevalent than in other groups.[1]

---

[1] The number of stories for three of the five most prominent topics is more limited for the group of outlets whose audience leans to the right.

As time passed during these first 100 days, the overall assessments of the administration's words or actions in stories from outlets with a left-leaning audience and those with a more mixed audience became less negative and more neutral, though no more positive; the tone of coverage from those with a right-leaning audience had no consistent pattern over time.

Outlets with left-leaning and mixed audiences over time became less negative, more neutral in their assessments of the Trump administration

% of Trump administration stories in each week that had an overall ...
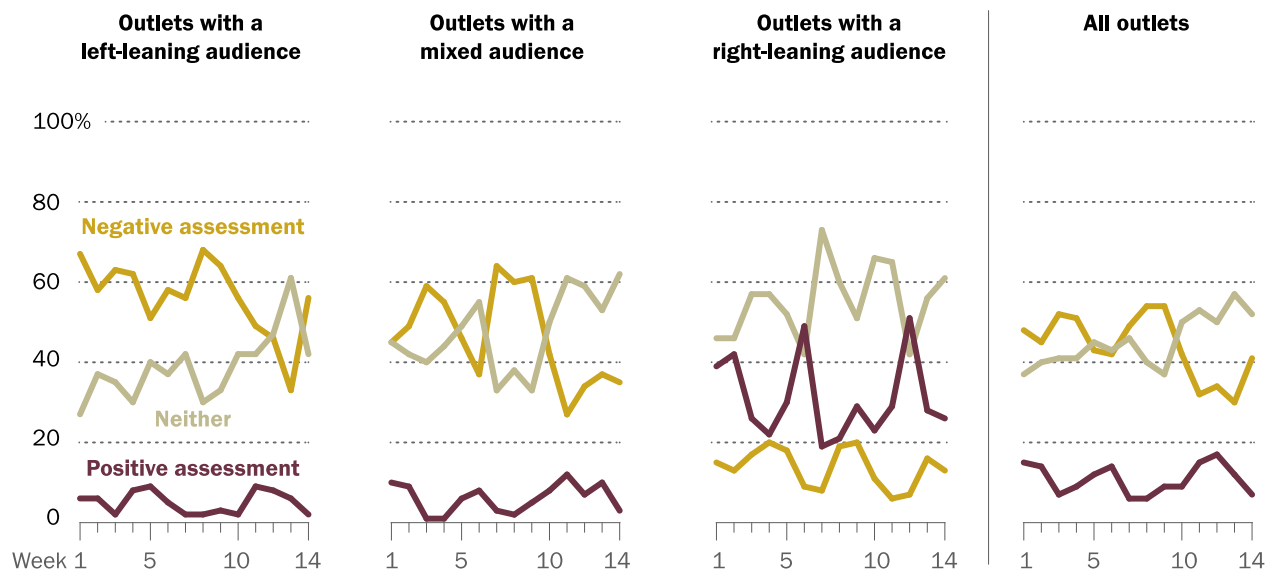
Note: Stories coded as positive had at least twice as many positive as negative statements; negative stories had at least twice as many negative as positive statements. All other stories are coded as neither. N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Refutations by journalists most common in outlets with a left-leaning audience, Twitter citations more even

Overall, the reporter or anchor directly refuted something President Trump or his administration said in one-in-ten stories studied. But this was about seven times as likely to occur in coverage from outlets appealing to a left-leaning audience (15%) than a right-leaning audience (2%). This occurred in stories from outlets with a more mixed audience 10% of the time.

Looking more deeply into the outlet groups where this was more common (outlets with a left-leaning or more mixed audience), refutations were most likely to appear around the topic of the president's political skills (27% and 25% of stories, respectively) than any of the other five prominent topics.

For example, in a CNN piece reviewing the president's first week in office, the reporter stated that Trump "vowed to pursue a 'major investigation' into the massive voter fraud conspiracy he's peddled as a means of explaining away his loss in the presidential popular vote – even though there is, again, no evidence anything of the sort occurred."

Outlets with a left-leaning audience most frequently had journalist refutations of statements from Trump/administration

% of Trump administration stories that refuted a Trump/administration statement

Note: N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
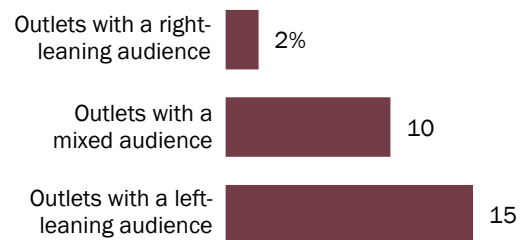"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Additionally, for both of these outlet groups – those with a left-leaning audience and those with a more mixed audience – stories with a refutation were more likely to be negative in tone than those without a refutation.[2]

In another example, from a segment from CNN's Anderson Cooper 360, the host refuted the president's claim that U.S. intelligence agencies agreed with his position that Russia did not try to influence the 2016 election. Cooper said: "The other pushback from the White House today via Twitter was they said, I'm putting it up, 'The NSA and FBI tell Congress Russia did not influence electoral process.' That is not true. The official White House position on this was not true."

---

[2] There are too few stories with refutations of Trump/administration statements from outlets with a right-leaning audience for this analysis in this outlet group.

The three outlet groups were similar in the extent to which stories included direct tweets from the president, though those with a more mixed audience were somewhat more likely than those with a right-leaning audience to do so (19% vs. 11%), while those with a left-leaning audience fell in between.

News outlets were similar in use of Trump tweets

% of Trump administration stories that included a tweet by Trump

Outlets with a right-leaning audience	11%
Outlets with a mixed audience	19
Outlets with a left-leaning audience	15

Note: N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
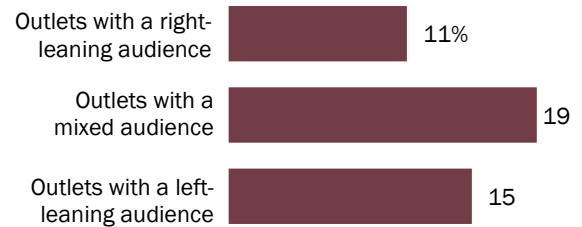"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Statements and actions from the administration drove most coverage – though less so among news outlets with a right-leaning audience

What sparked the production of a story in the first place differed in subtle ways across the three outlet groups. Stories produced by outlets with a right-leaning audience were less likely to stem from actions by Trump and the administration – though it was still the most common trigger (37% of stories versus 45% among outlets with a left-leaning audience and 50% among a more mixed audience). Stories from outlets with a more mixed audience, meanwhile, were less likely to be driven by the news media themselves – either by their own investigative work or by a statement or action by a member of the news media.

Administration statements and actions drive most coverage for all outlet groups

% of Trump administration stories produced as a result of a statement or action by …

	Outlets with a left-leaning audience	Outlets with a mixed audience	Outlets with a right-leaning audience
	%	%	%
Trump/administration	45	50	37
News media	20	13	25
Congressional Rep. or Dem.	10	9	11
Other government	14	16	15

Note: Trigger categories below 10% are not shown here. Other government includes other federal, state and local actors. N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

2. Five topics accounted for two-thirds of coverage in first 100 days

During the first 100 days of the Trump presidency, five news topics accounted for fully 66% of all coverage studied across 24 different news outlets: political skills (17%), immigration (14%), presidential appointments and nominations (13%), U.S.-Russia relations (13%) and health care (9%).

These topics reflected the major events that occurred during the first 100 days of the Trump administration.

Stories of Trump's political skills spanned a wide range of issues and events, such as the delivery of his first speech to a joint session of Congress, his management of White House staff, and his promotion and handling of claims about wiretapping.
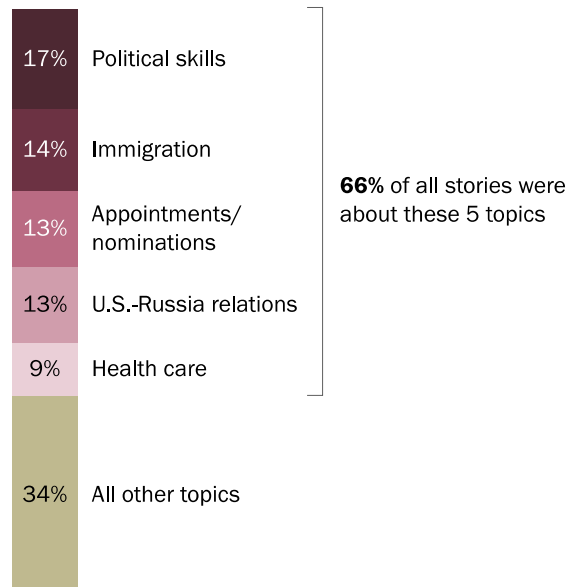
Immigration coverage looked at the president's executive order limiting the entry of travelers from certain countries and the legal challenges to it, as well as stories on the border wall with Mexico, illegal immigration and so-called sanctuary cities.

Stories about nominations and appointments included Trump's selection of Cabinet members, such as Sen. Jeff Sessions as attorney general and Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster as national security adviser. They also included the nomination and confirmation of Judge Neil Gorsuch as a Supreme Court justice.

Five topics accounted for two-thirds of all coverage of the early days of the Trump administration

% of Trump administration stories that were about each topic

17%	Political skills
14%	Immigration
13%	Appointments/ nominations
13%	U.S.-Russia relations
9%	Health care
34%	All other topics

66% of all stories were about these 5 topics

Note: N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Allegations about Russia's possible involvement in the 2016 election as well as the White House's relationship with Moscow dominated stories on U.S.-Russia relations. Specific events included federal investigations into allegations of collusion and coordination, the related resignation of national security adviser Michael Flynn, and Sessions' recusal from the Russia probe.

Coverage of health care included stories on efforts by Trump and other Republicans to move health care legislation through Congress.

