Methodology

We tracked the Grand Rapids Press coverage from September 7, 2010 through November 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2010 for all stories about anything that would appear on the November 2\textsuperscript{nd} ballot for those living in West Michigan.

We began on this date since for many political strategists the day after Labor Day is when candidates and campaigns make their “big push” before Election Day. We did not include November 2, Election Day, as many people would have already voted before they saw the paper and there were no additional articles about the Election.

We tracked the number of stories for each race and for all ballot initiatives, both statewide and local ballot initiatives. Whenever a story was printed we looked at sources cited in the story and the focus of each story, such as polling numbers, campaign finance, candidate platforms, endorsements or political ads.

For our study we only monitored the print version of the Grand Rapids Press. Our reasons for doing so is that there are still sectors of the community that only read the print edition and do not have easy access to the Internet.

We also did a comparative study and looked at the amount of ArtPrize coverage during the same 56-day period.

The Grand Rapids Institute for Information Democracy (GRIID) has been tracking election coverage in the West Michigan news media since 1998.
Summary of Findings

• There were a total of 87 Election articles during the 56-day study period.
• The races that received the most article were: 3rd Congressional (21), Governor’s race (19) and Proposal to have a Constitutional Convention (9)
• Area State races received limited coverage: 29th District Senate race (4 articles), 75th District House race (3) and no articles about the 28th and 30th Senate races or the 72nd, 73rd, 76th, 77th or 86th District House races.
• There was only 1 article about Proposal 2, 1 article about the Michigan Supreme Court candidates, 1 article about Secretary of State candidates and 1 article about the Attorney General candidates.
• Most of the stories about candidates focused on polling, political ads, debate schedules, public appearances, endorsements and personal attacks.
• Consequently, most of the stories had very little information on candidate platforms, issues or voting records for those running as incumbents or a higher office.
• Comparatively, there were 153 articles about ArtPrize during the same 56-day study period and 87 election articles.
• Election stories appeared on the front page of the Press 18 times during the study period, whereas ArtPrize stories were on the front page 35 times.
Content Analysis

Governor’s Race

The 2010 Governor’s race featured a battle between Republican candidate Rick Snyder and Democratic candidate Virg Bernero. There were a total of 19 articles about this race from September 7 through November 1st.

The bulk of the articles deal with candidate visits, polling and the debate schedule. Of all 19 stories only four articles focused on candidate positions on the issues and two of these were short summary statements on Right to Work (9/12) and government consolidation (9/19).

The other two article focus on the economy (10/24) and public education (10/30). Even when candidates made local public appearance the articles were soft on issues.

Here is a chronological listing of the articles for the Governor’s race:

9/7 Governor’s race: Control starts here – redistricting, money
9/11 Bernero at Kent Dems event
9/12 The candidates on right-to-work
9/18 Snyder, Bernero assemble generalities
9/19 The candidates on consolidation
9/19 Economic fear may drive gubernatorial vote
9/23 Showdown: 2 candidates, 1 debate
10/1 Running mate lays out Bernero’s agenda
10/2 Snyder takes his politics to Aquinas
10/8 Snyder to talk at GOP dinner
10/9 Bernero, Snyder finally will duel
10/11 Snyder, Bernero true to form in debate
10/20 Snyder urges action, not talk
10/21 Poll: Bernero trails with time running out
10/22 Balancing the Budget: Who pays?
10/24 Fixing Michigan’s economy
10/28 Bernero rallies against poll numbers
10/30  Gov. candidates turn eyes to education
11/1  As election nears, Snyder drives home message

3rd Congressional Race

There were a total of 21 articles on the 3rd Congressional race between Republican Justin Amash and Democrat Patrick Miles. Nine of those stories were about political endorsements, 6 dealt with the candidate’s claims about personal finance in China, 2 were profile pieces, 2 were about debates, one article was about campaign finances and the last article the Press published on this matter was a mix of campaign finances, candidate claims and endorsements.

