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When More Media Equals Less News:

Patterns of Content Homogenization in Argentina's Leading Print and Online Newspapers

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Abstract

This paper examines content homogeneity, understood as the degree to which different media focus on the same stories during a particular news cycle, in Argentina's leading print and online newspapers. It focuses on the role of technical practices across media and over time—during a decade for print and during 24 hours for online. The analysis shows three main patterns of homogenization: a) an increase in the level of homogeneity in print newspapers tied to their online counterparts' practice of publishing breaking and developing stories during the day; b) an increase in the level of homogeneity in online newspapers as the day unfolds; and, c) a densely interconnected web of homogeneity across print and online newspapers in 2005. We draw from these findings to make contributions to research on online news and media sociology, and to reflect upon the direction and meaning of changes in journalistic form in the current media environment.

Keywords:

News homogeneity; news diversity; online journalism; online newspapers; online news; print newspapers; technology; media sociology; Argentina.

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Patterns of Content Homogenization in Argentina's Leading Print and Online Newspapers

The first decade of journalism on the Web has motivated a wide spectrum of research on the production, products and consumption of online news (Boczkowski, 2002; Deuze, 2003; Hamilton, 2004; Matheson, 2004; Tewksbury, 2003). Scholars have devoted considerable effort to understanding the relationship between print and online news—a window into how new journalistic forms emerge in the context of existing ones—in topics as varied as professional identity (Cassidy, 2005; Singer, 2003), news production (Boczkowski, 2004; Gilbert, 2005; Klinenberg, 2005; Singer, 2004), news formats (Barnhurst & Nerone, 2001; Cooke, 2005) and consumption patterns (D'Haenens, Jankowski & Heuvelman, 2004; Mindlich, 2005; Schönbach, de Waal & Lauf, 2005). This paper adds to this stream of work by analyzing content homogeneity, understood as the extent to which different media focus on the same stories during a particular news cycle. More precisely, we examine whether the evolution of online news sites has been tied to changes in their content homogeneity and that of print counterparts.

Beyond the paper's contribution to online journalism scholarship, we focus on content homogeneity due to broader discussions about the existence of a trend towards its growth across the media landscape. Analysts have elaborated on the role of economic, institutional, organizational and professional factors (Bourdieu, 1998; Cook, 1998; Klinenberg, 2003; Schudson, 2003) and provided some systematic evidence of this trend at the story level, usually focusing on a single medium at a single point in time (Atwater, 1986; Busterna, 1988; Davie & Lee, 1993; Lacy, 1991; Lemert, 1974). This paper adds to this discussion on the growth of content homogeneity by examining the role of technical practices across media and over time.

To this end, we look at the evolution of the leading Argentine dailies' front pages from 1995 to 2005, and their online counterparts' homepages at three points in time during the day in 2005. We focus on a basic manifestation of content homogeneity: whether a story in one paper's front page, or homepage, appeared in the front page, or homepage, of the competitors in the same news cycle. The analysis reveals three main patterns of homogenization: a) an increase in the level of homogeneity in print newspapers tied to their online counterparts' practice of publishing breaking and developing stories during the day, a growing trend since 2001; b) an increase in the level of homogeneity in online newspapers as the day unfolds; and, c) a densely interconnected web of homogeneity across print and online newspapers in 2005. We describe these findings and reflect upon their conceptual, methodological and societal implications.

Theoretical Considerations

This paper is situated at the intersection of online journalism scholarship's analyses of the relationship between traditional and new media, and media sociology's concern with the homogenization of news content.