Some differences emerged in coverage of each of these five topics. Immigration and health care, the two most policy-centric issues, were less likely to be framed around leadership than other issues. The actor or type of event that triggered a story (i.e., what spurred a news organization to produce the story in the first place) differed by topic as well. Finally, refutations of something Trump said occurred most frequently in stories about the president's political skills.

In three of the five most common story topics, coverage focused overwhelmingly on the president's leadership and character
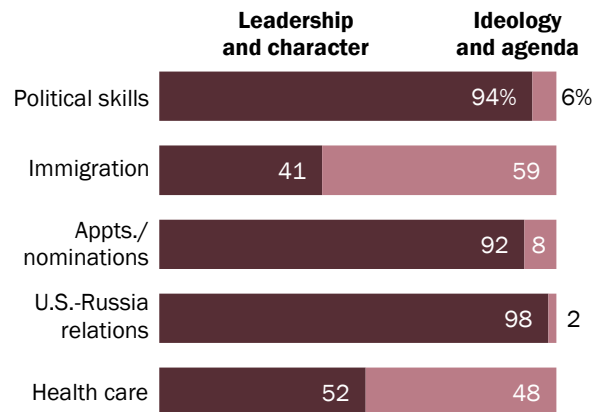
Among the five most prominent topics covered by the news media during the first 100 days of the Trump administration, immigration was the only one to focus more on the president's policy agenda and ideology than his leadership and character: 59% versus 41% of stories.

Nearly all stories for three out of the five most prominent topics framed around Trump's leadership versus policy agenda

% of Trump administration stories about the top five topics that were framed as …

	Leadership and character	Ideology and agenda
Political skills	94%	6%
Immigration	41	59
Appts./ nominations	92	8
U.S.-Russia relations	98	2
Health care	52	48

Note: N=1,989 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Coverage of health care, the other domestic issue among these top five, was about split between the two frames.

The remaining three topics – Trump's political skills, presidential appointments and nominations, and U.S.-Russia relations – were overwhelmingly framed around his leadership and character. For each of these topics, at least nine-in-ten stories mostly focused on elements of leadership and character rather than policy. For example, nearly every story about U.S.-Russia relations was framed around the president's leadership and character (98%), not his policy agenda.

Trump and the administration were most common source type in four of five main topics

About two-thirds or more of all stories produced about the five most common topics cited the president or someone from his administration. And for four of the five topics, the Trump administration was cited at a much higher rate than any other source type. The one exception was health care, for which stories were just as likely to cite a Republican congressional representative (66%) as they were Trump and his administration (64%). During that period, Republicans were trying to move health care reform legislation through Congress. Additionally, stories on health care were more likely than others to source an expert (22%).

Source types cited varied some by story topic

% of Trump administration stories about the top five topics that cited each source type

Legend: ■ Trump/admin ■ News media ■ Cong. Rep. ■ Cong. Dem. ■ Expert ■ Interest group

Political skills: 71%, 38%, 24%, 17%, 12%, 6%
Immigration: 79, 27, 11, 14, 14, 22
Appts./nominations: 68, 35, 36, 40, 13, 16
U.S.-Russia relations: 75, 44, 33, 37, 8, 2
Health care: 64, 24, 66, 18, 22, 13

Note: Not all source types studied shown. Multiple source types may appear in one story. N=1,989 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
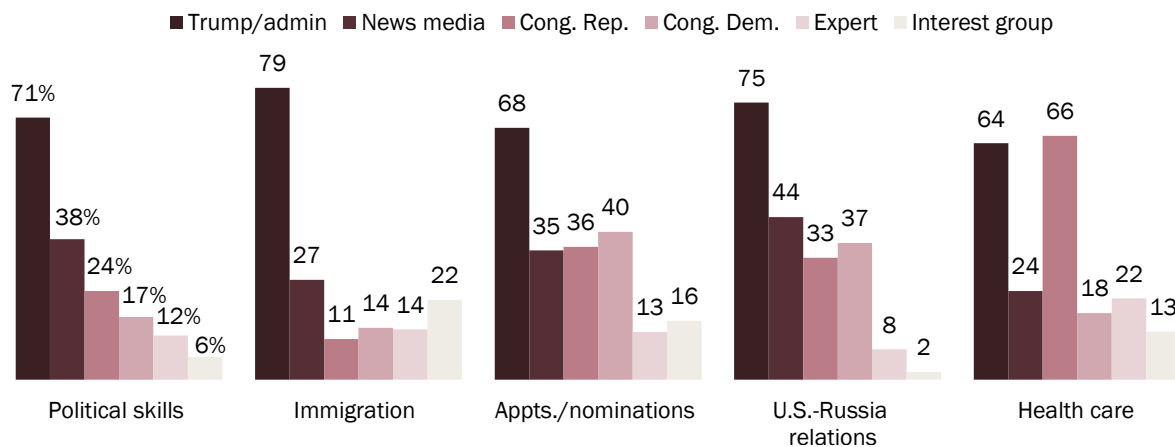"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

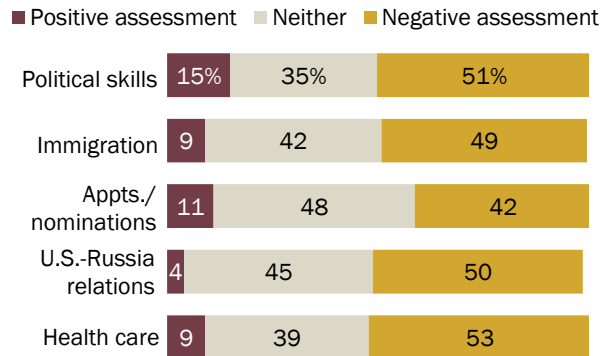## Positive assessments were rare across all five main storylines

Negative assessments of Trump and his administration's words or actions were considerably more common than positive assessments in all of the five most prominent topics. (For an explanation of how a story is categorized as having a positive, negative, or neither positive nor negative assessment, see the methodology.)

At least four-in-ten of all stories across the five most prominent topics were negative, rising to at least half for health care (53%), the president's political skills (51%) and U.S-Russia relations (50%). The only topic where neutral stories even slightly outweighed negative was coverage related to presidential appointments and nominations (48% neutral compared with 42% negative).

Stories about the president's political skills

Positive assessments of Trump/administration rare across all five prominent topics

% of Trump administration stories about the top five topics that had an overall ...

■ Positive assessment ☐ Neither ■ Negative assessment

	Positive assessment	Neither	Negative assessment
Political skills	15%	35%	51%
Immigration	9	42	49
Appts./nominations	11	48	42
U.S.-Russia relations	4	45	50
Health care	9	39	53

Note: Stories coded as positive had at least twice as many positive as negative statements; negative stories had at least twice as many negative as positive statements. All other stories are coded as neither. Numbers may not add up to 100% because of rounding. N=1,989 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

slightly outpaced the other four in terms of positive assessments, though only 15% of stories on this topic. Coverage of U.S. relations with Russia, on the other hand, were the least likely to carry a positive assessment of the president and his administration, at just 4% of all stories.
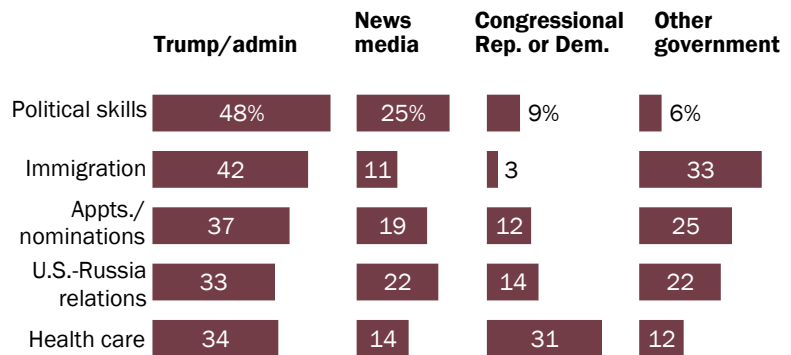
Trump and the administration triggered a large portion of news coverage, though the influence level varied by topic

Overall, the statements and actions of the president and his administration were the largest driver of coverage of Trump's first 100 days, but the amount of influence varied by topic.

About half (48%) of all stories written about the president's political skills were initiated as a result of a statement or action by Trump or a member of his administration. For the other four most common topics, Trump and his administration were also frequent drivers of coverage but were not as dominant, ranging from 33% of U.S.-Russia relations coverage to 42% of immigration.

Trump/administration triggered stories across all main topics, but other actors also came into play

% of Trump administration stories about the top five topics produced as a result of a statement or action by …

	Trump/admin	News media	Congressional Rep. or Dem.	Other government
Political skills	48%	25%	9%	6%
Immigration	42	11	3	33
Appts./ nominations	37	19	12	25
U.S.-Russia relations	33	22	14	22
Health care	34	14	31	12

Note: Trigger categories below 10% are not shown here. Other government includes other federal, state and local actors. N=1,989 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The news media, either through investigative reporting or a statement made by a member of a news organization, were also a significant driver of coverage, prompting a quarter of stories about political skills as well as about one-in-five stories on U.S.-Russia relations (22%) and the president's appointments and nominations (19%). This was less common for stories on health care (14%) and immigration (11%).

Health care coverage was much more likely than other topics to be in response to an action or statement by a Republican or Democratic congressional representative (31% compared with 14% or less for the others), likely tied to Republicans presenting new health care legislation during this period.

A third of immigration coverage (33%) was triggered by other government action, such as a Supreme Court statement, a report by a Federal agency, or a congressional hearing, followed by

stories on appointments and nominations (25%) and U.S.-Russia relations (22%). Only 6% of stories on the President's political skills were in response to other government entities.

