CODING GUIDE

These instructions explain the variables as they appear in the 2008 and 2011 Local News Research Project data sets. They should be read along with the document called *Coding List,* which lists the variable choices for each variable.

Local story identification and coding

Only local news stories will be coded. To determine whether a story is local, refer to the definition and examples below.

<u>Definition of local:</u>
Local items deal *primarily* with local events, people, issues and places in the Greater Toronto Area. The GTA consists of the City of Toronto plus the four surrounding regions of Halton, Peel, York and Durham.

If you are unsure if a story qualifies as local, think through the following questions to clarify:
- Is the main focus of the story local? i.e. location, individual, institution, business, artistic performer/personality, etc.
- Do the geographic locations mentioned in the story qualify as local?
- Will the story be of interest to readers because it will have an impact on them?
- Is the story tailored for local readers?
- If you are still uncertain whether a story can be considered local, count the number of paragraphs that deal with GTA-related matters and compare it to the number of paragraphs in the same story dealing with non-GTA information/issues.

Some examples:
- The minister of finance announces the provincial budget at Queen's Park. This is happening locally and affects local residents so it gets coded.
- The Ontario Minister of Finance gives a speech on his budget to the Bay Street business community at the Royal York. This is an event happening locally so it gets coded.
- A travel article written by a couple from Newmarket traveling in Nepal is considered local and should be coded because there would be local interest in individuals.
- A Ryerson University researcher completes a study comparing public and private health-care systems in Europe. There will be interest in the local researcher. The story should be coded.
- A story or review is written about a dance troupe that is coming to perform in Toronto, accompanied by information about where and when to buy tickets for the show. The event will be of local interest. The story should be coded.

- A story is written about the Canadian ski team's international performance, and there is one mention of a Toronto coach. This does not qualify as a significant local angle. Do not code the story.

For stories that involve the provincial government (located at Queen's Park), consider the story as local if it significantly impacts the GTA. However, if the story does not significantly impact the GTA, do not count the story as local.

Letters:
A letter is considered local – regardless of the letter-writer's address – if it *deals with a matter of local interest or if it deals with an item that was published earlier on a local situation/issue/person*. For instance:
- A letter about the City of Toronto's budget from an Ottawa resident is considered local because it is about a GTA issue. The letter should be coded.
- A letter from a Toronto resident about the U.S. presidential race would not be coded because it isn't about a local issue.

If you are in doubt, look up the original story to see if it qualifies as a local item (i.e., whether the original story deals with a local issue). However, only use the original story to determine whether the letter should be considered local; do not map any geographic references from the original story.

For the 2011 Toronto Star, when numbering the letters, if there are multiple letters that go along with one photo, always label the photo as an AC to the first letter. For example, if there are ten letters regarding the Baby Storm story, and the section has one photo of Storm's family, label the photo as an AC to the first letter that appears in that section.

Reviews:
To be a review, the item must deal with cars, food or entertainment (including books), and must contain opinion. Items that do not deal with these topics or do not contain opinion should be considered a feature. Items labelled as reviews by the newspaper should also be considered reviews.

A review is considered local if it deals with food or entertainment (involving GTA or non-GTA residents) in a local venue, or features a local artist/author/chef/performer, i.e. if it has a local angle. Examples:
- A review of a Hollywood movie starring an actor who is or was from Toronto is considered local because there will be local interest in the actor. The review should be coded.
- A story about the success of a Toronto-produced play that is on stage in New York is of local interest to GTA residents interested in the theatre. It should be coded as a local story, and should be considered a story rather than a review because it is about the success of the company rather than the merits of the show.

- The regularly appearing items "Deep Thoughts" (Living section) and "Second Opinion" (Living section) should be considered features, not reviews, because they are about research ideas and research findings, not food, entertainment or cars.

Entertainment:
Stories about live performances or theatre productions happening in Toronto are considered local, but stories about films opening in Toronto are considered local only if the film is part of a festival series (e.g., the Toronto International Film Festival, Cinematheque Ontario). Stories about major motion pictures opening in Toronto cinemas should not be considered local.

Community contribution:
A community contribution is considered a local story if it deals with a local subject.
- A web forum about drive-throughs in the GTA is considered local.

Sports:
Code "Around the NBA/NHL/NFL", "Baseball Notes" and "Notepad" (Sports section) if one of the topics mentioned in the item is local (e.g. if one of the bullets in "Notepad" is about the Toronto Marlies).

