

NONPROFIT INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM: A SNAPSHOT OF CONTENT AND REACH

Research supported by The Jonathan Logan Family Foundation.

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Content Analysis

- ▶ 2,309 individual “stories” in 2016 from 9 outlets
 - ▶ 3 National outlets (ProPublica, Center for Investigative Reporting, and Center for Public Integrity)
 - ▶ 3 State/Local outlets (NJ Spotlight, inewssource.org and Arizona Center for Investigative Reporting)
 - ▶ 3 Academic sites (American University, UC Berkeley and University of Wisconsin)

Impact Analysis & Conversations

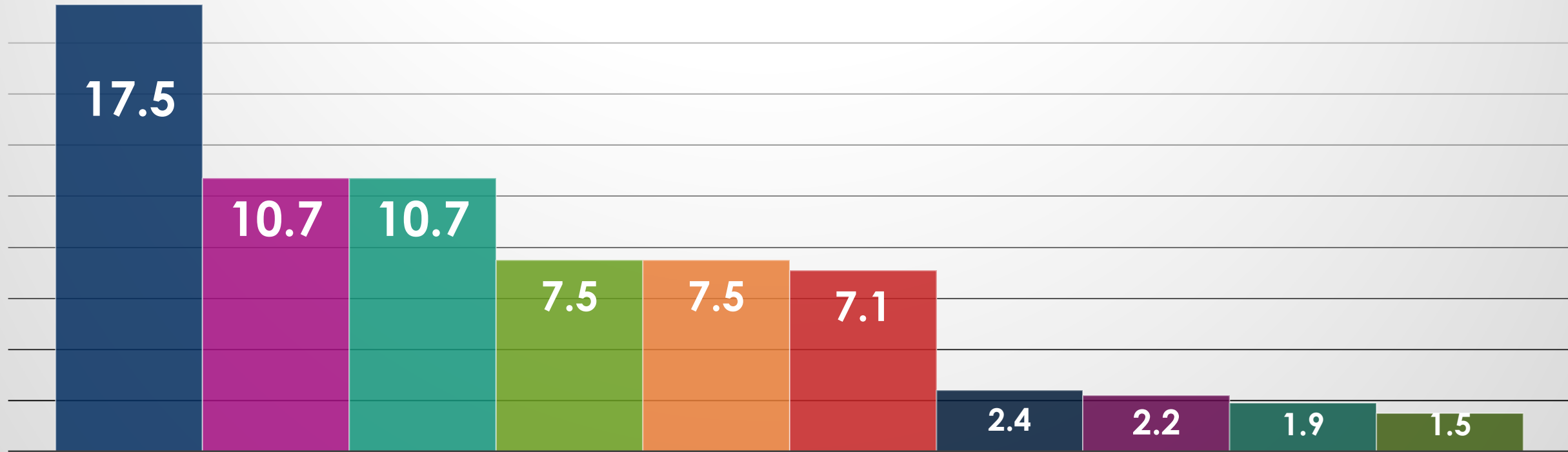
- ▶ Selected a random sample of stories
- ▶ Searched Lexus-Nexus for evidence of “other” outlets “picking up” original stories
- ▶ Informally asked participants to tell us what they did to measure “impact”
- ▶ Collected and curated those “conversations”

RESEARCH OVERVIEW: WHAT WE STUDIED

- ▶ **Story Topics:** Primary Story focus (e.g. Presidential elections, Government, Criminal Justice, Health Care, etc.)
- ▶ **Type of Story:** Straight news, “Explainers” Investigative reports, Data Journalism, Op-ed, etc.
- ▶ **Delivery Methods:** written, podcasts, blogs, video, etc.
- ▶ **Partners:** If and who were mentioned as partners in the story

CONTENT ANALYSIS: WHAT WE LOOKED FOR

Primary Story Topics (% of All Stories)



ALL STORIES

■ Government/ Non-election (17.5%)

■ Health/Healthcare (10.7%)

■ Story/Brand Promo (7.5%)

■ Housing (2.4%)

■ International News (1.9%)

■ Presidential Election (10.7%)