Most of the article did not deal with where the candidates stood on issues. For instance, on September 18 the Press ran a story (Congressional candidates debate senior issues) about a candidate debate at Meijer Gardens, which was hosted a group that does advocacy around senior issues. The article does cite claims by both Miles and Amash, particularly on Amash’s voting record as a State Representative. However, the Press reporter does not verify any of the claims made by either candidate or look at actual legislation that Amash voted on so that voters could have a more complete understanding of what was at issue.

Considering that candidates running for Congress will be dealing with major economic issues, health care, environmental issues and foreign policy matters, one would think that the Press would report on where the candidates stood on these matters. While it is true that some of these questions were posed to the candidates in their online voter guide and a few of them were part of the October 26 print Voter Guide, these critical domestic and foreign policies issues did not received the attention that voters require in order to make an informed decision.

Here is a chronological break down of the Press articles for the 3rd Congressional race:

9/18  Congressional candidates debate senior issues
9/20  Longtime GOP backers favor Miles
9/25  Congressional candidates debate over debates
9/26  Amash camp says air attack off-target
9/30  Ehlers throws support to Amash
10/4  Miles lands education support
10/6  Business practices help fuel debate
10/7  China connections
10/7  Miles carries fight to Amash’s home turf
10/7  Paul Henry’s widow backs Miles
10/9  Hoekstra endorses Amash
10/12 Miles sells China fund, issues challenge
10/15 Amash named rising star
10/17 Amash keeps financing edge over Miles
10/17 Pat Miles – profile
10/20 Miles touts more GOP supporters
10/21 Congressional candidates spar over TV claims
10/24 Justin Amash - profile
10/27 Republicans question Miles’ list of GOP support
10/29 Amash, Ehlers appear as legislative duo
10/31 Amash, Miles bring fireworks

2nd Congressional Race

There were only two articles about the 2nd Congressional race between Democrat Fred Johnson and Republican Bill Huizenga. The October 19 article was merely an announcement about campaign finance data and four upcoming debates between the two candidates.

The second story (10/31) also had some campaign finance data, but mostly focused on which candidate was “better known” in the district. Like the 3rd Congressional race, the coverage of this race did not provide voters with any substantive information on where the candidates stood on issues.

10/19 Congressional candidates to debate
10/31 Republican stronghold is no sure bet

29th District Senate Race

There were a total of four articles on the race between Republican Dave Hildenbrand and Democrat David LaGrand. One article focused on an endorsement for LaGrand and another dealt with campaign advertising. The October 16 article
was a summary of a debate between LaGrand and Hildenbrand where the only issues were raised was some of Hildenbrand’s voting record and their respective positions on state funding for the Pure Michigan campaign. Again, the Press reporter did not verify claims made or provide readers with concrete information on Hildenbrand’s voting record. The October 24 article was a mix of information on campaign finances, get the vote out efforts and a brief comment from both candidates on the state budget.

9/29   Public safety officers to rally for LaGrand
10/14  Candidates spare over advertising dollars
10/16  Senate candidates pull no punches
10/24  Possible for either to win the 29th

75th State House Race

The 75th State House race featured Democrat Brandon Dillon and Republican Bing Goei. The Press ran a total of three stories on this race with the first one on political attacks, the second one on a dispute over an endorsement and the third article that provided some candidate profile information and where they both stood on taxes. Again, very limited information on where the candidates stood on issues.

9/25   Candidates each deny negative attacks
9/28   Endorsement claim riles House candidate
10/17  75th House race could be close

State Proposals

In many ways this issue received the best coverage of any issue on the ballot. There were a total of nine articles on the ballot proposal to hold another State Constitutional Convention. The articles not only provided reasons to support or oppose such a convention, the Press ran several historical pieces about the last constitutional convention, which provided additional context for the current proposal. The only problem with these articles is that they were bunched together over a four-day period, so if readers missed them they would not have been able to easily access this kind of information.

10/10  Back to Square One?
10/10  How We Got Here
10/10  Don’t be on it
10/10 State’s last convention produced a governor
10/10 Convention firsts in 1961 – 62: Women, black delegates included
10/11 All Con, No Pro
10/11 Yes & No
10/12 Con-con low on voters’ radar
10/13 Former mayor urges support for constitutional convention

In contrast there was only one article on Proposal 2, which would bar felons from holding public office in the future.