Online Journalism Scholarship

After almost two decades of experimentation with electronic publishing options, online journalism found a home on the Web in the mid-1990s and has grown rapidly since then (Aumente, 1987; Boczkowski, 2004; Carlson, 2003; Fidler, 1997; Weaver, 1983). Because a significant proportion of top online news sites are the offspring of print and broadcast operations, a strategy pursued by a number of scholars has been to analyze the production, products and consumption of online news by focusing on the relationships between online and traditional journalism, which has enabled them to place the issues under examination into larger journalistic dynamics. For instance, regarding news production, Boczkowski (2004) and Boczkowski and

Ferris (2005) focused on how existing media deal with new technical capabilities, Cassidy (2005) and Singer (2003, 2004) analyzed professional matters, Gilbert (2005) looked at how organizational inertia affects firm performance, and Klinenberg (2005) studied how field relations shape time and place in editorial labor. Concerning news products, Barnhurst and Nerone (2002) situated web sites within the history of news formats and Cooke (2005) concentrated on the evolution of visual culture shaping design convergence. Regarding consumption, Mindlich (2005) examined younger generations' uptake of online news, and Schönbach, de Vaal and Lauf (2005) focused on the perception of the news agenda.

We build upon, and contribute to, research on the relationship between print and online news by focusing on the degree and kind of content homogeneity. This is an overlooked topic that has implications for other issues such as the work processes that create homogeneity, the symbolic construction of the resulting products, and their subsequent consumption.

Media Sociology

Media sociologists have argued that the news has become less diverse in the past few decades (Bourdieu, 1998; Cooke, 1998; Gans, 2003; Klinenberg, 2003; Norris, 2000). To Schudson, “the stories one reads in one publication are likely to bear a stronger resemblance to the stories in the next publication than they would have in the past” (2003, p. 109). This literature has conceptualized two main types of factors that account for this trend: the shared elements of journalistic practice and the monitoring of other media (Bourdieu, 1998; Cook, 1998; Gans, 1980; Glasser, 1992; Klinenberg, 2003; Plasser, 2005; Schudson 2003).

A handful of studies have empirically examined issues of content overlap at the story level (Napoli, 1999). In an early study, Bigman (1948) looked at two small town papers and found that “a large proportion of new stories... [were] verbatim twins after a sometimes rewritten

first paragraph” (p. 128). Two lines of inquiry have emerged since then: broadcast journalism scholars have undertaken cross-sectional analyses of television newscasts, with findings ranging from 40% to 70% of story overlap (Atwater, 1986; Davie & Lee, 1993; Fowler & Showalter, 1974; Lemert, 1974), and media economics scholars looking at ownership concentration have found no conclusive evidence of its negative impact on news diversity (Busterna, 1988; Lacy, 1991).¹ Both lines of inquiry have tended to focus on a single medium at a single point in time.

A handful of recent articles has linked online news to a furthering of homogenization in relation to such processes as the acceleration of the news cycle, the growing reliance on wire service copy, and the organizational dynamics of convergent newsrooms (García Aviles & Bienvenido 2004; Klinenberg 2005; Norris, 2000; Rosenstiel 2005). To date, the only study that examined these linkages’ consequences for news content is the 2006 *State of The News Media* report, which showed a high degree of story overlap across media sampled during a single day by focusing on the time or space allotted to the top four and seven stories, and concluded that “the new paradox of journalism is more outlets covering fewer stories” (Journalism.org, 2006).

We draw upon this scholarship on the homogenization of news to make conceptual and methodological contributions. Conceptually, we focus on the role of technical practices, a largely overlooked factor despite the massive technological transformation of news in recent years. Methodologically, we examine homogenization across media, to understand the contemporary multimedia landscape, and as it evolves over time, to ascertain dynamic patterns.

Data Sources

Argentina provides a fruitful national setting to explore dynamic cross-media patterns of content homogenization for at least two reasons. First, it has a well-developed media system in which the top players are well connected to, and highly visible in, the global media space. For

instance, *Clarín*, the country's largest daily, was until recently the largest Spanish-speaking print paper in the world, and *Lanacion.com*, the online edition of its main competitor, received the EPPY award for Best Overall non-U.S. Newspaper Online Service in 1999. Because of these features it is reasonable to expect that trends affecting the Argentine context might also be at play in other national settings. Second, some features of the industry set it apart from its counterparts in other countries, for instance the United States, in ways that facilitate our analysis. For instance, the industry is national in scope and concentrated in character—with the top five players accounting for 64% of the national market (Standard & Poor's, 2005)—which helps to compare news coverage due to reduced variability in local content. Moreover, the industry's share of the advertising pie has been in the 40% range over the past decade (Asociacion Argentina de Agencias de Publicidad, 2005), and the print and online newsrooms of the top newspapers have been relatively autonomous from each other in this period, allowing us to hold relatively constant the influence of factors such as resource levels and organizational routines.