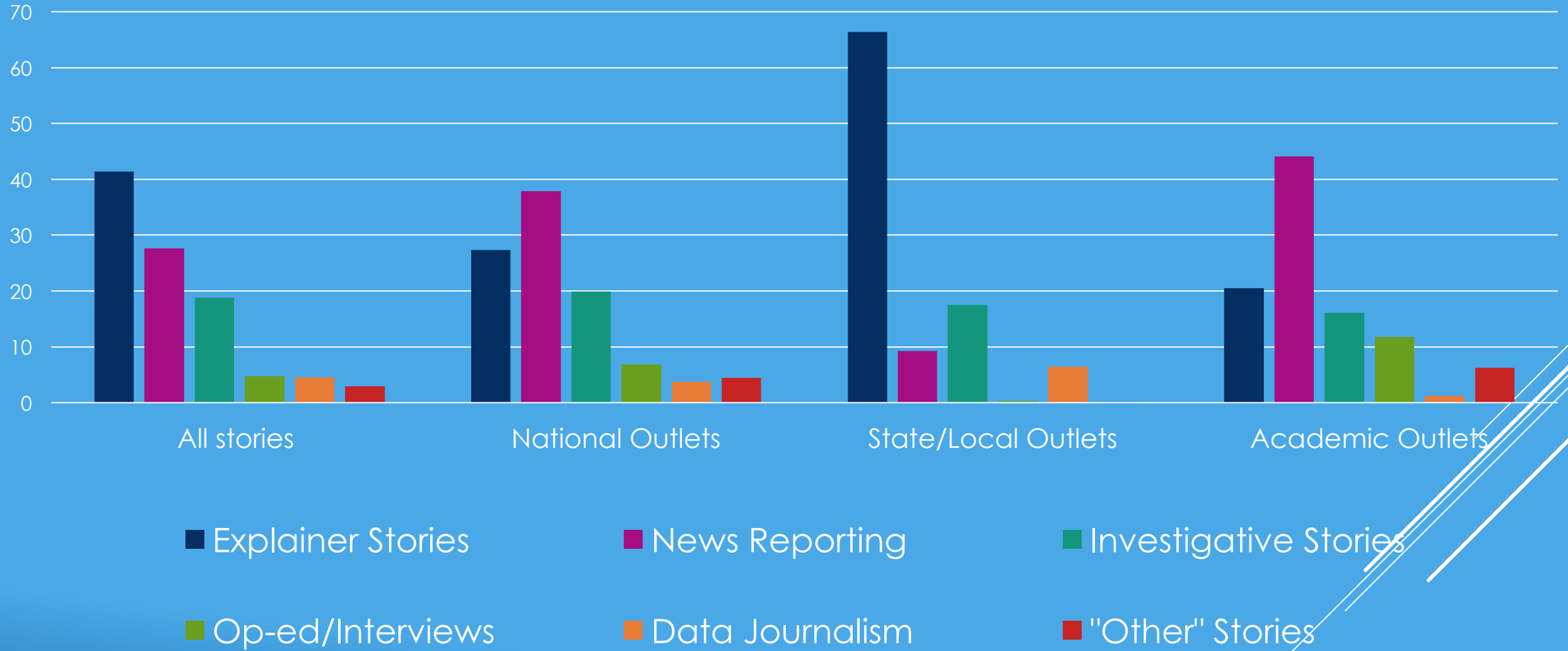
■ Business/Economy (7.5%)

■ Legal Issues (7.1%)

■ National Security (2.2%)

