


## PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY OF NEWS ORGANIZATIONS



News Outlet	Positive %	Negative %	Can't Rate %
Local TV news	65	35	5
60 Minutes	64	35	10
ABC News	59	41	7
Wall Street Journal	58	41	19
CNN	58	42	6
CBS NEWS	57	43	6
NBC News	55	44	5
NPR	52	47	21
MSNBC	50	50	10
New York Times	49	50	19
Fox News	49	51	8
USA Today	49	51	17

Data Collected 19-22, 2012 according to www.people-press.org

## High quality instructors are inspiring



Mackenzie McDermott

During fourth grade, the only thing I cared about was recess. I would stare out the window, impatiently tapping my fingers on my oversized desk. School was a waste of time as far as I was concerned. This drastically changed the following year. All of the sudden, I loved being in the classroom. I wanted to do science experiments, read the stories from our books and write for our newly-created and incredibly intellectual fifth grade newspaper. This sudden interest in school did not come from some out-of-the-blue change of heart. It came from a teacher. Because I had a hands-on, caring, passionate and cheerful person teaching me, I decided that maybe school wasn't all bad after all.

Some people naturally love to learn. However, most of us have to be taught to love it. Teachers are some of society's most vital commodities. While there seems to be more of a focus on this fact in elementary and high school, the need for strong, passionate professors at the collegiate level is equally as important. High school teachers are there to guide, teach and help students discover what it is they care about and want to learn. Try as they might, though, high school teachers don't get to teach to only kids who choose to enroll in their classes. They are stuck with the students and the students are stuck with them no matter how apathetic students are toward the subject matter.

College professors, however, have the privilege of teaching a room full of people who want to be there, especially in the higher-level major courses. Professors should take advantage of that desire.

Even the most fascinating of subjects can be completely unbearable when taught by a professor who doesn't seem to care about what they are teaching. It's important for college students who are passionate about a class to have a professor who shares that passion. I personally know that I have had classes in which I've loved the subject matter, but uninspired and indifferent lectures made it hard to really throw myself into the work. Apathy breeds apathy. This isn't to say that some burden of responsibility to be engaged in the classroom doesn't fall on the students, but it can be hard to be involved when even the professor is disinterested. At Truman State, this especially is true due to class size. Because the classes are smaller, there can be more personal relationships between professors and students — when used well, these are capable of facilitating discussion and inciting interest. One factor that attracts students to Truman is the teacher to student ratio. However, if a class of 30 is being taught like an impersonal, dispassionate lecture hall of 300, that ratio is not being used to its fullest.

Professors can be as influential in the opposite direction. My fifth grade teacher didn't make me love science — she just made me enjoy learning about it. The same concept occurs at the collegiate level during the first few years of general education classes. Because we attend a liberal arts college, everyone here is forced to dabble in subject areas for which they don't necessarily have a proclivity. When presented with a passionate teacher, this can be a very pleasant and even mind-changing experience.

There are classes that I have gone into with complete and utter dread, but have come out with a better opinion of the subject matter because I had a teacher who was engaged, passionate and clearly interested in making the class learn to love it. These are the types of professors who are extremely important. They are the reason higher education has become so vital in the job market. Professors who inspire passion help mold graduates who are extremely knowledgeable, enthusiastic and interested in their field.

Teachers don't stop being important just because school stops being mandatory. Those of us who choose to go to college might have a desire to learn, but there still is a need for teachers who invoke passion and interest in the subjects that we decide to study.

Mackenzie McDermott is a freshman English major from Springfield, Ill.

## Support your local news outlet



Lacy Murphy

The media is terrified of being accused of bias. However, it is extremely difficult for large news outlets to avoid. News bias basically has been around since the invention of the printing press. During the past, it seems like more people debated issues reported by the media, but the American political conversation is becoming less prevalent. More people get their news from Twitter blasts, Facebook posts from their friends or other Internet sources rather than local news, radio, or TV.

All I hear anymore is how this or that news corporation is liberally or conservatively biased. People complain they can't discern the truth from the news so they stop watching altogether.

Luckily for you, there actually is a

place where you can get accurate and timely information. My advice is to turn to local news outlets. They are the sources you can trust the most. Yes, it is difficult to completely eliminate bias, but this is the level where you are least likely to find it. Why? Local news outlets are the least powerful and tend not to be influenced by powerful people and organizations.

