



Center for American Progress



## **Ethnic Media in America: The Giant Hidden in Plain Sight**

Conducted by Bendixen & Associates  
For New California Media (NCM)  
In partnership with  
Center for American Progress  
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund

### ***Executive Summary***

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New California Media (NCM)  
[www.ncmonline.com](http://www.ncmonline.com)  
Tel: 415-503-4170  
Fax: 415-503-0970

*This executive summary summarizes the findings of the first-ever comprehensive survey of ethnic American adults on their media usage. The poll surveyed 1895 African American, Hispanic, Asian American, Arab American and Native American adults in the United States, representing some 64 million ethnics overall. The interviews were conducted in 10 languages: Arabic, Cantonese, English, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.*

## **MAJOR FINDINGS**

### **1. 29 MILLION ETHNIC ADULTS ARE “PRIMARY CONSUMERS” OF ETHNIC MEDIA**

The study reveals the striking impact of ethnic media in the United States. Forty-five percent of all African American, Hispanic, Asian American, Native American and Arab American adults prefer ethnic television, radio or newspapers to their mainstream counterparts. These "primary consumers" also indicated that they access ethnic media frequently. This means that a staggering 29 million adults (45 percent of the 64 million ethnic adults studied), or a full 13 percent of the entire adult population of the United States, prefer ethnic media to mainstream television, radio or newspapers. More than half of all Hispanic adults are primary consumers of ethnic media. Approximately two-fifths of African Americans and Arab Americans and a fourth of Asian Americans and Native Americans prefer ethnic media to mainstream media.

### **2. ETHNIC MEDIA REACH 51 MILLION ADULTS – ONE FOURTH – OF THE ENTIRE U.S. POPULATION**

In addition to the 29 million people classified as "primary consumers," ethnic media reaches another 22 million ethnic adults on a regular basis. These adults prefer mainstream media, but they also access ethnic television, radio or newspapers on a regular basis. Therefore, our study indicates that the overwhelming majority (80 percent) of the ethnic populations studied (64 million adults) are reached by ethnic media on a regular basis. The 51 million Americans reached by ethnic media represent about a quarter of the entire U.S. adult population.

### **3. GROUPS SURVEYED SHOW DIFFERENT CHARACTERISTICS IN ETHNIC MEDIA CONSUMPTION**

***Hispanics:***

The reach of Spanish-language media is almost universal in Hispanic America. Eighty-seven percent of all Hispanic adults access Spanish-language television, radio or newspapers on a regular basis. The success of the major television networks (Univision and Telemundo) is well documented but this study also indicates that Spanish-language radio and newspapers are rapidly increasing their penetration in this market. For example, more than a quarter (29 percent) of Hispanic adults report that they now prefer Spanish-language newspapers to their English-language counterparts. There are only small variations in the media usage of the Hispanic groups studied but the poll indicates that Cubans watch Spanish-language television and listen to Spanish-language radio more often than the other Hispanic groups studied while a higher percentage of South Americans read Spanish-language newspapers. This study also reveals that Hispanics have very low access (24 percent) to the Internet.

***African Americans:***

African American radio - stations that focus on African American themes and content - is the most popular ethnic medium among Blacks in the United States. A substantial majority of African American adults listen to ethnic radio stations on a regular basis. African Americans that are 40 years of age or older and those with annual incomes above \$30,000 listen to ethnic radio more often than those that are younger or poorer. It should also be noted that the reach of African American newspapers is impressive. Even though African Americans read mainstream daily newspapers more often, African American newspapers - mostly weeklies - reach 57 percent of all African Americans. Almost half (49 percent) of African American adults have access to the Internet.

***Asian Americans:***

Asian American newspapers reach a substantial percentage of the nine million Asian American adults in the United States. Approximately 80 percent of all Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese adults read an ethnic newspaper on a regular basis. The reach of Asian Indian, Filipino and Japanese newspapers is smaller but still impressive - more than half of the adults in these groups read an ethnic newspaper a few times a month or more. The poll also indicates that Korean and Chinese television stations are rapidly increasing in popularity - a quarter of those interviewed reported watching Korean and Chinese-language television more often than English-language television. Access to the Internet is very high (67 percent) among all Asian Americans and half of them prefer ethnic websites to mainstream websites. Asian Indian adults access the Internet more often than other Asians.

***Arab Americans:***

The Arabic media reaches three-quarters of all Arab Americans. Television is the preferred medium. Internet access among Arab Americans is higher than it is for any other ethnic group studied. Three-quarters of all Arab American adults have access to the Internet and a majority of them visit Arabic websites.

***Native Americans:***

Approximately one quarter (23 percent) of all Native Americans are primary consumers of ethnic newspapers. They read tribal newspapers more often than their mainstream counterparts. Native American television and radio stations have much smaller audiences. Nearly half of the Native American adult population has access to the Internet and 16 percent access websites with a focus on Native American issues.

**4. ETHNIC MEDIA AUDIENCES LOOK TO MAINSTREAM MEDIA FOR COVERAGE OF POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT**

The survey finds that while the ethnic populations studied tend to rely on the ethnic media for information about their communities and countries of origin, when it comes to information about politics and the U. S. government most turn to the mainstream media.

**METHODOLOGY**

The findings of this report are based on a poll of 1895 African American, Hispanic, Asian American, Arab American and Native American adults in the United States. The total sample is comprised of 14 sub-samples, which break down as follows:

<b><i>Sample group</i></b>	<b><i>Sample size</i></b>
<b>African American</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Arab American</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Asian American (Total)</b>	<b>601</b>
Asian Indian	100
Chinese	100
Filipino	100
Japanese	100
Korean	100
Vietnamese	101
<b>Hispanic (Total)</b>	<b>780</b>
Central American	102
Cuban	111
Mexican	316
Puerto Rican	118
South American	101
<b>Native American</b>	<b>114</b>

Each of the samples is representative of that specific ethnic population in the United States. Interviews for the study were conducted in the following languages: Arabic, Cantonese, English, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. All of the interviews were conducted between April 26<sup>th</sup> and May 26<sup>th</sup> of 2005. The margin of error varies between  $\pm 3.5$  and  $\pm 10$  percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence depending on the size of the sample. The polling project was commissioned by New California Media in partnership with The Center for American Progress and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund and was organized and coordinated by Bendixen & Associates of Coral Gables, Florida.

#### **ABOUT NCM AND POLL CO-SPONSORS:**

**NCM**, founded in 1996 by the nonprofit Pacific News Service to promote ethnic media, has been a pioneer of multilingual polling since 2002, with support from a broad range of foundations and organizations, including The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, The Ford Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, The Overbrook Foundation, The Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund, Open Society Institute. NCM has partnered with the Institute for Justice and Journalism at USC Annenberg School for Communication and with the Chinese American Voter Education Committee in developing multilingual polling nationwide.

**The Center for American Progress** is a nonpartisan research and educational institute dedicated to promoting a strong, just and free America that ensures opportunity for all. CAP believes that Americans are bound together by a common commitment to these values and they aspire to ensure that our national policies reflect these values.

**The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund** is the research, education, and communications arm of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the nation's oldest, largest, and most diverse civil and human rights coalition.

**Bendixen & Associates** is a public opinion research, management, and communications consulting firm based in Miami, Florida. Founded in 1984, the firm has grown from a company with roots in political campaigns and polling into an international consulting company that incorporates many disciplines and sectors. The firm has managed projects throughout the U.S., as well as in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Peru, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Bonaire and the Antilles.