Refutations of Trump or administration statements most likely to occur in stories about Trump's political skills

Two-in-ten stories about the political skills of the president carried a refutation by the reporter of something Trump or a member of his administration said. This is at least twice the rate of any of the other four main topics.

For example, Business Insider, in a review of President Trump's first address to a joint session of Congress, refuted his interpretation of economic data:

"Saying he inherited many problems domestically and overseas, Trump began to outline what he believed needed to be addressed. First, were the 94 million people out of the labor force – a misleading statistic, considering it encompasses retirees, students, and stay-at-home parents."

Trump/administration most likely to be refuted in stories about president's political skills

% of Trump administration stories about the top five topics that refuted a Trump/administration statement
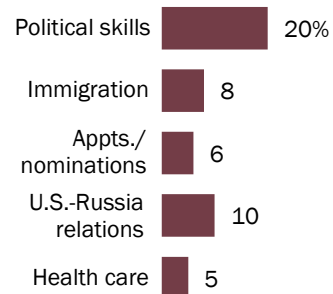
Topic	%
Political skills	20%
Immigration	8
Appts./nominations	6
U.S.-Russia relations	10
Health care	5

Note: N=1,989 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

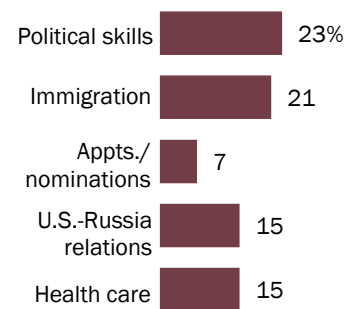## Stories on political skills and immigration were more likely than other topics to cite a Trump tweet

The two topic areas most likely to include a direct tweet from President Trump were the president's political skills (23%) and immigration (21%). The topic area of appointments and nominations was least likely at 7%.

ABC News, for example, in an article on Trump's response to a federal appeals court's decision upholding a restraining order against his immigration executive order, included his tweet: "SEE YOU IN COURT, THE SECURITY OF OUR NATION IS AT STAKE!"

After Trump fired acting Attorney General Sally Yates for refusing to defend his executive order on immigration, CNN reported on his frustration with the delay in confirming Jeff Sessions, his choice for attorney general, including this tweet: "The Democrats are delaying my cabinet picks for purely political reasons. They have nothing going but to obstruct. Now have an Obama A.G."

Trump tweets cited in about one-in-five stories about political skills and immigration

% of Trump administration stories about the top five topics that included a tweet from Trump

Topic	%
Political skills	23%
Immigration	21
Appts./nominations	7
U.S.-Russia relations	15
Health care	15

Note: N=1,989 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

3. A comparison to early coverage of past administrations

Previous Pew Research Center studies have analyzed news coverage of the beginning of each of the past four presidential administrations, starting with President Bill Clinton. During that time, the news media environment has changed dramatically, from expanded cable offerings to a cornucopia of digital news sites. At the beginning of the Obama administration in 2009, researchers examined a cross-section of the news media environment as it existed at that time while also studying how coverage from the original set of news outlets changed across administrations. In 2017, we are able to compare topic, frame and overall assessment of the president and his administration across time using the seven sampled media organizations that have persisted since 1993: the nightly evening news on ABC, CBS, NBC and PBS, as well as the print editions of The New York Times, The Washington Post and Newsweek across the first 60 days of each of the past four presidencies.

Because of the limited time frame and considerably smaller number of outlets, the 2017 comparison sample differs from the broader sample of the modern media landscape featured in earlier chapters of this report. For example, while the leadership and character frame constitutes about three-quarters (74%) of the broader sample, it makes up a slightly smaller portion (69%) of the coverage in the over-time comparison sample. Additionally, the overall assessment of Trump and his administration in the comparison sample was more negative and less positive than the broader sample. This is in part because assessments turned less negative as time went on, and the comparison sample has a month's less data. Still, coverage during this shorter time span was far more negative than positive (62% negative vs. 5% positive).

Assessments of the Trump administration's words or actions far more negative, less positive than in the past
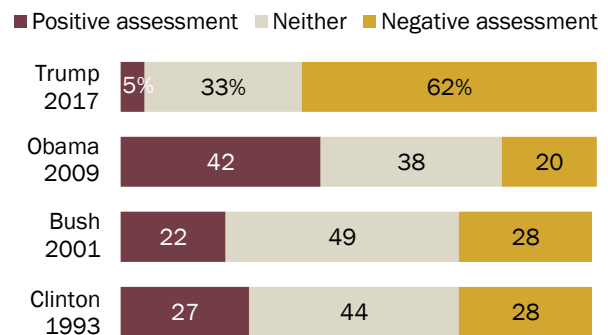
Compared with the first 60 days of the Clinton, Bush and Obama presidencies, news outlets' evaluations of Trump's start in office were far more negative and less positive. About six-in-ten news stories about Trump's first 60 days (62%) carried an overall negative assessment of his words or actions. That is about three times more negative than for Obama (20%) and roughly twice that of Bush and Clinton (28% each).

Coverage was also far less positive, with just 5% of stories conveying an overall positive assessment of the president and the administration. This is in sharp contrast to Obama's first days in 2009, when 42% of the stories offered an overall positive assessment. While the difference is less pronounced, coverage of Bush's and Clinton's early days was still at least four times as positive as Trump's (22% and 27%, respectively).

Both Clinton and Bush received more balanced shares of positive and negative coverage (between 22% and 28%), while 44% and 49% of stories respectively had neither a positive nor negative overall assessment.

Coverage of Trump delivered greater share of negative assessments than coverage of previous presidents

% of stories about each presidency that had an overall...

■ Positive assessment ▪ Neither ■ Negative assessment

	Positive	Neither	Negative
Trump 2017	5%	33%	62%
Obama 2009	42	38	20
Bush 2001	22	49	28
Clinton 1993	27	44	28

Note: Stories coded as positive had at least twice as many positive as negative statements; negative stories had at least twice as many negative as positive statements. All other stories are coded as neither. Not shown: 1% of stories in 1993 and 2001 that were coded as satire. Numbers may not add up to 100% because of rounding. 2017 N=326 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national print newspapers, Newsweek, and network TV shows covering the first 60 days of each administration.
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"
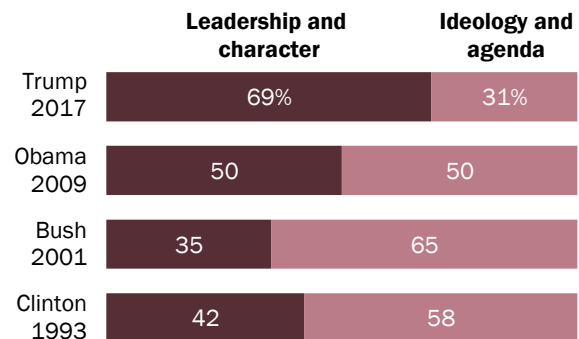
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Coverage shifted away from a focus on ideology to leadership and character in 2017

Another major difference between the coverage of Trump's first days in office and that of his last three predecessors is in the way journalists framed the coverage of the day's events – whether more around leadership and character or the policy agenda and ideology of the president and new administration.

In previous years, the leadership and character frame never comprised more than half of overall coverage.[3] In 2017, however, nearly seven-in-ten stories (69%) employed this lens. Coverage focusing on ideology and agenda, on the other hand, dropped from 50% in 2009 (a level lower than previous years) to about a third (31%) in 2017.

Coverage in 2017 was framed much more around leadership and character than in the past

% of stories about each presidency that were framed as...

Note: In previous years, character and leadership frames were separate. 2017 N=326 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national print newspapers, Newsweek, and network TV shows covering the first 60 days of each administration.
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

---

[3] In 2017, the leadership and character frames were often difficult to disentangle, so they were combined.

The mix of broad topic categories in 2017 aligns closely with 2009 coverage of Obama

Stories about each president were classified by subject matter into three broad topic categories (which in 2017 overlay 44 more specific topics): domestic issues, foreign affairs and the president's management and political approach.

Each received similar levels of attention during the early days of the current administration and the beginning of the Obama administration in 2009. For both presidents, about four-in-ten stories were about their management and political approaches, just slightly higher than stories about domestic issues. Foreign affairs received the least attention in both, though this was slightly higher during Trump's early days (24%) than Obama's (16%).

In contrast, during the first 60 days of both the Bush and the Clinton administrations, foreign affairs as well as management and political approach were covered much less than domestic issues.

Since 1993, coverage less prominent for domestic issues, more prominent for management and political approach

% of stories about each presidency in each topic category

	Domestic issues	Foreign affairs	President's management and pol. approach
Trump 2017	36%	24%	40%
Obama 2009	39	16	44
Bush 2001	56	18	22
Clinton 1993	51	20	26

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100 because studies prior to 2017 included an Other category not shown here. Numbers may not add up to 100% because of rounding. 2017 N=326 stories. Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national print newspapers, Newsweek, and network TV shows covering the first 60 days of each administration.
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

As the political issues facing the country change, so too does the coverage of specific topics within each broad topic category. In each of the past three studies, the specific topics of budget and economics together received the most attention (about three-in-ten for the Clinton, Bush and Obama presidencies).[4] In 2017, however, these topics constituted just 6% of coverage. Instead, one of the most common topics of the early days of the Trump administration – immigration (14% of stories) – did not account for more than 1% of stories in any of the previous years. And U.S.-Russia relations, which was the topic for one-in-ten stories for Trump, was just 2% of stories for Obama.

---

[4] In 2009, these topics were combined, so they are combined for all years here.

Acknowledgments

Methodology

Media coverage of President Donald Trump and his administration is based on data collected from Jan. 21 to April 30, 2017. This time frame begins the day following the inauguration of Trump and includes all weekdays through his 100th day in office. The study is not an analysis of media bias or evaluating whether the coverage of Trump and his administration was accurate or fair.

