

Do you hope to work in the media or use a Media Studies qualification to support your university application or are you simply interested in the way the media impacts on our everyday lives?

If you answered yes to any or all of the above, the projects on this page will get you thinking about 'the media' in preparation for September. Choose **just one** of the topics below and spend a few of your internet hours this summer researching and writing a short report. *Your report should be between 900 and 1200 words.*

Local Radio

How many local radio stations are operating in Dorset? Why do I say 'operating' and not 'broadcasting'? There are plenty of small stations communicating with their audiences online, Nerve for example, or Air – until they received their FM broadcast licence. There are community, independent and BBC local services, all with different audiences and different company structures behind them. Choose any two local radio stations you have heard of and write a short essay comparing them, looking at the following elements:

Who owns them?

How do they make money / how are they funded if they are not-for-profit?

What percentage of original material do they present, (not repeats or relayed from elsewhere)?

Who is their audience? *Use classifications such as age / gender / race / income / aspiration*

Which genre(s) and period(s) of music do they play and how old are the presenters?

If they are commercial – who advertises with them and what type of products / services?

Can you make any connections between the audience demographic, the music and the advertising?

OR Local Print Media

Similarly, there are different models of ownership and audience for local newspapers. Using the questions above as a guide, compare at least two local print newspapers, looking at readership, price, advertising, percentage of original news written by the paper's own team compared to the quantity of agency-sourced material. Is the newspaper a small, privately-owned business or is it part of a national chain? How are the stories and pictures presented and what is the level of language employed? Again, make any connections between the newspaper's style and content and their readership that you feel are notable.

Do they have an online presence? Is it designed to appeal to the same readership or are there significant differences? Finally, how do you yourself keep up with local news and events?

OR Local Cinema

There are also different models of ownership and audience for local cinemas. Using the questions above as a guide, compare at least two local cinemas, looking at audiences, price, advertising, differences in the programme presented. Is the cinema a small, privately-owned business or is it part of a national chain? Make any connections between the cinema's advertising and programme content and their audiences that you feel are notable or relevant.

Do they have an online presence? Is it designed to appeal to specific audiences or is it generic? Finally, how do you yourself keep up with the latest film news and releases, are you a cinema-goer?

I look forward to reading your report,

Tim Abberley, Lecturer in Media