



WBEZ Target Audience Qualitative Report (v1)

CONFIDENTIAL

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Blessing Resources LLC



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Learning Objectives



- ❖ Understand target new consumer needs, sources and desires for local or daily news.
- ❖ Explore positives and negatives of different news source including WBEZ and NPR perceptions.
- ❖ Learn how they define "local" vs. regional or national news.
- ❖ Identify any key gaps in what and how they currently receive news / information – with a focus on more local news.
- ❖ Gain reaction to a specific daily email (or other media like social or mobile app) ideas and which of 4 formats works best (and why).
- ❖ Get reactions to current longer newsletter format.

Qualitative Methodology (1)

Project Details:

- Goal is to determine interest and best way to execute WBEZ newsletter to help attract/retain new (especially Black) brand participants for WBEZ.
- 3 x 2 hour groups:
 - Group 1: Black Women
 - Group 2: Mix of Genders, Black Adults
 - Group 3: Mix of Ethnicities and Genders
- Chicago: Cook and Suburban Cook (many from south side)
- Recruited 8 to seat 6 per group
- Date: Wednesday, June 23 2021
- [Videos of each group available](#)

Qualitative Methodology (2)

- Group 1: Black Women
- Group 2: Black – Mix of Genders
- Group 3: Mixed Ethnicities and Genders
- For All (see screener in Appendix)
 - Not a regular listener/reader of WBEZ or NPR (May be completely unfamiliar)
 - Plan to stay in Chicago next 3 years
 - Live in Chicago area (most came from south side)
 - Open to newsletters
 - Light to medium news consumer
 - Some college making at least \$50k+ household income
 - Not working in competitive industry