Argentina's main dailies are *Clarín* and *La Nación*, with 36% and 14% of market share, respectively. While *Clarín* targets a broad audience and has a centrist outlook, *La Nación* aims at consumers with higher socioeconomic status and has a conservative ideology. In the first quarter of 2006 *Clarín* had an average daily circulation of over 420,000 and an average Sunday circulation of over 807,000, and *La Nación* over 165,000 and over 251,000, respectively (Instituto Verificador de Circulaciones, 2006).² *Clarín.com* and *Lanacion.com* are the country's top two general interest online newspapers with monthly averages of over 5.3 and 1.4 million unique users in 2004, respectively (Clarín.com es, 2004; La Nación Line, 2004). We also look at *Infobae.com*, the online edition of the small financial daily *Infobae*, which occupies a strong third place in the general interest online newspaper space. In recent years usage of these sites has

been larger during “business hours” from Monday to Fridays—which has also been the peak time of activity in online newsrooms. For instance, one survey estimated that about a quarter of the users log on from their workplaces (Internet: la gente, 2004), and another one that 6 out of 10 of them look at news sites while they are online at work (D’Alessio, 2005).

Print Data Set

We collected data from the front pages of *Clarín* and *La Nación* during four ten-week periods—each of these periods had a typical mix of high- and low-profile news events. For each period we collected 20 days of front pages and associated stories, from Monday through Friday, with an equal number of each day. We focused on Monday-Friday to assess changes in print tied to online papers during the latter’s days of peak activity.

The first period is September-December 1995, immediately before *La Nación* launched its online edition later in December of that year—*Clarín* did the same in March 1996. It serves as our baseline before the emergence of online newspapers on the Web in Argentina.

The second period is July-October of 2000, immediately before the print papers’ online counterparts started to regularly publish news stories during the day. We chose this period to see whether there were any changes in print in relation to the existence of online editions that mostly replicate previously published print content—as was the common practice from 1995 to 2000.

Publication of breaking and developing news stories during the day has grown in *Clarín.com* and *Lanacion.com* since 2001, and experienced a qualitative jump in May 2004 after *Clarín.com* redesigned its site and reorganized its editorial processes to provide more such stories. An intense pattern of constant publication has since become a dominant trend among Argentina’s leading online papers. Our third and fourth periods allow us to ascertain any possible consequences of this trend for print. These periods are from September to December 2004 and

2005, respectively—4-6 and 16-18 months after the intensification of this trend.

Online Data Set

We collected data from *Clarín.com*, *Lanación.com* and *Infobae.com*³ for ten weeks from September to December of 2005, two days per week, from Monday through Friday—totaling 4 instances of each day. Each Monday to Thursday was the day before each Tuesday to Friday included in our 2005 print sample. We collected data at 11:00 AM (the “morning shift”), 3:00PM (the “afternoon shift”) and 10:00PM (the “evening shift”) to see the unfolding of reporting as the day evolves. The morning shift captures the homepage once the online newsroom is in full swing, and before the “noon” print editorial meeting. The afternoon shift examines a peak time of activity for the online newsroom and shortly after the print noon meeting. The evening shift looks at the end of that day’s news cycle and after the print’s “afternoon” editorial meeting.

For each shift, we collected each online newspaper’s homepage and its first nine stories, counting from left to right and from the top down in a grid-like manner. These top nine stories (hereafter, the “homepage”) often corresponded with the first screen when viewed using the Microsoft Explorer browser in a 15-inch screen set to display normal size of the Verdana font—a common configuration in Argentina—thus representing an equivalent of a print paper’s front page: a user’s first visual impression of an online newspaper. It also provided a common metric for the most important stories across the sites’ different designs.

Data Analysis

We analyzed the data on issues of “content overlap,” “content focus” and “content type.”