This study was conducted in two parts: the main analysis and a secondary, comparative analysis. The main analysis studied stories about the president and his administration from a set of digital and broadcast news media (the primary sample). In order to compare across administrations, the comparative analysis pulled stories from a limited set of outlets for a shorter time period (the comparison sample).

Sample design

Primary sample

The primary sample incorporated news stories from a selection of broadcast outlets, digital native news sites and the digital presence of broadcast outlets and print newspapers. The selection criteria for each platform are described below, along with the sampling method for qualifying stories from each outlet.

For this project, qualifying stories were defined as stories that were at least 50% about Trump and/or his administration. Specified editorial or opinion sections or segments were not included, but individual opinion stories not set apart in a designated opinion section were included.

Broadcast

Outlet selection
News content was collected and studied from the television broadcasts of the three primary cable news networks (FOX, CNN, MSNBC), three major commercial broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC), PBS, and radio broadcasts of NPR and the two highest rated talk radio hosts according to Talkers.com (Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity). In all cases, the first 30 minutes of selected programs (defined below), Monday through Friday, were screened for qualifying stories.

Cable

Cable news programming draws its largest audience in prime time. Researchers studied the four news programs on each cable network between 7 p.m. and 11 p.m.[5] Shows were rotated such that two shows from each cable network were included in the sample on each weekday.

Network nightly news

Researchers studied weeknight programming from ABC, CBS, NBC, and PBS. Only episodes from every second day were included in this analysis, and at least one network's news show was included each weekday.

Radio

Within radio, every episode of Rush Limbaugh and The Sean Hannity Show was included in the sample. For NPR, Morning Edition and All Things Considered were rotated such that one was included each day. Radio broadcasts were recorded from online streams using automated tools. In the case where shows were accidentally not recorded, or the streams were pre-empted for other programming (although the show itself was still produced), researchers used alternate recordings.[6] For Limbaugh and Hannity radio programs, researchers used podcasts, while for the NPR shows researchers used the daily archive of the show on each program's website.

Story selection

Individual segments from each show's sample were selected as follows: First, a trained team of coders identified all story segments within the first 30 minutes of a program that focused primarily (at least 50%) on Trump or the administration's actions and policies. Every third story from each coded day was then selected for inclusion, and the starting story was also rotated each day (i.e., one day would start with the first story about Trump or the administration, the next with the second, etc.). Segments that were shorter than 30 seconds were not included in this study.

Outlets and shows included in the broadcast component of the primary sample:

Network
ABC World News Tonight
NBC Nightly News
CBS Evening News

---

[5] CNN only airs three shows between 7p.m.-11p.m., so The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer was also sampled. Additionally, many cable shows were regularly pre-empted with other programming, especially on CNN, and were not coded in these cases. On April 21, 2017, The O'Reilly Factor was canceled and Tucker Carlson Tonight moved to that slot on April 24. Both Fox News shows were coded as normal during this transition.

[6] The alternate recordings did not include commercials or headlines, thus researchers had to determine what the comparable 30 minutes would be. To do this, for each show, coders compared a sample of episodes in which the full recording was available to the alternate version in order to determine how far into the alternate version to code. For instance, on average, the 30 minute mark of the recorded version of Hannity occurred 23 minutes into the archived version.

PBS NewsHour

<u>Cable</u>
CNN
▪ The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer (5 p.m.)
▪ Erin Burnett OutFront (7 p.m.)
▪ Anderson Cooper 360 (8 p.m.)
▪ CNN Tonight with Don Lemon (10 p.m.)

Fox News Channel
▪ The First 100 Days (7 p.m.)
▪ The O'Reilly Factor (8 p.m., canceled 4/21)
▪ Tucker Carlson Tonight (9 p.m., moved to 8 p.m. on 4/24)
▪ Hannity (10 p.m.)

MSNBC
▪ Hardball with Chris Matthews (7 p.m.)
▪ All In with Chris Hayes (8 p.m.)
▪ The Rachel Maddow Show (9 p.m.)
▪ The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell (10 p.m.)

<u>Radio</u>
▪ The Sean Hannity Show
▪ The Rush Limbaugh Show
▪ Morning Edition (NPR)
▪ All Things Considered (NPR)

Digital content

Outlet selection

<u>Digital natives</u>
Digital native websites were selected via a process similar to that used for the 2017 Pew Research Center State of the Media report, which uses comScore data to determine the average monthly audience of outlets. Unique visitors from November 2016 through March 2017, which were acquired from the comScore Media Metrix database for Total Digital Population, were used to determine a site's inclusion in the study. To be included, a site needed to receive 20 million average unique monthly visitors in November-December 2016 and at least 15 million in the first quarter of 2017.

Researchers then examined the resulting sites to determine if they produced original content. This led to a list that included several technology, sports, and culture sites that during the time period did not extensively report on political issues. Accordingly, researchers performed a site search (a search limited to the site domain) on Google for each site to get a sense of the amount of political coverage on each site. There were two steps to this process: First, researchers conducted a Google site search for pages with the word "the" as a control word to get a sense of the overall number of pages on the site. Second, these results were compared with a similar search for "Obama" (who was still in office at the time sampling decisions were first made) and those sites for which less than 10% of pages contained the word Obama compared to the control word were excluded.

The digital native sites included were:

- Breitbart
- Business Insider
- BuzzFeed
- Huffington Post (renamed to HuffPost April 25, 2017)
- Independent Journal Review (IJR)
- International Business Times (IB Times)
- Politico
- Slate
- Vox

Digital content of print newspapers
Five print newspapers were selected for study, based on their top tier circulation ranking (according to the Alliance for Audited Media) that focused daily coverage on national affairs. Researchers then verified that the websites of these five legacy newspapers had traffic of at least 20 million average monthly unique visitors in November-December 2016 and 15 million in the first quarter of 2017 using comScore data.

The included newspapers were:

- USA Today
- The New York Times
- The Washington Post
- The Wall Street Journal
- Los Angeles Times

Digital content of broadcast outlets

Researchers verified that the digital presence for the broadcast outlets identified above had traffic of at least 20 million average monthly unique visitors in November-December 2016 and 15 million in the first quarter of 2017 using comScore data. The digital presence of nearly all broadcast outlets met these criteria, with the websites of MSNBC, Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity being the only exceptions. Digital content for these three outlets was not included.

Story selection

The number of stories selected from each outlet was determined by comScore traffic. Two stories per weekday were selected from outlets whose websites received more than 50 million average monthly unique visitors from November 2016-March 2017, and one story per weekday was selected from sites below 50 million average monthly unique visitors during this time period (the number of stories per weekday for each outlet is noted below).

The outlets from which two digital stories were coded were: Business Insider, BuzzFeed, CNN, Fox News, Huffington Post, The New York Times, USA Today and The Washington Post. The outlets from which one digital story was coded were: ABC News, Breitbart, CBS News, NBC News, IBTimes, IJR, Los Angeles Times, NPR, Politico, Slate, Vox and The Wall Street Journal.

Each day's home page was used to select stories; home pages were drawn from snapshots that were taken at 9 a.m., 2 p.m., and 9 p.m. (all times Eastern) each day and the snapshots used were rotated among those times (e.g., one day may use 9 a.m. and the next 2 p.m.). These snapshots were collected using automated methods; across all sites, researchers wrote scripts to record the HTML and screenshot of the front pages of each site at each of the times above.

The most prominent stories (in terms of where they appear on the home page) that focused on the Trump administration (at least 50% about Trump or his administration) were selected for analysis. Stories that were shorter than 100 words were not included in this study.

The primary sample had a total of 3,013 stories.

Comparison sample

The comparison sample duplicates for 2017 the samples used in other Pew Research Center studies conducted on the beginning of the Clinton, Bush and Obama presidencies. This sample consisted of seven media outlets – two newspapers, one news magazine and four broadcasts – in order to replicate these previous studies. The 2017 time period was Jan. 21 to March 21, 2017. This covers the first 60 days of Trump's presidency, excluding inauguration day, in line with these previous studies.

The specific outlets, selected to develop a sample of coverage provided by the national press, are as follows:

Newspapers
The New York Times
The Washington Post

Weekly magazine
Newsweek

Evening network TV
ABC World News Tonight
CBS Evening News
NBC Nightly News
PBS NewsHour

Newspaper stories were drawn from section front pages (i.e., national news, style, business, metro, Sunday review), editorials and op-ed pieces. In prior years, complete newscasts and complete issues of Newsweek were the basis for the sample of television and magazine stories. In 2017, there was generally much more content related to the presidency, so a random sample of content was drawn from the coverage, excluding weekends. The resulting sample had 326 stories. The 2009 sample had 362 stories, the 2001 sample had 333 stories and the 1993 sample had 566 stories.

Human coding of stories

The data in this study were created by a team of four coders who were trained specifically for this project.

The central variables in this study were:

- **Topic** refers to the general subject matter of the story. For every story, each paragraph was assigned a topic, and the overall topic assigned to the story was the one that was the most common. There were a total of 44 different topics, which are grouped below into the three broad topic categories used throughout the analysis – domestic issues, foreign affairs issues and personal/political issues:

  o *Domestic issues* – Abortion/family planning, agriculture, budget/taxes, business/economy, campaign finance, civil rights/liberties, crime incident or trends, crime/gun policy, culture/arts, defense (U.S. domestic), disasters,

education, election process, environment, health care, immigration, labor, poverty, religion, science/technology, women's rights, Social Security, energy, media, other domestic issues

- o *Foreign affairs* – Foreign trade, Iraq War/Iraq generally, Afghanistan War/Afghanistan generally, Iran, China, U.S.-Russia relations, North Korea, Syria, European Union/NATO, international institutions (other), Israel/Palestine, international terrorism, Middle East (other), other foreign issues

- o *President's management and political approach* – Personal profile/character, appointments/nominations, political skills, political philosophy/ideology

- o *Other*

- **Frame** refers to what the journalist is evaluating the president and his administration on. This study classified stories into one of two main frames: a) the president's leadership and character or b) his core ideology and policy agenda. For every story, each paragraph was assigned a frame, and the overall frame assigned to the story was the one that accounted for a majority of the paragraphs.