Summary of Findings

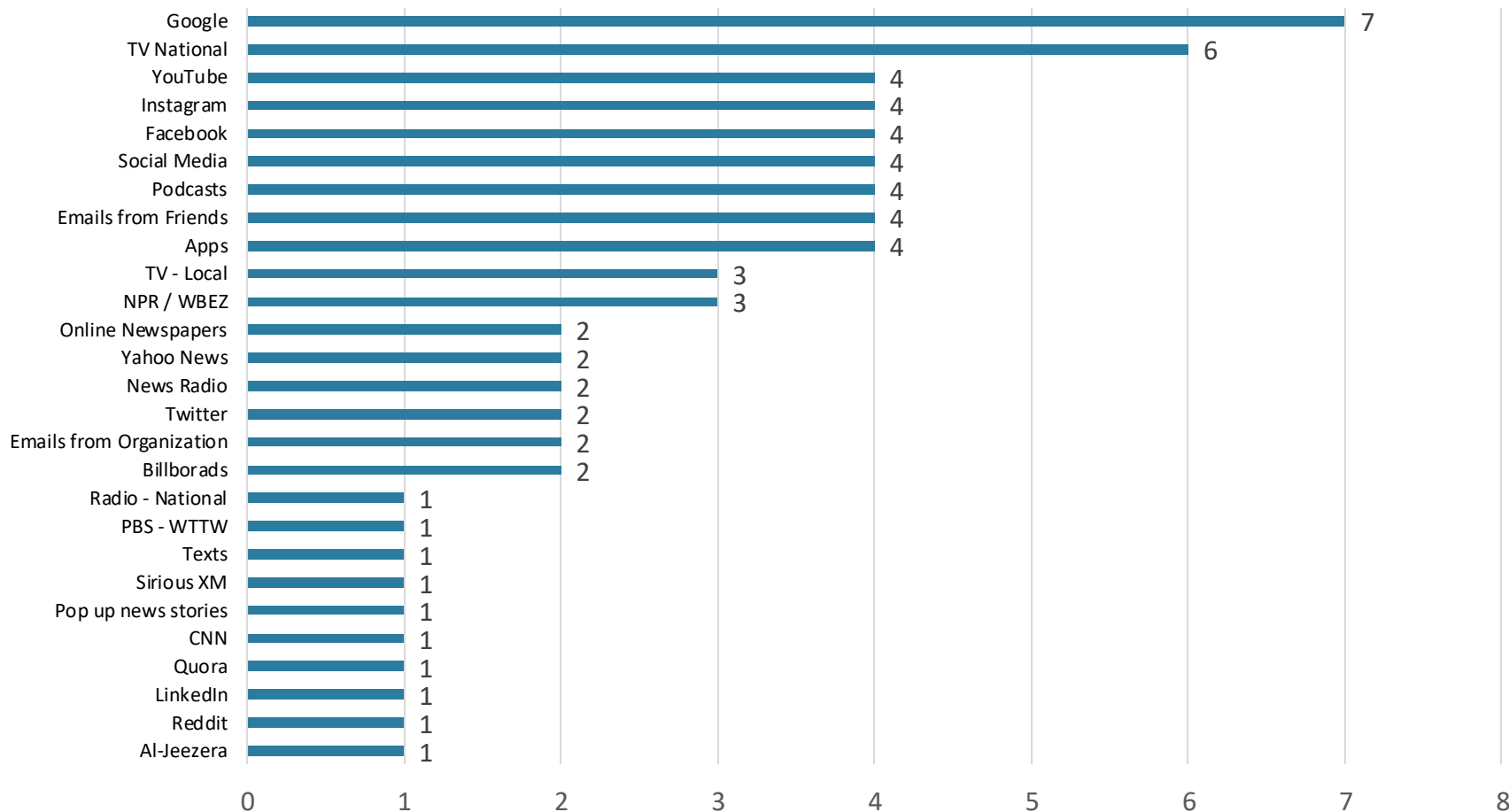
News/Information Sources

- These respondents use a **very wide variety of sources/media** for news or information that can vary by personal taste, urgency/importance, local vs. regional/national/international and their politics.
 - However, getting news or information from **emails (even from trusted sources) is very infrequent and not preferred** (*even though we screened overtly for folks open to email newsletters*).
 - “I get too many emails” (this was repeated by virtually everyone)
 - “I would rather watch or listen than read”
 - “I worry about spam / security”
 - “It can be hard to read / see pictures or videos using my cell phone”
- While TV is still used, **increasing a wide variety of online/mobile app sources are preferred** (see next page). Many also share news stories (often via social or text) and word-of-mouth marketing could be effective tool for WBEZ among existing listeners to attract a wider audience.
- **Radio was not mentioned very often for news/information** unless a specific program, Sirius XM or for an immediate big news story, for a quick check of weather or on some commuting where a car is involved.

News / Information Sources

- For this younger, urban audience, online tools increasingly are the go to source.

Current Sources Used – Number of Mentions (Unaided)



News/Information – “Local” Defined and Sources

- Definition of “local” news also varies from (a) state level, (b) Chicago region down to (c) a very specific community where they live (Ex: Streeterville) - there was no strong consensus – though even those who defined local in a very discrete way wanted to hear of regional/state news too.
 - Despite how they defined ‘local’, the biggest stated needs were **brief, clear summaries/implications of state/regional news and much more specify, single-source news and information on local neighborhood or Chicago city happenings (especially positive news).**
- The **source(s) of the news is also important** and these respondents are open / like a variety of sources including WBEZ/NPR if:
 - They are explicit and cited
 - Sources are objective or clear on if opinion vs. news
 - They don’t have a strong POV different vs. their personal politics or viewpoints
 - *“I won’t listen to certain news outlets because I feel they are very biased.”*
 - *“I like to hear different POV’s.”*
 - *“NPR is generally more objective, but they can use other sources too if it meets their standards.”*

View of WBEZ and NPR

- These respondents were screened to not be heavy users of WBEZ and, in general, familiarity is low for WBEZ. They felt WBEZ is a bit too 'quiet' / not visible enough locally.
 - **Note many respondents came from the south side of Chicago**
 - They see WBEZ almost exclusively as a **radio station** (few mentions of app, online etc.) and targeting NPR type, older listeners
 - They do respect its local roots and would expect credible information
- NPR is well known and is seen as credible, not inconsistent with their politics, but also a bit “*stodgy*” and seen more for older people on national/international/broader issues.
- **Black women (especially those with kids) are the most passionate and frustrated – feeling they do not have enough of a voice / advocate for issues they care deeply about** (often social justice and volunteer related). They may be a specific target to create relevant content.
- Other respondents (men, Latinos etc.) have a mix of interests in specific topics relevant to them (criminal justice, state news, gaming, sports, local events), but none are not seen as big ‘gaps’.
- **Importantly, NO ONE SOURCE currently meets all their needs and they see gaps especially in a lot of more local, neighborhood specific news/information.**

Highest Topics of Interest

- Similar to sources, there is a very wide variety of topics that any one individual is interested in, but as we had them write down or rank from the list we provided, a number of topics are of highest interest to many of the respondents – that is very ‘local’.