By content overlap we mean whether a story published on a front page—or a homepage—was about an event that was also featured in a story on the front page of the other print paper—or the homepage of one or both of the other online newspapers during the same

shift. For 2005 we also examined whether a story on the evening's homepage overlapped with a story on its print counterpart's front page the next day.

Content focus looks at whether a story was about a public affairs subject—including politics, economics and international news—or a non public affairs matter—issues such as sports, crime, culture, science, technology and medicine, and natural disasters and accidents.

Content type centers on whether a story was treated as either hard or soft news. Scholars have characterized this distinction variously (Baum, 2003; Gans, 2003; Patterson, 2000; Scott & Gobetz, 1991; Zelizer, 2004). We utilize Tuchman's (1978) definition for it relies on elements of news production instead of on the character of its subject matter—more prone to interpretive disagreements. For Tuchman (1978), two defining traits of hard news are that they deal with unscheduled or pre-scheduled events and their publication is seen as urgent.⁴ By contrast, soft news deal with non-scheduled events that need not be published urgently (Tuchman, 1978).⁵

Initially, both authors coded sub-samples of print and online stories independently. We coded 17.5% of the print data for 1995 and 2005 and obtained inter-coder agreement levels of 99% for content overlap, 87% for content focus, and 93% for content type. We also coded independently 6.6 % of the online data and reached inter-coder agreement levels of 98% for content overlap, 91% for content focus and 96% for content type. Then, the second author undertook the coding of the remaining stories. All doubts were resolved consensually.

Findings

Two general features apply to both data sets. First, each set aggregates information from different newspapers in distinct temporal samples. We consolidated data temporally—by year for print or shift for online—because the analysis revealed that variance across periods affects all newspapers and the main patterns emerge from comparisons across these periods; whenever

relevant we note idiosyncratic patterns affecting a particular paper in a given temporal period. Second, because content overlap only occurred for hard news—the largest category of content type in all samples (see Table 1)⁶—we use the proportion of stories with overlap to the total number of hard news stories as our content overlap metric. This also allows us to control for variation in the total number of stories and in the proportion of hard news stories across samples.

Patterns Within the Print Data Set

There is an increase in the level of content overlap between the print papers that coincides with their online counterparts' intensification of constant publishing during the day: this level goes from 37% in the 1995 sample to 33% in the 2000 sample, and then increases to 42% and 49% in the 2004 and 2005 samples, respectively (see Table 1).⁷ Because the 1995 and 2000 samples were before online newspapers' intensification of constant publishing and the difference between them is not significant, we combined them into a "Before" period, and also combined the 2004 and 2005 samples into an "After" period. Comparing these two periods we found a significant ($p < .01$)⁸ increase from 35% to 46% in the proportion of hard news stories with content overlap (see Table 2). There is also a marginally significant ($p < .1$) growth of 7% within the After period, from 2004 to 2005 (see Table 1), suggesting the possibility of maturation of this before-and-after pattern over time.

This increase in the level of content overlap is tied to a variation in content focus. We found a significant ($p < .01$) 18% increase in the proportion of public affairs stories with content overlap from the Before to the After periods, even though both the proportions of public affairs and non public affairs stories and the proportion of overlapped non public affairs stories stayed relatively unchanged (see Table 2). Thus, it appears that the homogenization of print's hard news agenda has weighed quite heavily on its public affairs component.

Patterns Within the Online Data Set

The analysis shows a high level of content overlap that increases moderately as the day unfolds. Content diversity—the mirror image of content homogeneity—decreased from 50% in the morning to 49% in the afternoon to 45% in the evening—the lowest level of diversity of all samples, print and online. Because the difference between the morning and afternoon samples is small and not significant, we aggregated them into a single sample and contrasted it with the evening sample, yielding a marginally significant ($p < .1$) but relevant 4% decrease in the level of content diversity (see Table 3). Moreover, 75% of the diversity lost goes to the most concentrated form of content homogeneity—overlap among the three newspapers.