- **Source type** refers to a person, group, organization or publication cited in a story. Citations included direct or indirect quotes, interviews, attributions or references accompanying factual information. With this in mind, researchers coded for the presence of nine different source types. Within each story, a source type was coded only once, even if it was cited repeatedly. The nine source types were:

  - o Trump or a member of the administration
  - o The Trump organization or a family member
  - o Congressional Democrat
  - o Congressional Republican
  - o Issue-based group or interest group
  - o Expert
  - o Poll
  - o Other journalist or news organization
  - o Citizen

- **Assessment of the Trump administration** refers to a story's overall tone toward the president and the administration's actions or words. The evaluation measure is tied to the

frame of the story – either leadership and character or core ideology and policy agenda. Each statement (made by a source or the reporter him or herself) in a story was analyzed as to whether it carried a positive, negative or neutral assessment of the president and his administration. Within a story, there needed to be at least twice as many positive as negative statements for a story to be considered positive, and vice versa to be considered negative. Otherwise stories were coded as neither positive nor negative.

- **Trigger** refers to the action, event or editorial decision for which a news story was created. In other words, this captures the impetus for that story to be published on that particular occasion. Stories were categorized as being initiated by:

    o Trump/administration
    o Congressional Republican or Democrat
    o Other government (includes federal agencies, the Supreme Court, congressional hearings, local and state government actors, and other political figures who are not currently in office)
    o Economy
    o Trump organization/family
    o News media
    o Planned political event
    o Unplanned external event
    o Foreign government
    o Other outside actor
    o Poll
    o Other

- **Refutation of Trump or the administration** refers to any instance in which the journalist directly refuted or invalidated a statement made by Trump or a member of his administration. This included instances in which the journalist provided evidence for these claims and those in which no evidence was provided. Judgments about performance, personality or policy without any direct refutation were not included.

Coders were given multiple sets of news stories from each platform type to evaluate during the training period. Once internal agreement on how to code the variables was established, coding of the content for the study began. The Krippendorf Alpha estimate for each variable is below. For each variable, this estimate is based on a minimum of 132 stories and upwards of 201 stories.

- Topic: 0.74

- Frame: 0.65
- Source type: 0.68 or higher (average is 0.81)
- Assessment of the Trump administration[7]: 0.63
- Trigger: 0.70
- Refutation of Trump or the administration: 0.71

Throughout the coding process, staff discussed questions as they arose and arrived at decisions under supervision of the content analysis team leader. In addition, the master coder checked coders' accuracy throughout the process.

---

[7] Master coder included in reliability estimate for the evaluation of the Trump administration.

Grouping of outlets by ideological composition of their audience

Each outlet was grouped according to the ideological composition of its audience. This grouping was based on the ratio of the proportion of the audience of each outlet who self-identifies as a liberal Democrat (including independents who lean Democrat) to the proportion that identifies as a conservative Republican (including independents who lean Republican).

Data were drawn from a pair of surveys conducted Nov. 29-Dec. 12, 2016, and May 30-June 12, 2017, each asking about a different set of outlets (for a summary of each survey's design, see below). The first survey asked respondents if they regularly got news about the 2016 presidential election from each outlet. The second asked if they regularly got news about politics from each outlet. Researchers then calculated each outlet's audience ratio based on the self-identified party identification and political ideology of each respondent. An outlet is considered to have a left-leaning audience if the proportion of all audience members that identify as liberal Democrats is at least two-thirds higher than the proportion that identify as conservative Republicans. Alternatively, an outlet is considered to have a right-leaning audience if the proportion of all audience members that identify as

Outlet by ideological profile of audience

	% of audience who identify as...		
Outlet group	Liberal Dem./lean Dem	Conservative Rep./ lean Rep	Lib. Dem-Cons. Rep difference
Outlets appealing to a left-leaning audience			
	%	%	%
Vox	49	7	42
Slate	47	8	39
The New York Times	51	12	39
Politico	46	8	38
NPR	48	11	37
Huffington Post	43	14	29
Los Angeles Times	37	11	26
The Washington Post	42	18	24
BuzzFeed	37	16	21
PBS	32	17	15
Business Insider	31	17	14
MSNBC	30	17	13
Outlets appealing to a mixed audience			
USA Today	26	16	10
CNN	26	19	7
NBC News	24	19	5
Wall Street Journal	30	25	5
International Business Times	16	13	3
CBS News	22	20	2
ABC News	20	21	-1
Outlets appealing to a right-leaning audience			
IJR	19	33	-14
Fox News	10	43	-33
Breitbart	6	63	-57
Sean Hannity Show (radio)	3	73	-70
Rush Limbaugh Show (radio)	2	74	-72

Note: Includes those who are or lean Democrat and Republican.
Source: Surveys conducted May 30-June 12, 2017, and Nov. 29-Dec. 12, 2016.
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

conservative Republicans is at least two-thirds higher than the proportion that identify as liberal Democrats. And an outlet with a more mixed audience is one in which neither liberal Democrats nor conservative Republicans make up at least two-thirds more of the audience than the other.

Looking at the sources by platform, more than half (54%) of the digital content was from outlets with a left-leaning audience. Radio content, on the other hand, was dominated by outlets appealing to a right-leaning audience (66%). Content from cable TV was more evenly split among audience types, while network nightly TV content was dominated by more mixed-audience outlets (75% of all content).

Digital has the largest left-leaning audience, radio the largest right-leaning audience

% of Trump administration stories from each platform type

	Digital	Network TV	Cable TV	Radio
	%	%	%	%
Outlets with a left-leaning audience	54	25	36	34
Outlets with a mixed audience	32	75	36	--
Outlets with a right-leaning audience	14	--	28	66

Note: N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Survey design

Data in this report for outlet groupings are drawn from two surveys. The first was from a wave of the American Trends Panel (ATP), conducted from Nov. 29 to Dec. 12, 2016, among 4,183 respondents. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 4,183 respondents is plus or minus 2.7% percentage points. The American Trends Panel, created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults recruited from landline and cellphone random-digit-dial surveys. Panelists participate via monthly self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. The panel is being managed by Abt Associates.

Members of the American Trends Panel were recruited from two large, national landline and cellphone random-digit-dial (RDD) surveys conducted in English and Spanish. At the end of each survey, respondents were invited to join the panel. The first group of panelists was recruited from the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey, conducted from Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014. Of the 10,013 adults interviewed, 9,809 were invited to take part in the panel and a total of 5,338 agreed to participate.[8] The second group of panelists was recruited from the 2015 Survey on Government, conducted from Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015. Of the 6,004 adults interviewed, all were invited to join the panel, and 2,976 agreed to participate.[9]

The ATP data were weighted in a multistep process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents' original survey selection probability and the fact that in 2014 some panelists were subsampled for invitation to the panel. Next, an adjustment was made for the fact that the propensity to join the panel and remain an active panelist varied across different groups in the sample. The final step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on a number of dimensions. Gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region parameters come from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 American Community Survey. The county-level population density parameter (deciles) comes from the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census. The telephone service benchmark comes from the July-December 2015 National Health Interview Survey and is projected to 2016. The volunteerism benchmark comes from the 2013 Current Population Survey Volunteer Supplement. The party affiliation benchmark is the average of the three most recent Pew Research Center general public telephone surveys. The internet access benchmark comes from the Center's 2015 Survey on Government. Respondents who did not previously have internet access are treated as not having internet access for weighting purposes. The frequency of internet use benchmark is an estimate of daily internet use projected to 2016 from the 2013 Current Population Survey Computer and Internet Use Supplement.

---

[8] When data collection for the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey began, non-internet users were subsampled at a rate of 25%, but a decision was made shortly thereafter to invite all non-internet users to join. In total, 83% of non-internet users were invited to join the panel.

[9] Respondents to the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey who indicated that they are internet users but refused to provide an email address were initially permitted to participate in the American Trends Panel by mail, but were no longer permitted to join the panel after Feb. 6, 2014. Internet users from the 2015 Survey on Government who refused to provide an email address were not permitted to join the panel.

Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish, but the Hispanic sample in the American Trends Panel is predominantly native born and English speaking.

The November 2016 wave had a response rate of 79% (4,183 responses among 5,280 individuals in the panel). Taking account of the combined, weighted response rate for the recruitment surveys (10.0%) and attrition from panel members who were removed at their request or for inactivity, the cumulative response rate for the wave is 2.6 %.[10]

The data for the outlet groupings in this report is also drawn from a nationally representative survey conducted from May 30-June 12, 2017 among a sample of 4,024 adults 18 years of age or older. The margin of error for the full sample is plus or minus 1.6 percentage points.

The survey was conducted by the GfK Group in English and Spanish using KnowledgePanel, its nationally representative online research panel. KnowledgePanel members are recruited through probability sampling methods and include those with internet access and those who did not have internet access at the time of their recruitment (KnowledgePanel provides internet access for those who do not have it, and if needed, a device to access the internet when they join the panel). A combination of random-digit dialing (RDD) and address-based sampling (ABS) methodologies have been used to recruit panel members (in 2009 KnowledgePanel switched its sampling methodology for recruiting members from RDD to ABS).

KnowledgePanel continually recruits new panel members throughout the year to offset panel attrition as people leave the panel. All active members of the GfK panel were eligible for inclusion in this study. In all, 6,667 panelists were invited to take part in the survey. All sampled members received an initial email to notify them of the survey and provide a link to the survey questionnaire. Additional follow-up reminders were sent to those who had not responded as needed.

