

Smooch: Study of 130,213 stories shows Obama bias in 2012 election

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A sweeping study of some 130,213 news articles on the 2012 presidential match between President Obama and Mitt Romney has proven anew that there was a strong pro-Democratic bias in the U.S. and international press.

The study, published in the authoritative journal *Big Data & Society*, also tested the campaign themes the media focused on and determined that Obama succeeded in stealing the economic issue from Republican Romney.

"The 2012 elections saw an 'issue trespassing' strategy with President Obama taking the initiative on the economy," found the survey of stories produced by 719 U.S. and international outlets.

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The survey used a technical language processing analysis to filter all the stories and found that Obama was portrayed as an attack dog and Romney on defense. Key was Obama's ability to "own" the economic message despite Romney's repeated assaults and the public's general view that the GOP handles the economy better.

"Overall, media reporting contained more frequently positive statements about the Democrats than the Republicans. Overall, the Republicans were more frequently the object of negative statements," wrote the study authors. Their conclusion: "The Republican Party is the most divisive subject in the campaign, and is portrayed in a more negative fashion than the Democrats."

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