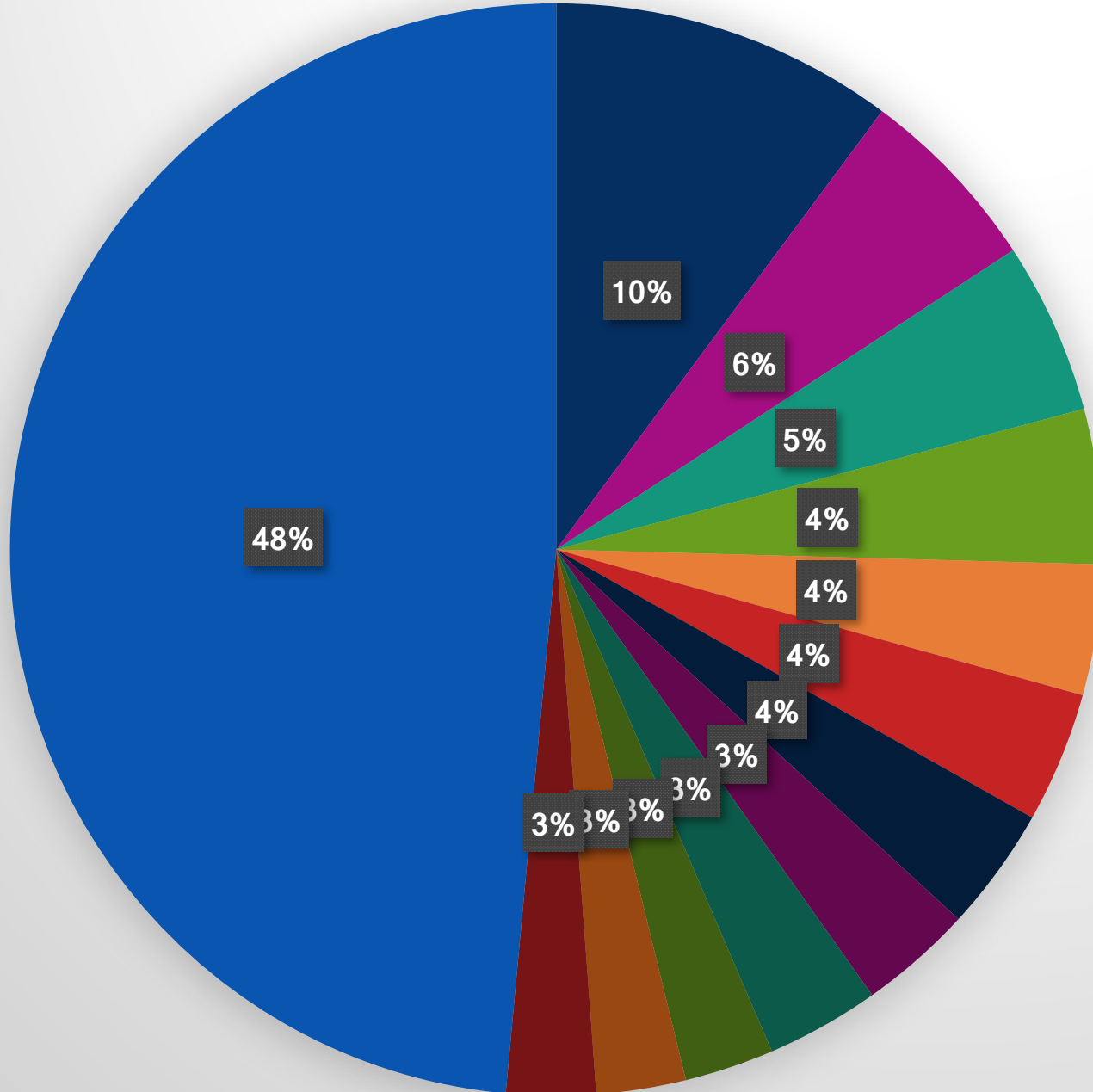
■ Natural Disasters (1.5%)

Type of Stories By Source



TYPES OF STORIES BY TYPE OF OUTLET

Percent of "Partner" mentions



- Time (10%)
- Huffington Post
- Washington Post
- Virginian Pilot
- NBC News
- NPR
- WNYC
- Al Jazeera America
- New York Times
- Mother Jones
- New York Daily News
- PRI (3%)

- ▶ **Partnerships:** Overall 15.9% of the stories mentioned a partnership but 30.9% of all picked up stories were partnership stories
- ▶ **Data Visualizations:** Just 3.9% of the stories were data-centric/data visualization stories but they comprised 15.9% of all of the “picked up” stories.
- ▶ **Presidential Election Stories:** These stories made up 8.2% of the stories but 19.8% of the “picked up” stories.

IMPACT ANALYSIS: WHAT GOT PICKED UP?

- ▶ **Who is driving the impact Measurement train?**
 - ▶ Participants recognize that funders want measures of impact but are not really sure they want to chase after it?
- ▶ **Impact Measurement takes lots of Time and Effort.**
 - ▶ And participants are not sure they are doing it right
- ▶ **You think anyone ever asked Jimmy Breslin to his impact measurement score?**
 - ▶ A cultural and perhaps generational shift in terms of views on impact
- ▶ **Would you like to see my Pulitzer? Or my East Central Upstate Healthcare Reporters award?**
 - ▶ Do awards measure impact or quality of journalism? Are they the same?

IMPACT ANALYSIS: WHAT WE HEARD

- ▶ **Anecdotal evidence of legislative change.**
 - ▶ Can we systematize this?

- ▶ **Anecdotal evidence individual and consumer engagement.**
 - ▶ Can we systematize this?

- ▶ **It is nice to be “liked” and “sharing” is always good.**
 - ▶ But does this really measure engagement?

IMPACT ANALYSIS: WHAT WE HEARD

- ▶ **Learning by Doing:** *How about a more comprehensive survey of nonprofit investigative news outlets and impact measurement?*
- ▶ **Create new and systematic methods for measuring consumer engagement:** *How about figure out how to do this better?*
- ▶ **Explore direct measures of legislative impact:** *Can we “backward map” to measure the link between legislation and news stories?*
- ▶ **Machine Learning, Natural Language Processing and Sentiment Analysis:** *Will automated reach measurement tools work in our world?*

CONCLUSIONS & CONVERSATION KICKERS

<https://works.bepress.com/njpoliticsprof/>

COPIES OF THE REPORT AND SUPPORTING
DOCUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE

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