The final sample of 4,024 adults was weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, race, Hispanic origin, education, region, household income, home ownership status and metropolitan area to the parameters of the Census Bureau's March 2016 Current Population Survey (CPS). This weight is multiplied by an initial sampling or base weight that corrects for differences in the probability of selection of various segments of GfK's sample and by a panel weight that adjusts for any biases due to nonresponse and noncoverage at the panel recruitment stage (using all of the parameters described above).

Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting at each of these stages. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording

---

[10] Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves are removed from the panel. These cases are counted in the denominator of cumulative response rates.

and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Appendix A: A deeper look at the outlet with the most stories in each outlet group

Of the 24 news media outlets included in this analysis, 12 have an audience that leans more left than right, five appeal to an audience more to the right than left and seven have an audience that is more mixed. In each of these three groups, it is possible to identify the outlet that produced the largest share of the content studied. In this study, the volume of content from any single outlet depends on a number of factors, including each outlet's format, the amount of content produced and audience size. For outlets with an audience that leans to the right, one brand, Fox News, weighs particularly heavy because the study had fewer outlets

Fox, CNN and MSNBC each accounted for the largest portion of content in their respective outlet group

% of Trump administration stories from the news brand that accounted for the most stories in each outlet group

Within outlets with a …	News brand	%
Right-leaning audience	Fox News	49
Mixed audience	CNN	37
Left-leaning audience	MSNBC	16

Note: N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

that appealed to a right-leaning audience. For this reason, Fox News accounted for nearly half (49%) of all stories in this outlet group. CNN, one of seven more mixed-audience outlets, accounted for a little more than a third (37%) of all coverage in this group. While MSNBC had the greatest number of stories from any outlet with a left-leaning audience, it accounted for just 16% of the coverage, largely because there were 12 outlets in this group – more than the other two.

To understand how Fox News, CNN and MSNBC affected totals for each outlet group, researchers examined their coverage alongside the other news media included in the study. The differences that stood out are detailed below.

Fox News was more apt than other outlets appealing to a right-leaning audience to cover immigration, cite Trump/administration sources and members of Congress, but less likely to be driven by the news media

One area where Fox News differed from the remaining outlets in the group appealing to a right-leaning audience was in the share of coverage devoted to each of the three broad topic categories. Fox News devoted less of its coverage to the president's management and political approach than did the remaining outlets with a right-leaning audience (25% vs. 41% of stories), and somewhat more of their stories were spent on domestic issues (47% vs. 40%) and foreign affairs (28% vs. 19%).

When it came to the specific storylines within these broad topic categories, Fox News devoted much more attention to immigration than other outlets with a right-leaning audience (22% vs. 9%) and less attention than others to the president's political skills (14% vs. 27%).

Fox News' emphasis on domestic issues driven by coverage of immigration

% of Trump administration stories that were about each topic

	Fox News %	All other outlets with a right-leaning audience %
Broad topic categories		
Domestic issues	47	40
President's management and political approach	25	41
Foreign affairs	28	19
Top 5 specific topics		
Political skills	14	27
Immigration	22	9
Appts./nominations	9	11
U.S.-Russia relations	11	10
Health care	7	9

Note: N=642 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The sources audiences heard from in the Fox News cable and website content studied also differed in several ways from other outlets in this group. Seven-in-ten Fox News stories (70%) about President Trump or the administration cited the president or a member of his administration, compared with 42% of stories from the remaining outlets in this group. The network was also more likely than all other outlets with a right-leaning audience to cite a Democratic member of Congress and far more likely to cite both a Democrat and Republican Congress member in a story. Conversely, it was less likely to cite the news media as a source. And, overall, 50% of Fox News stories contained at least two different types of news sources, compared with just 38% of stories from other outlets that appeal to a right-leaning audience.

Source types in Fox News coverage notably different than in other outlets with a right-leaning audience

% of Trump administration stories that cited …

	Fox News	All other outlets with a right-leaning audience
	%	%
Trump/administration	70	42
News media	34	47
Congressional Rep.	23	14
Congressional Dem.	21	13
Expert	5	5
Interest group	6	5
Citizen	5	2
Cong. Rep. AND Dem.	11	3
Cited two or more source types	50	38

Note: Not all source types studied shown. Multiple source types may appear in one story. N=642 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

As for what triggered a story, Fox News was about half as likely to produce stories that were initiated by the news media as the remaining outlets in that media grouping (18% vs. 32%).

Conversely, statements or actions by the president or his administration drove more of the coverage for Fox News (43%) than the other outlets with a right-leaning audience (31%).

One area of little difference between Fox News and other outlets whose audiences skew right was the evaluations the stories contained of Trump and his administration's words or actions. Over half of all stories by Fox News (55%) and all other outlets with a right-leaning

Fox News coverage more driven by Trump/administration, less by media than other outlets with a right leaning audience

% of Trump administration stories produced as a result of a statement or action by …

	Fox News	All other outlets with a right-leaning audience
	%	%
Trump/administration	43	31
News media	18	32
Other government	16	14
Congressional Rep. or Dem.	10	12

Note: Trigger categories below 10% are not shown here. Other government includes other federal, state and local actors. N=642 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

audience (56%) were neither positive nor negative, but positive assessments for each (30% and 32%) outweighed negative (15% and 12%) by about two-to-one.

CNN coverage focused more on U.S.-Russia relations and the president's political skills, cited fewer experts and interest groups than other outlets with a mixed audience, and was more often triggered by Trump/administration

One way CNN differed from all other more mixed-audience outlets was the cable network's greater emphasis on foreign affairs.

Overall, foreign affairs accounted for 36% of CNN television and website content studied about Trump and his administration compared with 28% of coverage from the remaining outlets in this group. CNN also devoted less attention to domestic issues (32% vs. 41%, respectively).

The prevalence of CNN's foreign affairs coverage in part reflects a specific focus on the storyline of U.S.-Russia relations: 20% of all of CNN's stories, compared with 12% of content from all other outlets with a more mixed audience. An additional one-in-five stories from CNN focused on the president's political skills (20%) compared with 14% from other more mixed-audience outlets.

CNN's foreign affairs focus tied more to coverage of U.S.-Russia relations than other mixed-audience outlets

% of Trump administration stories that were about each topic

	CNN	All other outlets with a mixed audience
	%	%
Broad topic categories		
Domestic issues	32	41
President's management and political approach	33	32
Foreign affairs	36	28
Top 5 specific topics		
Political skills	20	14
Immigration	13	16
Appts./nominations	11	15
U.S.-Russia relations	20	12
Health care	7	8

Note: Numbers may not add to 100% because of rounding. N=979 stories. Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Another way CNN stood out from all other outlets with a more mixed audience was in how likely its coverage was to offer a negative assessment of President Trump and his administration's words or actions.

Over half of CNN's coverage was negative (56%) while almost four-in-ten stories (38%) were neither positive nor negative. In contrast, coverage from other outlets in this group was less likely to be negative (42%) than to be neither positive nor negative (52%).

When it came to the sources cited, a few differences also stand out. CNN was about half as likely as all other outlets with a more mixed audience to cite an expert (8% compared with 20%). They were also three times less likely to source an interest group in their stories (6% compared with 18%). Roughly half (54%) of CNN's stories included two or more source types, compared with about two-thirds (67%) of coverage from other, more mixed-audience outlets.

When considering what triggered CNN's coverage compared with all other more mixed-audience outlets, there was little difference except for how often CNN responded to actions or statements by Trump and his administration. Over half (54%) of all stories by CNN were in response to something Trump or his administration did or said, slightly higher than all other outlets appealing to a more mixed audience (48%).

CNN's coverage more negative than other mixed-audience outlets

% of Trump administration stories that had an overall …

	CNN	All other outlets with a mixed audience
	%	%
Positive assessment	6	6
Neither	38	52
Negative assessment	56	42

Note: Stories coded as positive had at least twice as many positive as negative statements; negative stories had at least twice as many negative as positive statements. All other stories are coded as neither. N=979 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

MSNBC's coverage was considerably more negative, less likely to cite experts and interest groups, and focused more on U.S.-Russia relations and Trump's political skills than other outlets with left-leaning audience

The most striking difference between MSNBC's coverage and that from all other outlets with a left-leaning audience was in the assessments the stories offered of President Trump and his administration's words or actions.

About eight-in-ten (81%) of MSNBC's stories offered an overall negative assessment of Trump and the administration, compared with about half (52%) of stories from other outlets in this group.

Stories from MSNBC were also less likely to have neither a positive nor a negative assessment than stories from other outlets with a left-leaning audience (15% vs. 43%).

MSNBC's assessments of Trump/administration far more negative than those from other left-appealing outlets

% of Trump administration stories that had an overall …

	MSNBC	All other outlets with a left-leaning audience
	%	%
Positive assessment	4	5
Neither	15	43
Negative assessment	81	52

Note: Stories coded as positive had at least twice as many positive as negative statements; negative stories had at least twice as many negative as positive statements. All other stories are coded as neither. N=1,392 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Another notable difference is that MSNBC's viewers were more likely to hear from other news outlets and less likely to hear from experts and interest groups than audiences of other outlets in this group.

Close to half (48%) of MSNBC's coverage included another news organization as a source for stories compared with 38% of stories from all other outlets in this group.

MSNBC was also far less likely than other outlets in this group to cite an expert (3% vs. 26%) or an interest group (3% vs. 18%).

Additionally, MSNBC was less likely to cite a Democratic member of Congress (17% vs. 22%) or to include both a congressional Democrat and Republican (8% vs. 15%) as a source in the same story than all other outlets in this group.