Photos:
If a local story has a photo with it, code all the photos associated with the story, even if the photo content is not local. Code the photo content consistent with the story content. For instance:
- A story about a local nuclear power plant is accompanied by a photo of nuclear safety regulators in Ottawa. The photo should be coded, and the number of local geographic references for the photo will be zero.

If the photo accompanying a non-local story contains local content, code the photo. The photo status will be SA (stand-alone photo). Code the subject according to the photo content, not the content of the story. For instance:
- A story about the Ontario farming industry is accompanied by a photo of a local farm. The story will not be treated as local but the photo should be considered local.

For bulleted items where only one or some of the bullets are considered local (e.g. "Briefly" in the Entertainment section), code accompanying photos only if they are related to the bullet(s) considered local. Otherwise, do not code the photos.

Sidebars:

For stories with accompanying excerpts or sidebars, code the excerpt/sidebar only if the content of the excerpt/sidebar itself is local.

Coding local news items

Every local item will be coded regardless of form. This means you will code every:
- local news story
- local feature including profiles and obituaries
- local sidebar
- local stand-alone photo
- local photo(s) that appear with a story
- local column
- local editorial
- local editorial cartoon
- local review
- local letter
- local community contribution item
- local school sports summaries

VARIABLE: OBJECTID
The database will automatically assign a number to any new items added. This is an autonumber field.

VARIABLE: Media_Type
Select the name of the media outlet from the dropdown menu.

VARIABLE: Edition
Each issue of the newspaper is assigned a number for identification purposes. These have already been assigned and loaded into the database. Select the appropriate edition number from the drop-down menu based on the date of the issue you are coding.

VARIABLE: UID (unique identifier)
The UID consists of the edition #, item # and element #. For example, Item ID 1.04.1 means edition one (the first copy of the newspaper to be analyzed); local item #4 from that edition and element #1, which indicates the element being coded is the main story.

These numbers will be the precise reference for the story. Item ID 2.06.2 refers to newspaper edition #2 (second day of the newspaper to be analyzed); local item #6 in that edition of the paper; element #2 which would be a photo. (Item ID 2.06.1 refers to the text of the main story.)

- Sidebars are given a separate UID. They are not considered an element of the main story. For example, Item ID 1.9.1 refers to the main story. A sidebar to the story would be given the code 1.10.1.
- Local item numbering within each new edition of the paper begins again at 1.
- Community contributions solicited by the paper, including Web forums and "Reader Exchange" (New in Homes section), are considered one item and should only receive one Item ID.
- Photos that accompany a group of letters on the same topic should be considered a stand-alone photo, and receive its own Item ID. Photos that accompany a Web forum should be considered an element of the main item, e.g. the Web forum would be given the code 1.25.1, and the accompanying photo will be given the code 1.25.2.

VARIABLE: Page

If the story begins on one page and turns to another, cite only the starting page number. Cite both the page number and letter to identify the section, for example A1, B3, L5.

VARIABLE: Word Count

Look up the word count in the library archives (Proquest).

Download the file from the Proquest and save it in the shared folder. Start a new folder for each issue, and use the x.y from the UID as the file name (e.g. "4.8", "4.10", etc.) We are doing this so that when we are finished coding, we will have a folder that contains all the local stories that appear in each edition.

VARIABLE: Headline

Write in the headline, including the subhead, of the story or stand-alone photo. For photos and editorial cartoons, enter "Not applicable".

VARIABLE: Item Origin

Enter the appropriate code for the origin of the story.

Freelance writers are reporters who are not on staff but who contribute items to the news pages and are paid for their contribution. Professional journalists who submit opinion pieces for the editorial page should be considered FRE (freelancers).

Community contributors are local people who write a one-off column for the paper, usually the op-ed page. They are also the source for reader feedback surveys via email or voice mail. People who write submit an opinion piece for the editorial page should be considered COMC (community contributors) even if they are freelance writers from the community (but NOT professional journalists, who should be considered freelancers). For instance:

- A university professor who contributes a column on a specialty topic would be a community contributor. A journalist who covers a news event, files a news story to the paper and is paid for the article is a freelance writer.

VARIABLE: Item Form
Choose the appropriate form for the article. Remember, an item can only be a review if it is of cars, or of a restaurant or entertainment form (including books).

Columns must have the writer's photo at the beginning or the end, and appear regularly. They can be written by journalists or local people, as long as they appear regularly and are accompanied by the writer's photo.

