

**NEWSPAPER READER SATISFACTION:
A Preliminary Study of the Local
Public's Perceived Right to Know**

by

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A research study was designed to assess the degree to which the Tampa Tribune, a local daily newspaper, was satisfying the community's perceived "right to know." The researcher was interested in identifying any discernible difference between this concept relative to the satisfaction of three additional variables in the community's reader-newspaper relationship: the degree to which certain previously published newspaper articles and newspaper photographs provided the respondent with information they needed to know, wanted to know, and if such information was provided in sufficient detail.


Additionally, the researcher hypothesized that so conditioned have Americans become to the media-fabricated phrase "the public's right to know" and its alignment with guaranteed freedom of the press and freedom of speech, that a majority of the general public would believe the "right to know" was specifically stated in the United States' Constitution and the First Amendment.

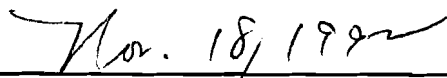
Data gathered from 135 completed questionnaires showed that 73 percent of the respondents were unaware the "right to know" is not specifically stated in any of our nation's founding documents.

Concerning the aforementioned four measured variables, distinctive differences were identified between the newspaper photographs and stories. Further stratification was evident among the photographs ranked as highly visually intense versus those of moderate visual intensity and low visual intensity. Those newspaper stories ranked as highly and moderately newsworthy elicited a strength of response not evident among those of low newsworthiness.

Overall, while the published stories evoked consistent agreement that the information contained therein was what the public wanted, needed and had a right to know, the respondents were less certain they wanted or needed the information contained in the photographs, although they believed they had a right to know that same information.

Abstract approved:


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