10/17 Voters asked to ban felons from all state, local offices

**General Election Coverage**

The bulk of the remaining stories dealt with broad election elements, such as various get out the vote strategies by the political parties, re-districting, debate announcements, local ballot initiatives and local judicial races.

All of these articles can be viewed along with all election stories that we have included in chronological order. Besides the date we also list the page location for each article and the headline. Following these articles are a listing of all the ArtPrize stories that appeared in the Press during the same 56-day study period.

**Election Articles**

9/7 A10 Governor’s race: Control starts here – redistricting, money

9/9 A5 County Democrats rally support for fall campaigns

9/9 A5 Chamber (Grandville) hosts candidates event ($25)


9/18 A1 Snyder, Bernero assemble generalities
9/18  A3  Congressional candidates debate senior issues

9/19  A16  The candidates on consolidation

9/19  A17  Economic fear may drive gubernatorial vote

9/20  A3  Longtime GOP backers favor Miles

9/23  A3  Showdown: 2 candidates, 1 debate

9/25  A3  Congressional candidates debate over debates

9/25  A4  Candidates each deny negative attacks

9/26  B1  Amash camp says air attack off-target

9/28  A10  Endorsement claim riles House candidate

9/29  A6  Public safety officers to rally for LaGrand

9/30  A4  Ehlers throws support to Amash

10/1  A2  Running mate lays out Bernero’s agenda
10/2  A4  Snyder takes his politics to Aquinas

10/3  A1  State Dems hope to ride out storm
http://www.mlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2010/10/how_michigan_democrats_are_try.html


10/6  A3  Business practices help fuel debate


10/7  A1  Miles carries fight to Amash’s home turf

10/7  A1  Ballot goof costs Ottawa $48,570


10/8  A5  Snyder to talk at GOP dinner

10/9  A1  Bernero, Snyder finally will duel


10/10  A1  Back to Square One?

10/10  A12  How We Got Here

10/10  A13  Don’t be on it
State’s last convention produced a governor

Convention firsts in 1961 – 62: Women, black delegates included

All Con, No Pro

Snyder, Bernero true to form in debate

Yes & No

Con-con low on voters’ radar

Miles sells China fund, issues challenge

Former mayor urges support for constitutional convention

Candidates spare over advertising dollars

Amash named rising star

Senate candidates pull no punches

Brenda Lawrence chips at Snyder’s stances
10/17 A1  Who’s at root of all that money?

10/17 A12  Voters asked to ban felons from all state, local offices

10/17 A13  This time, surprise is if justices get along
http://www.themorningsun.com/articles/2010/10/06/news/politics/doc4caca32a7d0e721963291.txt


10/17 B10  Amash keeps financing edge over Miles


10/18 A3  Judicial race pits court veterans ( Allegan)


10/19 A8  Congressional candidates to debate

10/20 A3  Miles touts more GOP supporters

10/20 A5  Snyder urges action, not talk

10/21 A1  Congressional candidates spar over TV claims

10/21 A1  Poll: Bernero trails with time running out
10/21 A7  Bill Clinton to campaign

10/22 A7  Vote may change more than seats for Kent County Board

10/22 A12  Balancing the Budget: Who pays?

10/24 A1  Fixing Michigan’s economy

10/24 A6  Secretary of state hopefuls talk elections, efficiency

10/24 A7  Candidates talk reform, but mean different things http://record-eagle.com/statenews/x839571080/AG-candidates-spar-over-federal-lawsuits

10/24 B1  Possible for either to win the 29th

10/24 B3  Georgetown voters to reconsider liquor licenses

10/24 B3  Proposal would make Wyoming’s money more flexible

10/24 B4  Allegan residents again will vote on tax for new jail


10/24 B5  Wealth of experience among Rockford candidates


10/24 I1  Justin Amash Profile http://www.mlive.com/living/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2010/10/profile_3rd_congressional_dist_1.html
10/25 A1  Democrats unholster big gun  