Community contributions are a separate category from columns, reviews, and features. They are pieces submitted by non-staff, e.g. by readers, experts, politicians. The Item Form would be COMC (community contribution), and the Item Origin would be COM (community contributor). Community contributions can also be opinion pieces written by outside journalists. In this case, the Item Form would be COMC (community contribution), but the Item Origin would be FRE (freelancer) instead of COM (community contributor).

VARIABLE: Interactive elements (Interactive1 and Interactive 2) – CODE FOR OPENFILE.CA ONLY
For local news items posted on OpenFile.ca, code any interactive elements that accompany the story. These include interactive maps, videos, photo galleries, sound clips and charts/graphs. If there is more than one interactive element, code the first under the variable Interactive1 and the second under Interactive 2.

VARIABLE: Number of hyperlinks (No_of_Links) - CODE FOR OPENFILE.CA ONLY
Count the number of hyperlinks that are included within the online article.

VARIABLE: Photo Status (FotoStatus)
Stand-alone photos are photos that are not accompanied by a story.
The photo status can be derived from the Item ID, i.e. a photo with the Item ID 1.2.3 indicates that there are three elements to the story and that this photo is the third element, whereas a photo with the Item ID 1.6.1 indicates the photo is a stand-alone.

For items that are text, code this field as SP (story accompanied by a photo) if there are any accompanying photos, and NA (not applicable) if there are none.

VARIABLE: General Photo Content (GenFotoCont)

Identify whether the people in the photo are male or female. Code ANM (animals) for this field ONLY IF there are animals but no humans in the photo; e.g. for a photo of a woman and a dog, code the photo as FEM (Human: Female). If the item is text, code this field as "Not applicable".

For editorial cartoons, the item origin should be STA (staff), the photo status should be NA (not applicable), and the general photo content should also be NA (not applicable) because editorial cartoons are considered illustrations rather than photos.

VARIABLE: Race/ethnicity (R/E1, R/E2, R/E3 and R/E4)

The term "General community" (no specific ethnic group) will be used for the majority of stories that are not about a specific ethnic issue/group. For stories that do mention specific ethnic groups, code the group it portrays (not the group it impacts). Be as specific as possible when you are choosing a category, i.e. if the story is about a Jamaican immigrant, choose "Jamaica" for "race/ethnicity" rather than "Black community."

If a story references more than one racial/ethnic group we need to record this. A story about a Chinese boy and a Russian girl who go to an Africentric school would be coded Chinese under variable R/E1(Race/ethnicity 1); Russian under variable R/E2; Black under variable R/E3.

NOTE: The categories "Not identifiable" and "Not applicable" are for PHOTOS ONLY. Stories that are not about a specific racial or ethnic group should be coded as "General community".

VARIABLE: Religion

If the story references a religious community, enter the name of the religion. If religion is not relevant to a story, code "not applicable" for this field.

VARIABLE: Minority Community (MinorityCmnty)

Code this only if one of these specific communities is a key part of the story. Otherwise, code "not applicable" for this field.

How to handle photos in terms of race/ethnicity, religion and minority community

For photos, code the specific race/ethnicity, religion and minority community status **FOR PEOPLE ONLY**. For example, a photo of inanimate objects, (e.g., sushi, a mosque or a tree) should be coded "not applicable" for all three of these fields.

If only some of the people in a photo can be identified for gender or ethnicity but others cannot (i.e. because they are not facing the camera or their faces cannot be seen clearly), code the gender and ethnicity of those that can be identified. For instance:

- A photo has three people in it: one is standing in a dark hallway and cannot be identified for gender or ethnicity, one is a female who cannot be identified for ethnicity because her back is turned, and one is a White male. The photo should be coded HMF (humans: male and female) for "General Photograph Content", and White for R/E1; Not identifiable for R/E2 to cover off the other two people in the photo.
- You can enter two race/ethnicity for one person if appropriate in photos. For example, a story about the French president along with a photo of Sarkozy would have the race/ethnicity of French and White.

If there is any doubt about the ethnicity of the people in a photo, code "not identifiable" for the race/ethnicity variable.

VARIABLE: General subject
All local items (local news stories, features, sidebars, columns, editorials, photographs (free-standing and photos that run with stories) reviews, letters and community contributions must be categorized according to its general subject area.
- To do this, you must categorize each item by dominant subject/theme

Stories often involve more than one subject/theme. You need to decide which subject/theme is the most prominent. The questions to ask are:
- What is this story really about?
- What is the main point in the story?
- What is the central concept described in the story?