A 2011 study of the public view of media reported 69 percent of people said they have a lot or some trust in information they get from local news organizations, while only 59 percent said they trust information from national news organizations, according to people-press.org.

Start listening to local radio stations and pick up the local newspaper. People tend to think local news organizations don't know what is going on globally or nationally, but that is not true at all. They just report the information most relevant to you.

True politics starts at the local level. If you are well informed about your community and its needs, you can better make decisions about your desires at the state or national level. Paying attention to local news can be likened to buying locally produced goods. You can support community groups, keep the community special, get better service and encourage local prosperity. It might be unreasonable to expect all of the information you

get to come from the local level, but it definitely adds variety to what kind of information you receive.

Our front page might not have insider information about breaking White House news and we might not print the massive amounts of information that mass media outlets can, but at the end of the day, local news outlets are bringing you information that hits close to home. Such information is important. If you rely only on mass media, you lose perspective. While local news might not provide more information, it sheds a different light on that information. You don't necessarily have to agree with it. You just have to know it's there.

Scrolling down your newsfeed might be a more efficient way to gather news, but it can't give you the detail and factual information that local news can. I am not advising that you get all of your news from one source. That would be as counterproductive as getting your news solely from CNN or Fox News. I am encouraging you to diversify the ways in which you get your news. Consult multiple sources from print or broadcast journalism and then discuss your findings with other community members.

Lacy Murphy is a junior French major from Springfield, Mo.

## How do you typically get your news?

"I usually get my news online from msn.com and Facebook."

Nicole Draper  
freshman

"I watch KRCG, the local CBS station out of Jefferson City for my news."

Kelsey Sandlin  
freshman

"I get my information from Twitter, then if something piques my interest, I read Google News for something more reliable."

Isaac Akers  
sophomore

"I usually check CNN's mobile application for my news or watch their TV station."

Tyler Yost  
junior



## AROUND THE QUAD

## Don't let social pressures change your opinions



Adam Rollins

In an ironic twist, I am feeling negative social pressure from proponents of gay marriage to support their cause absolutely or risk being labeled a bigot.

Don't misunderstand me — I love equality, freedom and justice. And all the other terms that are associated with every argument about American politics. However, I have my own ideas about what those terms mean when applied to

the issue of gay marriage, which might not always agree with gay rights activists. Does that mean I'm anti-gay rights? I don't think so, but I'm afraid others might see it that way.

I purposefully am vague concerning my beliefs because even now I fear a backlash of letters and comments labeling me as ignorant or insensitive. I fear the judgment of my friends and the social stigmatization resulting from disagreement with a Facebook post. I am moderate among liberals, but, according to some gay rights supporters, I might as well be on the far right of the political spectrum. At this point, I am more afraid of the consequences of not supporting gay marriage than the other way around.

But the fact is I don't agree 100 percent with charging headlong into full equality of all marriages, and I should not have to feel ashamed to ask people to slow down and reconsider before they pressure others to hop on the bandwagon. Even though this type of negative peer pressure might lead to change, the support gained likely will only be reluctant.

For example, a January 2013 study published in Judgment and Decision Making found that of a group of individuals who made charitable monetary donations, those within the control group who gave more were happier about their decision. Those within the test group were told the amount they donated would later be disclosed to others. Individuals within the test group on average gave significantly more than those within the control group — however, they were less happy with their decision to donate. It was suggested their dissatisfaction resulted from the feeling that they were coerced by the fear of being judged by others, even though the deed was good.

Regarding the issue of gay marriage, the worst strong-arming offender I have seen is a big, pink equal sign of the Human Rights Campaign organization. I know the groundswell of people changing their Facebook profile pictures to that equal sign is supposed to be a show of solidarity supporting equality. Nevertheless, I can't help but think of it instead as a gathering of people, unified in their

stern judgment of my opinions. Everywhere I look, that faceless equal sign is monitoring my social media activity, watching and waiting for me to slip up, say something unsupportive, at which point it will come crashing down to crush my social reputation. Rather than inspiring me to support marriage equality, it just makes me uncomfortable.

I have hopes that others with similar reservations who, like me, are afraid to voice their opinions toward gay marriage, stay strong in their commitment to moderate compromise. In fact, I am only cautioning my readership now to warn young supporters of gay marriage against heavy-handed social tactics. Coercing mass support through fear of social reprisal might leave people on both sides of the issue with a bad taste in their mouth.

Adam Rollins is a sophomore communication major from St. Charles, Mo.