

ADVERTISING PRESSURES ON NEWSPAPERS: A SURVEY

Lawrence C. Soley and Robert L. Craig

ABSTRACT: Although there are numerous anecdotal reports, there are few systematic studies of advertisers' attempts to influence news reports. The two empirical studies that examined advertising pressures on editors and writers at farm, business, and consumer magazines found that the pressure is much greater than suggested by academic writers. Another study of television found organizational pressures to approve deceptive program-length advertisements, i.e., infomercials. This study extended the empirical research about advertising pressures to newspapers. A survey of editors at daily newspapers found that just under ninety percent reported that advertisers attempted to influence the content of stories appearing in their papers; ninety percent had economic pressure applied on them by advertisers because of their reporting; and thirty-seven percent had capitulated to advertiser pressure. Despite these pressures, eighty-five percent of the editors reported that their papers carry stories that advertisers "find critical or harmful."

Lawrence C. Soley is the Gertrude and Cyril Colnik Professor of Communication at Marquette University. He received his Ph.D. from Michigan State University.

Robert L. Craig is a Visiting Fellow in Media Studies at the University of Ulster at Coleraine, United Kingdom. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Iowa.

Journal of Advertising,
Volume XXI, Num.ber 4
December 1992