This increase in content overlap impacts more heavily on non public affairs than on public affairs stories. There is a significant ($p < .05$) 7% growth in the proportion of non public affairs stories from the combined morning-afternoon shifts to the evening shift, resulting mostly from sports news breaking at the latter part of the day (see Table 3). We also found a significant ($p < .01$) 14% increase in overlap of the evening's non public affairs stories—with 11 of these 14 percentage points going to overlap among the three papers. These findings suggest a lightening of the news agenda as the day unfolds marked by an increase in the proportion of non public affairs stories and, especially, by the fact that only a third of such stories are not overlapped.

Patterns Connecting Print and Online Samples

The intensification of online updates during the day coincides with an increase in the level of content of overlap in the print and online newspapers—in this subsection we draw on the online data of *Clarín.com* and *Lanación.com* to examine print-online ties in the absence of print *Infobae* data. There is a significant ($p < .01$) increase in the degree of content homogeneity from

35% in the Before Print sample to 46% in the After Print sample and 47% in the Online sample (see Table 4). Thus, the major variation is not between media but across historical periods.

Contemporaneously, we found a high level of content overlap in the print-online pairs of the same company at a critical juncture of the cross-media 24-hour news cycle: the transition from the end of one day in the online environment to the following morning's print edition.⁹ The hard news in the evening homepages of *Clarín.com* and *Lanacion.com* anticipate 58% and 51% of the hard news of the next day front pages of *Clarín* and *La Nación*, respectively (see Table 4). We also found homogeneity across media and companies: *Lanacion.com*'s evening homepage anticipate close to half (48%) of the front page of the next day's *Clarín*, while *Clarín.com*'s anticipates a bit more than a third (36%) of those that appeared on the next day's *La Nación*.¹⁰ This pattern of temporal anticipation further strengthens the notion of a densely interconnected web of homogeneous meaning pervading the contemporary journalistic field in Argentina.

Discussion

Content homogeneity in *Clarín* and *La Nación* did not increase during the first five years of existence of *Clarín.com* and *Lanacion.com* but only after the latter intensified the constant publication of news. Because the respective print and online newsrooms have been separate, and no major relevant changes in the organization and resource allocation of news production have taken place during the After period, we suggest that technical practices account, at least partly, for the increase in content overlap. Thus, it is not technology per se, manifested in the emergence of a new medium, but technical practices, or how journalists use the technology to make news, what is linked to this increase. The potential of negative consequences of these trends for a pluralistic public sphere is important also because this growth mostly affected public affairs stories—of two dailies with a combined 50% share of the national newspaper market.

Looking at temporal evolution across the online newspaper space suggests the possibility of consensus formation as the day unfolds. Although the content overlap increase is marginally significant and moderate in size, this trend is relevant because the baseline is already high and the bulk of the increase is in the most concentrated form of overlap. Moreover, the high impact of this increase upon non public affairs stories—an effect that does not spill over the following morning’s print edition—signals a relative autonomy of online newsrooms to set the news agenda vis-à-vis their print counterparts. These findings challenge the popular idea of a “24/7” cycle in online news, which is too undifferentiated to capture the trends towards consensus formation and agenda lightening as the day unfolds.

The contemporary landscape across the print-online space in Argentina is one of a densely interconnected web of meaning, not only because the level of content overlap is around 50% for both media as well as all online shifts, but also due to the existence of high cross-media inter-newspaper homogeneity, all of which further reinforces concerns about potential negative consequences for the diversity of the public sphere. The role of online newspapers’ incessant publication in this state of affairs also questions the popular belief they are somewhat inferior to their traditional media counterparts because they rely on content generated by wire services and other media. Regardless of the origin of the information they publish, changes in online newspapers have been tied to homogenization of their supposedly superior print counterparts.

These findings have broader implications for scholarship on online journalism and media sociology. Regarding the former, beyond opening up a new topical angle, the analysis suggests that news content, in addition to formal attributes such as interactivity and multimedia, is a powerful window into the role of the online medium within the larger media environment. This paper adds conceptually and methodologically to media sociology as well. Conceptually, it

highlights the contribution of technical practices as a possible factor in content homogeneity. Methodologically, it illustrates the value of an approach across media and over time—had we collected data at a single point in time, we would not have elicited the observed patterns; had we looked exclusively at print, we would have missed the role of online’s technical practices.