<u>CONSISTENT HIGH INTEREST ACROSS MOST RESPONDENTS</u>
<i>Things To Do: Cultural Events, Music</i>
<i>Dining: Openings, Recommendations</i>
<i>Neighborhoods</i>
<i>Local Business, Economy</i>
<i>Reviews: Movies, Restaurants, Shows, Concerts etc.</i>
<i>Health and Wellness</i>
<i>Criminal Justice and Public Safety</i>
<i>Weather</i>
<i>Simplifying Complex Topic – 5 things to Know About xx Topic</i>
<i>Local politics: What’s Happening in City Hall, Springfield</i>

Polarizing, Moderate or Less Frequent Need Topics of Interest

- There is more moderate, polarizing or "I don't need everyday" reactions to educational topics, pre-edited news I can use or humor.

<u>POLARIZING or MODERATE INTEREST ACROSS MOST RESPONDENTS</u>
<i>News I Can Use</i>
<i>Humor</i>
<i>Environment Related</i>
<i>Education Related: Schools, Colleges etc.</i>
<i>Science and Technology</i>

Lowest Interest Topics

- While a few respondents really wanted one of more of these topics, overall each one only got 1 to 2 votes as critically important vs. nice-to-have.

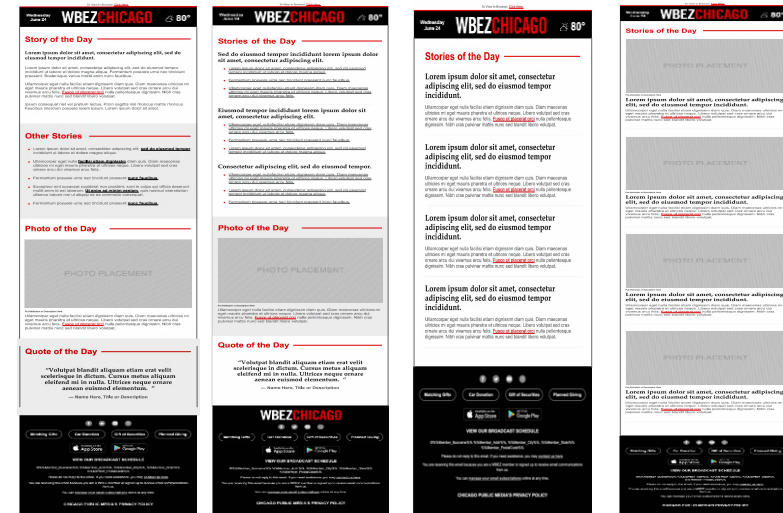
<u>LOWEST OR MOST POLARIZING INTEREST ACROSS MOST RESPONDENTS</u>
<i>Question and Answer: Artists, Entrepreneurs, Religious leaders</i>
<i>Opinion or commentary on big issues</i>
<i>Games/ Including Sports, Online Gaming etc.</i>
<i>Transportation</i>
<i>Advice</i>
<i>Ways to Volunteer</i>
<i>Quote of Day</i>
<i>Profiles of Local Interesting People</i>

Reactions to Formats We Shared

- While no one format was a clear favorite and very few wanted via email, the first two formats on left generally were more preferred and some principles emerged:

Note: We started in Group 1 as email, but then tried to pivot as a mobile app

- **Ideally – Create ways to personalize what info to see**
- Short headlines/copy with hot links
- Mix of pictures, videos, words and/or audio
- Many liked one lead story and then short list of other stories vs. too much copy per story
- **Stories ideally organized by topic** – for example:
 - Neighborhood happenings and news
 - Local business
 - Local politics
 - Weather, Traffic
- Higher interest in a **funny, positive or quirky picture or local news stories (things they wouldn't hear normally)**
- Listing of sources - if not WBEZ directly
- Note there is low interest in "quote of the day"



Too much copy
Not organized by topic

Prefer videos.