10/25 A3  Family groups take on judge’s race  

10/25 A9  Two vie for family court seat  

10/26 A1  Quiet run for office is not by choice  

10/26  20 page Voter Guide

10/27 A1  Republicans question Miles’ list of GOP support  

10/28 A3  Bernero rallies against poll numbers  

10/29 A5  Amash, Ehlers appear as legislative duo  

10/30 A1  Dems put out call to black voters  

10/30 A3  Ottawa voters to decide 9 ballot proposals  

10/30 A5  Gov. candidates turn eyes to education  

10/30 A5  State GOP candidates push for voter turnout  
http://www.mlive.com/newsflash/index.ssf/story/state-gop-candidates-push-for-high-voter/6c90b9c232f54df0ab5a93e0350c30ab
10/31 A1    Hold them to their promises
html

10/31 B1    Amash, Miles bring fireworks http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-
rapids/index.ssf/2010/10/justin_amash_pat_miles_jr_goin.html

10/31 B2    Republican stronghold is no sure bet
http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-
rapids/index.ssf/2010/10/bill_huizenga_fred_johnson_vie.html

11/1  A1    Our time has come http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-
rapids/index.ssf/2010/11/kent_county_clerks_expect_55_p.h
ml

11/1  A3    As election nears, Snyder drives home message
http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-
rapids/index.ssf/2010/10/grand_rapids_snyder_supporters.html

ArtPrize Articles

9/7  A1    Tech-savy ArtPrize aims to be even tech-savvier
9/8  A1    The Rapid unveils its ArtPrize express
9/10 A3    4 Pictures w/caption
9/11 B1    ArtPrize award manufactured locally
9/12 A1    Public Museum is prime exhibit
9/12 A2    Key to Touring ArtPrize? Start at Center
9/12 E1    Art Song: Organizers see concerts as way to unify ArtPrize experience
9/12 E3    Calvin hopes shows encourages students to explore ArtPrize
9/13 A1    Grand Valley goes for sculpture
9/14 A1    At UICA, expect the unexpected
9/15 A1    Looking for variety? Join the Club
9/15 A13   Elephants – Artistic and Actual – Make their way into downtown GR
(pics & caption)
9/16 A1    Interesting stuff hangs out at GRAM
9/16 A3    3 pics and caption
9/16 A10 2 pics and caption
9/17 A1 Church offers plenty to contemplate
9/17 A4 City opens parking ramp (because of ArtPrize)
9/18 A1 Our Town becoming Art Town
9/18 A1 Meijer Gardens offer bumper crop
9/18 A2 Why wait for ArtPrize’s official opening?
9/19 A1 Here’s what’s new this year as organizers tweak second edition to expand visitors’ involvement (whole front page)
9/19 A7/8 Photos (14) with captions
9/19 A16 GR Press Editorial on ArtPrize
9/19 B5 ArtPrize makes planetarium a sight better
9/19 E1 Art reprise
9/19 E5-8 ArtPrize guide
9/20 A1 Piano Exhibit can be accompanied by you
9/20 A8 Pics (1) and caption
9/21 A1 You can’t rush art – until the deadline approaches
9/21 A2 Cameras are no help
9/21 A3 Pics (3) and caption
9/21 B1 KidPrize
9/22 A1 Special ArtPrize Cover – full page
9/22 A2 Meet the artist behind our front-page illustration
9/22 A2 It’s all happening at the hub
9/22 A3 Smile: ArtPrize is here
9/22 A11 Pics (5) and caption
9/22 A12-14 ArtPrize Guide
9/22 B1 Palette to Palate
9/23 A1 If you ArtPrize, they will come
Two international incidents later; Ashley the sculpture has arrived

Creators, Collectors Unite

ArtPrize Guide

This time, they’re ready

Venue offers own award

Wanted: ArtPrize executive director

Pics (4) and caption

Pics (4) and caption

Employer proud of ArtPrize entrant

Look behind ArtPrize

Entrant says Artprize piece displays God’s love

What are you looking at?

Contemporary art institute invites you to lounge and learn

Event is easy going……..mostly

See special exhibit through the eyes of children

Pic and caption

Critic’s Choice

Entries at Press are conversation starters

Symphony, ArtPrize join music and color

Pics (7) and captions

ArtPrize venue guide

The Bigger the Better?

