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Abstract

This report examines the performance of the media use measures used in the 1984 Continuous Monitoring project. Traugott finds: (1) As expected, television viewership was higher during interesting primary contests, and as the election neared. (2) The variables which measured the "days watched" for television news and "days read" for newspapers behaved as expected over time. Specifically, newspaper readership did not vary with the month of interview or with election period. However, the number of days of reported television news use did vary, both by month and election period. (3) Attention paid to news about the campaign moved appropriately with time, both for newspapers and television, although the "read news about campaign" variable is comparatively muted. (4) Recollection of specific campaign effects -- such as the Presidential debates -- generally decayed as time passed, but inflated slightly after the election. Traugott also conducts a factor analysis to assess the reliabilities of the media use measures. She finds that the items load as expected. Traugott concludes by assessing of the validity of the media measures against opinionation (whether respondents give "don't know" answers to feeling thermometer questions), political interest measures, and political involvement measures. She finds that political interest is more strongly related to media watching than is involvement.