MSNBC cited the media more often, experts less often than other outlets with a left-leaning audience

% of Trump administration stories that cited each source type

	MSNBC	All other outlets with a left-leaning audience
	%	%
Trump/administration	76	78
News media	48	38
Congressional Rep.	28	29
Congressional Dem.	17	22
Expert	3	26
Interest group	3	18
Citizen	3	4
Congressional Rep. AND Dem.	8	15
Cited two or more source types	61	71

Note: Not all source types studied shown. Multiple source types may appear in one story. N=1,392 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

MSNBC's viewers also heard more about foreign affairs – especially U.S-Russia relations – than did audiences who turned to other outlets with a left-leaning audience.

MSNBC covered foreign affairs at a higher rate than did the rest of the outlets in this group (31% vs. 23%), but stories were less focused on domestic issues (33% vs. 42%). But both MSNBC and the remaining outlets in this group covered the president's management and political approach at about the same rate (37% vs. 35%).

MSNBC's greater emphasis on foreign affairs was driven largely by its coverage of U.S.-Russia relations (21%), which was about twice that of other outlets in this group (10%). MSNBC coverage was also somewhat more likely to include stories about the president's political skills (20%) than other outlets with a left-leaning audience (15%).

MSNBC emphasized U.S.-Russia relations far more than other outlets with a left-leaning audience

% of Trump administration stories that were about each topic

	MSNBC	All other outlets with a left-leaning audience
	%	%
Broad topic categories		
Domestic issues	33	42
President's management and political approach	37	35
Foreign affairs	31	23
Top 5 specific topics		
Political skills	20	15
Immigration	15	11
Appts./nominations	13	16
U.S.-Russia relations	21	10
Health care	10	11

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100% because of rounding. N=1,392 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Overall, coverage from left-appealing outlets was most often produced in response to actions or statements from President Trump or his administration. However, about half (51%) of MSNBC's coverage was in response to the president or his administration, higher than other outlets with a left-leaning audience (44%). MSNBC was somewhat more likely to have stories driven by a member of Congress than other outlets in this group (15% vs. 9%, respectively).

Appendix B: Coverage across news platforms

Of the more than 3,000 stories included in this study, 63% are from digital websites, 27% from television and 10% from radio. It is important to note that some differences in coverage could be tied to the platform of the content.

Two variables that seemed they could have some element of format at play were examined: number of source types and the use of direct tweets. The tables below display coverage for these two variables, in addition to tone across news platforms, and then outlet group within each platform.

For example, stories on a digital platform were overall much more likely to name multiple source types than stories from both television and radio. Looking at just digital content, though, three-quarters of stories

Mix of source types by platform

% of Trump administration stories from each platform type that cited …

	Digital %	Television %	Radio %
Source type			
Trump/administration	78	74	45
News media	39	26	33
Congressional Rep.	29	24	12
Congressional Dem.	23	18	11
Expert	22	5	9
Interest group	18	5	6
Citizen	4	7	3
Congressional Rep. AND Dem.	15	10	2
Number of source types			
No source types	3	10	22
1 source type	26	39	44
2+ source types	71	50	33

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100% because of rounding. Not all source types studied shown. Multiple source types may appear in one story. N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

from outlets with a left-leaning audience cited two or more sources, 17 percentage points higher those from outlets with a right-leaning audience (58%). The same pattern holds for both television and radio.

Mix of source types by platform and outlet group

% of Trump administration stories from each platform type and outlet group that cited …

Outlets with a …	DIGITAL			TELEVISION			RADIO	
	Left-leaning audience %	Mixed audience %	Right-leaning audience %	Left-leaning audience %	Mixed audience %	Right-leaning audience %	Left-leaning audience %	Right-leaning audience %
Source type								
Trump/administration	78	81	71	75	79	63	80	27
News media	41	30	49	41	15	25	13	44
Congressional Rep.	31	28	23	28	24	20	14	10
Congressional Dem.	24	23	22	18	20	16	10	12
Expert	27	20	7	3	8	2	17	5
Interest group	20	18	9	5	6	2	10	3
Citizen	4	3	3	4	9	7	5	3
Congressional Rep. AND Dem.	16	16	11	9	13	7	4	1
Number of source types								
No source types	3	4	4	8	9	16	8	29
1 source type	23	26	39	32	42	45	49	42
2+ source types	75	70	58	59	49	39	43	29

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100% because of rounding. Not all source types studied shown. Multiple source types may appear in one story. No radio shows with a mixed audience are included in this study. N=3,013.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Evaluation of Trump/administration by platform

% of Trump administration stories from each platform type that had an overall ...

	Digital	Television	Radio
	%	%	%
Positive assessment	8	12	28
Neither	47	36	52
Negative assessment	45	52	19

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100% because of rounding. Stories coded as positive had at least twice as many positive as negative statements; negative stories had at least twice as many negative as positive statements. All other stories are coded as neither. N=3,013.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Evaluation of Trump/administration by platform and outlet group

% of Trump administration stories from each platform type and outlet group that had an overall ...

Outlets with a ...	DIGITAL			TELEVISION			RADIO	
	Left-leaning audience	Mixed audience	Right-leaning audience	Left-leaning audience	Mixed audience	Right-leaning audience	Left-leaning audience	Right-leaning audience
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Positive assessment	5	6	22	6	6	35	5	40
Neither	42	53	54	22	38	55	44	57
Negative assessment	53	41	24	72	57	10	51	3

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100% because of rounding. Stories coded as positive had at least twice as many positive as negative statements; negative stories had at least twice as many negative as positive statements. All other stories are coded as neither. No radio shows with a mixed audience are included in this study. N=3,013.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Presence of Trump's tweets by platform

% of Trump administration stories that …

	Digital %	Television %	Radio %
Included a tweet by Trump	19	12	4
Did not include a tweet by Trump	81	88	96

Note: N=3,013.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Presence of Trump's tweets by platform and outlet group

% of Trump administration stories from each platform type and outlet group that …

Outlets with a …	DIGITAL			TELEVISION			RADIO	
	Left-leaning audience %	Mixed audience %	Right-leaning audience %	Left-leaning audience %	Mixed audience %	Right-leaning audience %	Left-leaning audience %	Right-leaning audience %
Included a tweet by Trump	17	21	19	10	15	7	8	3
Did not include a tweet by Trump	83	79	81	90	85	93	92	97

Note: No radio shows with a mixed audience are included in this study. N=3,013.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Appendix C: Detailed tables

**COVERING PRESIDENT TRUMP IN A POLARIZED MEDIA ENVIRONMENT
CONTENT ANALYSIS DETAILED TABLES
JAN. 21-APRIL 30, 2017**

Topic: Domestic issues

*% of Trump administration stories
that were about each topic*

	%
NET Domestic issues	40
Immigration	14
Health care	9
Budget/taxes	4
News media	3
Defense–domestic	3
Business/economy	2
Civil rights/liberties	1
Environment	1
Election process	1
Energy	1
Abortion/family planning	<1
Crime/gun policy	<1
Science/technology	<1
Domestic issues (other)	<1
Education	<1
Crime incidents or trends	<1
Religion	<1
Women's rights	<1
Campaign finance	<1
Culture/arts	<1
Labor	<1
Poverty	<1
Agriculture	--
Natural disasters	--
Social Security	--

Note: N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Topic: President's management and political approach

% of Trump administration stories that were about each topic

	%
NET President's management and political approach	34
Political skills	17
Appts./nominations	13
Personal profile/character	3
Political philosophy/ideology	1

Topic: Foreign affairs

*% of Trump administration stories
that were about each topic*

	%
NET Foreign affairs	26
U.S.-Russia relations	13
Syria	3
North Korea	3
International terrorism	1
European Union/NATO	1
Foreign trade	1
Iran	1
China	1
Foreign issues (other)	1
Israel/Palestine	1
Iraq War/Iraq	<1
Afghanistan War/Afghanistan	<1
International institutions (other)	<1
Middle East (other)	<1

Note: N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content
analysis of news stories from national
newspaper websites, radio, cable and
network broadcasts and websites, and
digital outlets about President Trump or his
administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017
(Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized
Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Frame

% of Trump administration stories that were framed as ...

	%
Leadership and character	74
Ideology and agenda	26

Note: N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Assessment of Trump/administration

% of Trump administration stories that had an overall ...

	%
Positive assessment	11
Neither	45
Negative assessment	44

Note: Stories coded as positive had at least twice as many positive as negative statements; negative stories had at least twice as many negative as positive statements. All other stories are coded as neither. N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Trigger

% of Trump administration stories produced as a result of a statement or action by …

	%
Trump/administration	45
News media	19
Other government	15
Congressional Rep. or Dem.	10
Outside actor	4
Planned political event	3
Foreign government	3
Poll	1
Unplanned external event	1
Economy	<1
Trump family/business	<1
Other	<1

Note: Other government includes other federal, state and local actors. N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source type

% of Trump administration stories that cited ...

	%
Trump/administration	74
News media	35
Congressional Rep.	26
Congressional Dem.	21
Expert	16
Interest group	13
Citizen	5
Poll	4
Trump org/family member	1
Cong. Rep. AND Dem.*	13

*Includes stories that cite both Republican and Democratic members of Congress.
Note: Numbers do not add to 100% because multiple source types may appear in one story. N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Number of source types cited

% of Trump administration stories that cited …

	%
No source types	7
1 source type	31
2 source types	33
3+ source types	29

Note: N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Refutation

% of Trump administration stories that ...

	%
Refuted a Trump/ administration statement	10

Note: N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Presence of tweet

% of Trump administration stories that ...