Pics (5) and caption

A look behind the scenes at an exhibition center

ArtPrize voters endure continued texting troubles

GVSU demonstrates its commitment to art
9/28  A9  Pics (6) and caption
9/29  A1  An ArtPrize frame of mind
9/29  A8  Pics (5) and caption
9/29  A9  UIICA once again is a step ahead of others
9/29  A10  We all want to be judges
9/29  A15  Art curmudgeon has a complaint
9/29  A17  ArtPrize 2010: Essays and Critique
9/29  A17  Whose vote counts most?
9/29  A17  Social networking that bleeds
9/30  A1  Art talk is a good thing
9/30  A3  Pic and caption
9/30  A6  Pics(6) and caption
9/30  A7  At GRAM, exhibits worthy of major metropolitan shows
9/30  A8  Texting Trouble clears in time for voting flurry
9/30  Weekend cover
9/30  Weekend pg 4  Marrying music and art
9/30  Weekend pg 5  New album reeals Achuleta’s quirky side
9/30  Weekend pg 6  Lead with your heart
9/30  Weekend pg 7 – 10  ArtPrize venue guide
10/1  A1  ArtPrize voters fall in love with diverse choices
10/1  A4  Don’t be afraid to take a risk
10/1  A6/7  Pics (10) and captions
10/1  A7  Batting .500 in the ArtPrize top 10 predictions
10/1  A8  Unexpected art at church
10/2  A1  We have faith in art
10/2  A2  Public museum display is staggering
10/2  A3  Message of hope at the BOB
10/2 B1 Business abuzz for ArtPrize
10/3 A1 Meet the finalists
10/3 A12/13 Finalists create with wood, salt, pencil, string, pennies, metal, plastic and glass
10/3 A14 Women’s City Club hosts surprising, engaging art
10/3 B1 Artist hopes to get stolen bike back
10/3 B4 Downtown is hopping again
10/3 B5 The artist is a fan: Maya Lin returns to GR for ArtPrize
10/3 E1 Music is canvas for these ArtPrize entries
10/3 E3 Music to Our Eyes – Pics (5) and caption
10/3 E4-6 ArtPrize venue Guide
10/4 A1 From spiritual to saccharine, art critic ranks the top 10
10/4 A3 Pics (3) with caption
10/4 A8 Time for a walk in the park
10/4 A8 Vandals strike third time
10/4 A9 Water, Water Everywhere (5 Pics)
10/4 B1 A Place for Everybody
10/4 B3 Painter with Down syndrome immerses himself in his work
10/4 B3 Words fail her, but art doesn’t
10/4 B3 Art connects Siegel to nature, people
10/4 B3 Sculptor pushes past his pain
10/5 A1 Moving pictures
10/5 A3 Even unofficial artwork attracts attention – 2 Pics
10/5 A7 The great divide of quality
10/5 A7 Event gets glowing review on “Today”
10/5 A8 Drawing crowds – Pics 5 and caption
10/6 A1 Outsider Art
Mosaic of Murals

Here are my predictions

Press art curmudgeon says: Hands off art

Nothing will be the same for ArtPrize’s favored artist

S Sensory Experience (Pics 4)

Music, dance add to finale excitement

Eyes on Division (Pics 4)

Looking Art in the face

Art now part of our lives and loves

Professionals have their say in first juried awards

A Blast of Color (pics 5)

Two out of three isn’t bad

MSU vs U-M ArtPrize

Award winning artist returns to class

Another success, with room to improve

Latest art ruffians may have left receipt

Keep event’s spirit alive all year

The Color Tour (Pics – 5)

Big crowds, bustling streets provide fitting farewell for ArtPrize 2010

Uplifting work at ArtPrize

ArtPrize elephants end up in a garden

ArtPrize centers popular stops

ArtPrize: a statewide destination

Art benefits parking

ArtPrize entry inspires move to Calvin College

ArtPrize award winner removed

Imagine ArtPrize in Chicago, only smaller
Wanted: permanent home

Other cities considering ArtPrize imitations

Museum quality? Believe it or not

Kentwood captures ArtPrize sculpture

Meijer Gardens sets attendance record: Chihuly Exhibit, ArtPrize contribute to increased numbers

Can’t place the face? ArtPrize project has 40,000