Viewer’s reactions to TV broadcast meteorologists as climate educators

Results of an in-depth interview study

Investigators:

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Survey Overview

- Determine viewer habits and preferences when watching local weather broadcasts
- Assess viewers reaction to local broadcasts containing climate change impacts discussed by the Broadcast Meteorologist
Survey background

- Virginia media markets
- 30 participants
- 3 climate change belief segments: Certain, Somewhat certain, and Uncertain (10 in each segment)
- 15 male, 15 female
- 20-39, 40-59, 60+
- Compensated with a $50 gift card
Information gathering

- Live interview conducted via GotoMeeting
- Approximately 30 minutes in length
- General questions pertaining to viewing of TV weather forecasts
- Reactions to climate change graphics designed for use in TV broadcasts
- Reactions to actual video clips of Broadcast Meteorologists utilizing climate change graphics in their weather broadcast
General findings

How often do you watch the weather report on a local TV news station?

- Daily: 5 (Certain), 4 (Somewhat Certain), 5 (Uncertain)
- Often: 2 (Certain), 2 (Somewhat Certain), 1 (Uncertain)
- Sometimes: 1 (Certain), 3 (Somewhat Certain), 3 (Uncertain)
- Never: 2 (Certain), 1 (Somewhat Certain), 1 (Uncertain)

Why do you watch the weather report on TV?

- General: 5 (Certain), 4 (Somewhat Certain), 10 (Uncertain)
- Planning: 3 (Certain), 5 (Somewhat Certain), 4 (Uncertain)
- Travel: 1 (Certain), 1 (Somewhat Certain)
General findings

- Do you have a favorite weathercaster?
  - Yes: 6
  - No: 4

- Have you heard a weathercaster report about something other than the weather?
  - Yes: 3
  - No: 7

- Have you heard a local weathercaster report on climate change?
  - Yes: 6
  - No: 4

- Would you be interested in hearing your weathercaster report about climate change?
  - Yes: 9
  - No: 1

- Do you believe that weathercasters should report about climate change?
  - Yes: 9
  - No: 1
What kind of information - if any - about climate change would you like to learn from your local TV weathercasters?
Reactions to graphic
Richmond

Almost all felt they were easy to understand.

Half indicated that the graphic conveyed that it was warming up locally due to climate change impacts.

About a third mentioned that the graphic caught their attention immediately.

Almost all mentioned that the colors used grabbed their attention the most.
Improvements to graphic Richmond

Almost one-third mentioned too much red was used and it blended into the background making it difficult to read.

Nearly a third indicated that use of a relevant timescale would be more useful.

About a quarter commented that the text and placement of the graphic description was difficult to read.
Reactions to graphic U.S.

- Almost all felt it was easy to understand.
- Almost all mentioned the attention grabbing color.
- A third liked the illustrative difference communicated across the entire U.S.
- A third pointed out that although informative there was a lot to look at.
Improvements to graphic

U.S.

- Almost half mentioned that the impact of the graphic was not clear
- A third commented that the background color was not defined and blended with the main graphic
- About half indicated that the text and placement of the graphic description was difficult to read
Reactions to video

Increasing average annual temperature

- Most thought the information was easy to understand
- Almost all interpreted the information as VA temps are rising
- Most found the information useful
- Nearly all liked that the information was local
Improvements to video

Increasing average annual temperature

❖ About one-third felt that the graph was not clear in what it was representing

❖ A fewer than a third thought more time was needed on the subject

❖ A fewer than a third would like to see the sources of the information being presented/discussed

❖ One-third indicated that they would have liked a better explanation of the material given by the weathercaster
Reactions to video

Warmer summer nights

❖ Most thought the information was easy to understand
❖ Almost all interpreted the information as VA temps are rising
❖ About two-thirds found the information useful
❖ Most liked that the information was local
Improvements to video

Warmer summer nights

- One-third felt that the material was presented too quickly.
- About a quarter indicated that it contained too much information.
- About a third mentioned that the graph was not clear in the message it was attempting to convey.
- About a quarter indicated that the graphic was being blocked by the weathercaster during the broadcast.
Almost 80% indicated they would be interested in hearing their local weathercaster report on climate change.

Exactly 80% indicated that their local weathercaster should report on climate change.

These sentiments were mostly equal among the three belief segments.

All belief segments mentioned the need for unbiased, scientifically backed/referenced material.

All belief segments expressed a thirst for climate change information, especially local impacts.
Questions?