

The Typical News Cycle

There is a rhythm to the news. Understanding this rhythm means knowing when to hold or release the news, to pitch a story, and to hold events such that your media outreach has the maximum effect.

2:00 am	Blogosphere breaks leading stories.
4:30 am	Wire Services (AP, Reuters, etc) rewrite and condense stories from the morning newspapers – called “Rip and read” for use by early morning radio and TV.
4:30 am – 5:00 am	Radio and TV news directors assemble morning newscasts. Both TV and radio will use packages produced for the previous evening’s news in these early broadcasts. Some radio stations will take audio feeds at this time. Some radio and TV will conduct live, in-studio interviews.
6:00 am – 9:00 am	Blogosphere reacts with commentary to leading stories. Morning TV news recycles last night’s news, teasers for evening newscasts. Drive time, peak radio listening.
10:00 am	Front page deadlines for afternoon dailies (hit stands at 1-2pm). Good time to pitch stories to TV assignment desks. Good time to hold news conferences, media events.
11:00 am – 1:30 pm	Most television packages shoot to allow for writing and editing before airing. Good time to hold news conferences and media events to get in today’s news. Good time to pitch print reporters for upcoming events, stories, and other items.
1:30 pm – 5:00 pm	Reporters on deadline working on stories. Expect media inquiries: be ready to answer questions and return calls.
5:00 pm	Deadlines for back news sections of morning papers, including local and regional news not already slated to be front page news. Not a good time to pitch stories. Not a good time to hold news conferences/media events but only to get into the next day’s news.
5:00 pm – 6:30 pm	“Drive time” – peak radio listening.
5:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Print reporters working with editors on front page stories. Expect media inquiries: be ready to answer questions and return calls. Evening TV news broadcasts. Not a good time to pitch stories. Not a good time to hold news conferences/ media events for major or breaking stories or for tomorrow’s news.
8:00 pm – 9:00 pm	Front page deadlines, depending on size of paper. Blogosphere spins the commentary; if there is sufficient favorable chatter on your event/topic/news or announcement, keep up the buzz with online statements, a follow-up release, or commentary. Some local TV stations nighttime news broadcast. Guests due in studio for TV interviews on 10pm newscasts.
10:00 pm – 11:30 pm	Local TV stations nighttime news broadcast.
Sun.	Good day for stories to appear in all media (most listeners/readers/viewers), poor day to pitch to print media. Sunday papers typically run longer feature stories worked on for the entire week. Pitching on Sat. may not get you in the Sun. paper.
Mon.	Good day for stories to appear, good to pitch stories.
Tue – Thurs.	Best days to pitch stories, best for stories to appear and best for media events.
Fri.	Poor day for stories to appear, worst day to pitch a story to any media.
Sat.	Worst day for a story to appear (fewest listeners/readers/viewers).

** Of course, if you need to release bad news, you would use this cycle differently, most likely releasing on Friday after 5pm, preferably before a holiday.