Not organized by topic

Harder to pick and choose

Reactions to *Current Newsletter*

(see appendix for stimulus we used)

- Many liked much of the content and ‘feel’, but likely wouldn’t read something like this as an email. The reactions are consistent with the principles from the other formats we showed.
- **Positives of Current:**
 - *Like the content, but want delivered in a non-email format (App, social media etc.)*
 - *“Nice mix of stories.”*
 - *“Feels personalized a bit.”*
 - *“There are hot links if I want to learn more, get tickets etc.”*
 - *“They cite their sources.”*

Negatives Reactions to Current:

- *“There are three negative stories in a row to start. For local news especially, I want something more positive mixed in”.*
- *“Very verbal – which more video or picture links”*
- *“Would love ways to further navigate or personalize to what I really want to know about.”*
- *“If it can be personalized, I’d probably use on an APP, Facebook or Instagram.”*

Moderator Recommendations (for WBEZ consideration)



- There is a **thirst for a reputable single-source for Chicagoland news/information – especially that is highly sensitive to specific ethnic/gender group needs (ex: Black Female Professionals and/or parents of kids).**
- Social media tools, podcasts and your mobile app are likely a better media delivery system vs. email for reaching younger audiences like this.
- Ideally, given the mix of interests, the more ability you can provide consumers to **personalize/customize their experience**, what information is prioritized/organized etc. – the better.
- Respondents ideally want a mix of written, pictures, audio and video links.
- Content can come from non-NPR or WBEZ sources, as long as it is vetted, cited and credible.

Recommendations (2)



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- Biggest gaps and needs are around **POSITIVE, relational and not easy to find information and news/information listed below**. For local communities, people want to feel good about where they live and too much negative local news (which they already get in national / international news is a big turnoff):
 - New openings of restaurants, stores etc.
 - Local news, events, business, politics
 - Reviews on more local or topical things
 - Local criminal justice related
 - Simplifying locally relevant complex topics and what it means
 - Quicky, funny, local - *“stuff I wouldn’t normally hear about, but would be fun to share”*
- For the current newsletter, ensure good mix of positive and negative news each time. Consider mixing in quirky/unusual/interesting stories and continue to try and create 2-way dialogue and a personality / relational tone of voice – which is appealing to many.

Recommendations (3)



- Explore ways to be more visible locally and really own Chicago as your home.
- Consider ways to leverage/equip community influencers to share WBEZ digital news/information via word-of-mouth and **social media**.
- Create content across media channels that is very specific and topical to specific groups:
 - For specific neighborhoods or regions
 - Specific topics like restaurant/business openings and reviews
 - For specific audiences and what they are most interested (ex: Professional Black Women and Social Justice/Helping Local Communities)
 - Forums that engage or allow dialogue and 2-way conversation



Some Direct Quotes:

- *"Give us a better app or social media/web site that is easy to navigate, categorizes topics so readers can choose the news they want and integrate more local news, interviews with local people/businesses/things going on."*
- *"I want a selective viewing option to see more of what is important to me and screen out what I don't care about."*
- *"Focus on target demo groups with more relevant stories and information – as a black female professional, I still feel we are often ignored."*
- *"Stay invested in your audience – be open to public opinion/debate and maintain/have a presence in our community."*
- *"As our lives change from having kids, to owning a home, to getting a bit older, my information needs change and need to be tailored to where I live and my life stage. I used to care a lot about schools and kid events, now more about taxes and adult activities that may be things I didn't know about."*
- *"It is hard to think of one place where I can learn what is going on locally. I rely on multiple sources, friends/family but wish it was more simple and centralized."*

Appendix 1

SharePoint Appendix Links

Focus Group Stimulus

- [News/Information Categories List](#)
- [Newsletter Mock-ups](#)
- [The Rundown newsletter example](#)

Focus Group Participant Profiles

Focus Group Participant Screener

Video Recordings

WBEZ91.5CHICAGO

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Thank You

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