

The Washington Post

By Howard Kurtz
Washington Post Staff Writer
Monday, April 27, 2009

Boosting Obama

The networks have given President Obama more coverage than George W. Bush and Bill Clinton combined in their first months -- and more positive assessments to boot.

In a study to be released today, the **Center for Media and Public Affairs** and **Chapman University** found the nightly newscasts devoting nearly 28 hours to Obama's presidency in the first 50 days. (Bush, by contrast, got nearly eight hours.) Fifty-eight percent of the Obama evaluations were positive on the ABC, CBS and NBC broadcasts, compared with 33 percent positive in the comparable period of Bush's tenure and 44 percent positive for Clinton. (Evaluations by officials from the administration or political parties were not counted.)

On Fox News, by contrast, only 13 percent of the assessments of Obama were positive on the first half of Bret Baier's "Special Report," which most resembles a newscast. The president got far better treatment in the New York Times, where 73 percent of the assessments in front-page pieces were positive.

A striking contrast: Obama's personal qualities drew more favorable coverage than his policies, with 32 percent of the sound bites positive on CBS, 31 percent positive on NBC and 8 percent positive on Fox.

Footnote: Obama spokesman Robert Gibbs, for his part, gives White House reporters "a strong A," telling CNN's Wolf Blitzer that they ask "tough questions each and every day."

[Link to full article](#)