

Searching the Local Media

Television stations, radio stations, newspapers, and magazines are all businesses. But they are businesses with special power. They inform and influence people in the community. This power gives the media an important role in community decision making. All the other domains—government, business, and nonprofits—try to use the media to their advantage. They may even have publicists, press packets, and other methods of getting their message out to the media.

Most of the media rely heavily on advertising. Radio and television sell commercials. Newspapers and magazines sell ad space. Without advertising, they would go out of business.

The media also need readers, listeners, and viewers. What makes people pay attention to the news media? One main thing is a good story. News reporters are always looking for stories—something informative, unusual, off beat, scary, scandalous—something that will make people pay attention. Reporters and news editors will usually respond to a personality, an issue, or an event if they think it will attract public interest.

Media Search, Part 1: Find your local media outlets.

Find the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of your local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. Find web sites for the local media. You may also be able to find your local media outlets online:

[Major U.S. and International Newspapers](#)

[National, International, State, and College Newspapers](#)

[TV and Radio Stations - National and by State](#)

[News and Opinion Magazines](#)

Media Search, Part 2: Find what your local media know about the problem.

Your local media—newspaper, radio, and television—may cover the problem you are interested in. Call reporters and find out. If they aren't covering the story, ask why not. If it would make a good story, tell them—they might get interested.

If they are covering the problem, find out what they know about the problem. Reporters are a rich resource, and they can point out where you can go to find out more.

To find reporters, read your newspaper or listen to news broadcasts. Find out who covers the problem you are interested in. Then call the newspaper or station, ask for the newsroom, and ask to speak with the reporter.

If you subscribe to the local newspaper, you should start clipping articles on your problem.

Remember: If you find someone in the media who is helpful or sympathetic with what you are doing, this person can be very helpful later in your project.