	%
Included a tweet by Trump	16

Note: N=3,013 stories.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Broad topic category for each presidency based on comparison sample

% of stories about each presidency that were about each broad topic category

	Clinton 1993	Bush 2001	Obama 2009	Trump 2017
	%	%	%	%
Broad topic categories				
Domestic issues	51	56	39	36
Foreign affairs	20	18	16	24
President's management and political approach	26	22	44	40
Other	3	4	1	--

Note: Topics studied shifted slightly from year to year. 2017 N=326; 2009 N= 362; 2001 N=333; 1993 N= 566.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national print newspapers, Newsweek, and network TV shows covering the first 60 days of each administration.
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Topic: Domestic issues for each presidency based on comparison sample

% of stories about each presidency that were about each topic

	Clinton 1993 %	Bush 2001 %	Obama 2009 %	Trump 2017 %
Abortion/family planning	1	2	1	<1
Agriculture	--	--	--	--
Budget/taxes	25	27	n/a	3
Business/economy (non-budget)	6	2	n/a	2
Budget/taxes + Business/economy combined	n/a	n/a	30	n/a
Campaign finance	1	2	<1	--
Civil rights/liberties	<1	--	<1	1
Crime incidents or trends	--	--	--	<1
Crime/gun policy	<1	<1	--	<1
Culture/arts	--	<1	--	<1
Defense--U.S. domestic	2	3	1	2
Education	<1	6	<1	--
Election process	--	2	--	1
Energy	n/a	n/a	<1	<1
Environment	<1	6	1	<1
Gays in the military	7	--	--	n/a
Health care	5	2	2	8
Immigration	<1	<1	--	14
Labor	2	2	--	--
Media	n/a	n/a	n/a	2
Natural disasters	--	<1	--	--
Poverty	1	--	--	--
Religion	--	5	<1	<1
Science/technology	1	--	3	<1
Social Security	n/a	n/a	--	--
Women's rights	1	--	1	--
Other domestic issues	n/a	n/a	1	<1

Note: Topics studied shifted slightly from year to year. In 2009, business/economy topics were combined. 2017 N=326; 2009 N= 362; 2001 N=333; 1993 N= 566.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national print newspapers, Newsweek, and network TV shows covering the first 60 days of each administration.
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Topic: Foreign affairs for each presidency based on comparison sample

% of stories about each presidency that were about each topic

	Clinton 1993	Bush 2001	Obama 2009	Trump 2017
	%	%	%	%
Foreign policy & U.S. intervention	15	14	n/a	n/a
Iraq	n/a	n/a	3	1
Afghanistan	n/a	n/a	3	1
Russia	n/a	n/a	2	10
Iran	n/a	n/a	1	1
China	n/a	n/a	--	1
North Korea	n/a	n/a	--	<1
Syria	n/a	n/a	n/a	<1
European Union/NATO	n/a	n/a	n/a	1
International institutions (other)	n/a	n/a	n/a	--
Israel/Palestine	n/a	n/a	n/a	2
International terrorism	n/a	n/a	n/a	4
Middle East (other)	n/a	n/a	3	--
Foreign issues (other)	n/a	n/a	2	<1
Foreign trade	3	1	1	2

Note: Topics studied shifted slightly from year to year. In 1993 and 2001, most foreign affairs topics were combined into the "foreign policy & U.S. intervention" category.
2017 N=326; 2009 N= 362; 2001 N=333; 1993 N= 566.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national print newspapers, Newsweek, and network TV shows covering the first 60 days of each administration.
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Topic: President's management and political approach for each presidency based on comparison sample

% of stories about each presidency that were about each topic

	Clinton 1993	Bush 2001	Obama 2009	Trump 2017
	%	%	%	%
Personal profile/character	4	4	3	4
Appts./nominations	7	3	6	15
Political skills	11	11	26	17
Political philosophy/ideology	4	4	6	3
Obama's race/historic nature of his presidency	n/a	n/a	4	n/a

Note: 2017 N=326; 2009 N= 362; 2001 N=333; 1993 N= 566.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national print newspapers, Newsweek, and network TV shows covering the first 60 days of each administration.
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Frame for each presidency based on comparison sample

% of stories about each presidency that were framed as ...

	Clinton 1993	Bush 2001	Obama 2009	Trump 2017
	%	%	%	%
Leadership and character	42	35	50	69
Ideology and agenda	58	65	50	31

Note: In previous years, character and leadership frames were separate and frame was referred to as theme. 2017 N=326; 2009 N= 362; 2001 N=333; 1993 N= 566.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national print newspapers, Newsweek, and network TV shows covering the first 60 days of each administration.
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Assessment of each presidency based on comparison sample

% of stories about each presidency that had an overall …

	Clinton 1993	Bush 2001	Obama 2009	Trump 2017
	%	%	%	%
Positive assessment	27	22	42	5
Neither	44	49	38	33
Negative assessment	28	28	20	62
Satire	1	1	n/a	n/a

Note: Stories coded as positive had at least twice as many positive as negative statements; negative stories had at least twice as many negative as positive statements. All other stories are coded as neither. Stories were not coded for satire in 2009 and 2017. 2017 N=326; 2009 N= 362; 2001 N=333; 1993 N= 566.
Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national print newspapers, Newsweek, and network TV shows covering the first 60 days of each administration.
"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Appendix D: Survey topline questionnaire

2016 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 23 NOVEMBER
FINAL TOPLINE
November 29 – December 12, 2016
TOTAL N=4,183[11]

[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF NEWSSOURCEA AND NEWSSOURCEB]
ASK ALL:
NEWSSOURCEA   Leading up to the presidential election on November 8, which of the following sources did you regularly get news from about the presidential campaigns and candidates? This includes any way that you got the source.
[Check all that apply] **[PROGRAMMING NOTE: RANDOMIZE 1-10 WITH 99 ALWAYS LAST]**

		Selected	Not selected /No Answer
a.	A social networking site, such as Facebook or Twitter		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	32	68
b.	Local TV news		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	52	48
c.	Your local daily newspaper		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	21	79
d.	NPR		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	18	82
e.	Rush Limbaugh Show (radio)		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	8	92
f.	Sean Hannity Show (radio)		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	9	91
g.	Washington Post		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	14	86
h.	New York Times		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	17	83
i.	Drudge Report		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	5	95
j.	Huffington Post		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	14	86
k.	None of the above **[EXCLUSIVE PUNCH]**		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	14	86

[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF NEWSSOURCEA AND NEWSSOURCEB]

---

[11] The Wave 23 survey was administered exclusively in web mode. The survey included N=186 previous mail mode panelists that were converted to web and were provided an internet-enabled tablet if necessary.

ASK ALL:
NEWSSOURCEB   Again, leading up to the presidential election on November 8, which of the following sources did you regularly get news from about the presidential campaigns and candidates? This includes any way that you got the source. *[Check all that apply]* **[PROGRAMMING NOTE: RANDOMIZE 1-9 WITH 99 ALWAYS LAST]**

		Selected	Not selected /No Answer
a.	Breitbart		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	5	95
b.	Buzzfeed		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	7	93
c.	CNN		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	43	57
d.	Fox News Cable Channel		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	39	61
e.	MSNBC		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	26	74
f.	USA Today		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	13	87
g.	Wall Street Journal		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	11	89
h.	Yahoo News		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	12	88
i.	Google News		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	19	81
k.	None of the above **[EXCLUSIVE PUNCH]**		
	Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	22	78

PEW RESEARCH CENTER QUESTIONNAIRE
May 30-June 12, 2017
N=4,024

RANDOMIZE ORDER OF POLSOURCE1 and POLSOURCE2:

ASK ALL:
POLSOURCE1 Which of the following sources do you regularly get news from about GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS? This includes any way that you get the source.

[*Select all answers that apply*] **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS; item g always last]**

		Selected	Not selected/ No answer
a.	ABC News		
	May 30-June 12, 2017 [N=4,024]	36	64
b.	CBS NEWS		
	May 30-June 12, 2017 [N=4,024]	35	65
c.	NBC News		
	May 30-June 12, 2017 [N=4,024]	36	64
d.	Business Insider		
	May 30-June 12, 2017 [N=4,024]	4	96
e.	Vox		
	May 30-June 12, 2017 [N=4,024]	3	97
f.	Independent Journal Review (IJR)		
	May 30-June 12, 2017 [N=4,024]	2	98
g.	None of the above		
	May 30-June 12, 2017 [N=4,024]	42	58

ASK ALL:
POLSOURCE2   Which of the following sources do you regularly get news from about GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS? This includes any way that you get the source.

[*Select all answers that apply*] **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS; item g always last]**

		Selected	Not selected/ No answer
a.	PBS		
	May 30-June 12, 2017 [N=4,024]	21	79
b.	Politico		
	May 30-June 12, 2017 [N=4,024]	7	93
c.	International Business Times		
	May 30-June 12, 2017 [N=4,024]	2	98
d.	Slate		
	May 30-June 12, 2017 [N=4,024]	4	96
e.	Los Angeles Times		
	May 30-June 12, 2017 [N=4,024]	5	95
g.	None of the above		
	May 30-June 12, 2017 [N=4,024]	71	29

ASK ALL:
PARTY   In politics today, do you consider yourself a…?

May 30-
June 12
2017
N=4,024
26	Republican
36	Democrat
30	Independent
6	Something else, please specify
2	No answer

ASK IF (PARTY=3,4,-1)[N=1,494]:
PARTYLN   As of today, do you lean more to…

Based on those who said Independent, something else, or refused on PARTY
N=1,494
38	The Republican Party
48	The Democratic Party
15	No answer

PARTY/PARTY LN COMBINED
PARTY   In politics today, do you consider yourself a…?
PARTYLN   As of today, do you lean more to…

May 30-
June 12
2017
N=4,204

26	Republican
36	Democrat
30	Independent
6	Something else, please specify
2	No answer
40	Republican/Lean Republican
54	Democrat/Lean Democrat
6	Refused to lean

ASK ALL:
IDEO   In general, would you describe your political views as…

May 30-
June 12
2017
N=4,024

7	Very conservative
26	Conservative
41	Moderate
16	Liberal
7	Very liberal
3	No answer