We rely on a simple definition of technical practices: whether or not journalists used online tools to publish constantly—as opposed to following print’s daily cycle. Moreover, we have inferred their contribution to news homogenization from the resulting products but have not systematically delved into the production processes. Preliminary analyses of a concurrent ethnographic study of online news production directed by the first author suggest that content homogenization is tied to an intensification of monitoring and mimicking other media (Boczkowski, Frazzetta, Lopez & Mansur, 2006). An organizational imperative to keep the homepage current and complete leads journalists to permanently watch other media and rapidly incorporate other media’s stories when they are initially missed. This heightened monitoring and mimicry further homogenizes the news due to the heavy reliance on wire services and other media. Additional field research to be conducted by the first author will continue examining these and other possible mechanisms.

Our research design has influenced our findings in at least three ways. First, we examined the top stories, but our impression during the coding process was that the level of content overlap would have been even much higher had we included a larger number of stories. This was the case of some of the American-focused television research on content homogeneity mentioned above, which examined all the stories in a given newscast. Second, we also looked at the most basic editorial constructions: the headline, the lead and the first lines of a story—it is worth noting that the first author plans to examine story content and formats in future analyses. Third,

although looking at two media is an improvement from the single medium focus of most news homogenization studies, it does not do justice to the today's contemporary multimedia space.

Finally, we do not claim that our findings are generalizable outside of the Argentine context. Structural factors such as the industry's market concentration and national scope, the development of the Internet in the country, and features of the Argentine media in particular, and Latin American media in general, might be at play here (Cole, 1996; Hughes, 2006; Lawson, 2002; Waisbord, 2000). However, we think that the homogenization patterns analyzed here might resonate in other national contexts for three reasons. First, the alluded *2006 State of the News Media* report that focuses on the American context also found high level of cross-media homogenization. Second, recent comparative media scholarship has underscored similarity in production and products around the world: for instance, Hallin and Mancini (2004) identified a trend towards de-differentiation of national media systems and Shoemaker and Cohen (2006) found consonance of news topics in their ten-country cross-media study. Third, large Argentine newspapers such as *Clarín* and *La Nación* are active participants in various international media settings, which may also contribute to isomorphic processes. These reasons do not diminish the possible factors shaping our findings that might be unique to the Argentine scene, but suggest that at least part of these findings may also resonate across national contexts.

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Biographical Note

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Table 1

General Characteristics of Data Sets

	Print Data Set				Online Data Set		
	1995	2000	2004	2005	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Sample size	208	235	237	247	540	540	540
Mean number of stories per front page	5.2	5.9	5.9	6.2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Content type							
Hard news	91% (190)	89% (208)	81% (192)	84% (207)	66% (359)	71% (383)	82% (441)
Soft news	9% (18)	10% (24)	16% (38)	10% (25)	21% (112)	9% (48)	10% (55)
Editorials, interviews and op-eds	0% (0)	0% (1)	3% (7)	4% (10)	2% (11)	11% (57)	7% (40)
Entertainment pre-scheduled news	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	11% (58)	10% (52)	1% (4)
Other	0% (0)	1% (2)	0% (0)	2% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Content overlap							
Stories with content overlap	70	68	80	102	181	196	241
Hard news with content overlap	37%	33%	42%	49%	50%	51%	55%

Table 2

Evolution of Content Overlap and Content Focus for the Print Data Set

	Before period	After period	Variation
Content overlap			
Level of diversity	65% (260)	54% (217)	-11%***
Level of homogeneity	35% (138)	46% (182)	+11%***
Totals	100% (398)	100% (399)	0%
Content focus			
Public affairs stories	60% (239)	56% (225)	-4%
Level of content homogeneity	33% (80)	51% (114)	+18%***
Non public affairs stories	40% (159)	44% (174)	+4%
Level of content homogeneity	36% (58)	39% (68)	+3%

*** $p < .01$

Note.

Level of diversity: number of hard news stories without content overlap published by both newspapers divided by total number of hard news stories published by both newspapers in any given period.

Level of homogeneity: number of hard news stories with content overlap published by both newspapers divided by total number of hard news stories published by both newspapers in any given period.

Table 3

Evolution of Content Overlap and Content Focus for the Online Data Set

	Morning and afternoon	Evening	Variation
Content overlap			
Level of diversity	49% (365)	45% (200)	-4%*
Level of homogeneity			
Overlap between two stories	23% (170)	24% (106)	+1%
Overlap among three stories	28% (207)	31% (135)	+3%
Totals	100% (742)	100% (441)	
Content focus			
Public affairs stories	64% (475)	57% (251)	-7%**
Level diversity			
Level homogeneity	55% (263)	53% (132)	-2%
Level homogeneity			
Overlap between two stories	21% (98)	20% (50)	-1%
Overlap among three stories	24% (114)	27% (69)	+3%
Non public affairs stories	36% (267)	43% (190)	+7%**
Level diversity			
Level of homogeneity	49% (132)	35% (68)	-14%***
Level of homogeneity			
Overlap between two stories	27% (72)	30% (56)	+3%
Overlap among three stories	24% (63)	35% (66)	+11%

* $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$

Endnotes

¹ This literature has often not examined content homogeneity and diversity at the story level (Napoli, 1999; Voakes, Kapfer, Kurpious & Shano-Yeon, 1995).

² Both *Clarín* and *La Nación* have made good progress in their recovery from the 2002 Argentine economic crisis and had an optimistic economic outlook in 2005. No massive layoffs of full-time newsroom staff occurred at either paper after the crisis partly due to a union-sponsored contract clause that entitles journalists to high severance packages in case of employment termination.

³ We collected data on *Infobae.com* for online but not on *Diario Infobae* for print since it more realistically represents the situation of the top general interest online and print newspaper spaces.

⁴ An unscheduled event means one that “occurs unexpectedly; news of it is to be disseminated that day or the day after” (Tuchman, 1978, p. 51), and a pre-scheduled one refers to “an occurrence announced for a future date by its convenors; news of it is to be disseminated the day it occurs or the day after” (p. 51). We operationalized urgent dissemination differently for print and online. For print, it meant publication of a story within 24 hours or less once the major events had taken place, and for online within 2 hours or less. We chose the two-hour window because it reflects the pattern of temporal rotation of most top news stories in the online newspapers we studied during the work hours and because in a concurrent study of content production conducted by the first author in one of the online newspapers examined here this window was referred to as the ideal “point of maturation” of a hard news story.

⁵ The vast majority of the stories fell clearly into one of these two categories but we had three additional ones. The first included editorials, opinion pieces and columns. Second, a special type of soft news which we termed “entertainment pre-scheduled news with no urgent dissemination.” This kind of stories mostly cover content from the previous day’s television programs. Because

they deal with pre-scheduled events, they did not fit neatly into our definition of soft news; and because their urgency of dissemination is lower than the two-hour window specified for online hard news, they did not qualify as hard news. Third, stories that are about new products and services offered by each print and/or online newspaper.

⁶ The preponderance of hard news in the online papers increases as the day unfolds, partly due to a change in the design of *Lanacion.com*'s evening homepage: the editorials on its third column during the morning and afternoon homepages were replaced by search options without stories, thus the nine-story front-page added a "row" of stories. To measure the effect of this change in format, we recalculated the level of overlap and the thematic distribution of the overlaps without the three added stories and found that the results showed no significant difference from those reported above. Furthermore, our main metric controls for the number of total overlapped stories.

⁷ This trend affects more *Clarín* than *La Nación* in 1995 and 2000—partly due to the smaller size of *Clarín*'s front pages—but this difference vanishes in 2004 and 2005 (see Table 1).

⁸ The tests of statistical significance of the differences between proportions were based on the effect size index h —the difference between the arcsin-transformed proportions—and, as appropriate, the harmonic mean of the ns , following Cohen's (1988) procedures and tabled critical values.

⁹ Because we focused on publication during the work week, we analyzed a sub-sample of online's evening editions Monday through Thursday, and the following day's print editions.

¹⁰ This lower level of anticipation between *Clarín.com*'s evening homepage and *La Nación*'s print front page is related to the discrepancy between the high level of non public affairs reporting in the former and the much lower level of this kind of content in the later.