To answer these questions, use the following guidelines:
1. Look at the actions or developments in the story, rather than the context in which they occur.
2. Focus on *why this story is in the paper* – usually something has to happen (a news peg) that can give you a clue on how to classify the story.
3. If you cannot decide between two themes (or more) you can resort to paragraph counting (i.e. choose the subject that has more paragraphs in the story).
4. Use headlines or section heads as clues only.
5. Discuss the story with another coder/project principal investigator if you're still uncertain.

Example: If the story is about a housing development on the Oak Ridges Moraine and environmentalists/opposition to the development, the dominant theme is "land use" not housing or the environment. The story is in the paper because of the dispute over what should happen to the land. The appropriate coding is: General subject LU

VARIABLE: SubjDetail
After choosing the general subject/theme, enter a code that indicates, in more detail, what the item is about. Here are a couple of coding issues to be aware of:

Police/crime/legal/courts/local public safety
Items dealing with crime/police investigations/criminal charge/trials/police conduct/school safety fall into this category.

Do not include terrorism-related items in the crime category. There is a separate category (national security NS) for these items.

Exclude traffic accidents that make no mention of criminal proceedings i.e. where there is no mention of charges or further police investigation. These sorts of "pure" accident stories have a category of their own (FA02 or FA03). Code PO08 (driving-related crime/charges/investigations/trials) in cases of traffic accidents where charges are laid/police continue to investigate.
- Example: If the story is about a car accident where charges are laid, the story is a crime story, not an accident story. The story would be coded: General subject PO, Subject detail PO08 (driving-related crime/charges/investigations/trials).

Stories about the behavior of police officers should be coded as PO13 (police conduct/procedures, SIU investigations), even if criminal charges are laid against the officers.
- Example: If a story is about court proceedings against a police officer charged with excessive use of force, the story should be coded PO13 (police conduct/procedures, SIU investigations).

For drug-related murders, code the story as PO02 (murder/manslaughter/assault/violent crime/charges).

Education
Stories about violence, sexual harassment, bullying in schools go under the general subject of crime: General subject PO, Subject detail PO01 (School-safety/violence in schools/bullying/sexual harassment).

Health
- Example: A Ryerson University researcher completes a study comparing public and private health-care systems in Europe. There will be interest in the local researcher. The story should be coded:
  Item form: NEWS
  General subject: HE (Health/health protection….)
  Subject detail: HE03 (Health policy/health funding…)

Fire/accidents…

- Example: If two people are killed in a major highway accident during a snow storm and no charges are laid and there is no on-going police investigation, the story would be coded:
  General subject: FA
  Subject detail: FA02 (vehicle accident, weather related)
  This would not be considered a weather story because the real news was the accident.

- Example: But if the story is a roundup of a major summer rain storm that deals with fallen trees and a summary of small auto-accidents and individuals' experience in the storm, the story should be coded "weather/weather impact./storms/preparedness" (EW06) because the weather is the main issue.

- Example: If the story is about the city's inept efforts to clean up after a snow storm, the story should be coded MU11 "Response to extreme weather (snow, rain, wind, heat)"

If the story is about a car accident where charges are laid, the story is a crime story, not an accident story.

Religious-cultural diversity/multiculturalism/immigrants issues (RI)
- Example: If the story is about a Sikh from India refusing to wear a helmet while riding a motorcycle because it would interfere with his religious obligation to wear a turban, the full coding for the story would be:
  General subject: RI
  Subject detail: RI05 (religious practices/accommodation) *RI01 (minority rights including court and human rights commission decisions) might also apply, but use the more precise description of the issue where possible

- Example: If the story is about a celebration of International Women's Day by Muslim women who attend a particular mosque that caters to the South Asian community:
  General subject: RI
  Subject detail: RI06 (immigrant/minority women's role/rights)

- Example: If local synagogues call for a war on poverty, the story should be coded:
  General subject: SO
  Subject detail: SO07 (anti-poverty activism/reports)

Arts/entertainment
Remember, they must have a local angle to be coded.
- Example: A review of a Hollywood movie starring an actor who is or was from Toronto is considered local because there will be local interest in the actor. The story should be counted and coded as:
  Item form: REVW (review)
  General subject: AE

Subject detail: AE08 (Film)

- Example: A story about a Toronto-produced play that is on stage in New York is considered to be a local interest to GTA residents interested in the theatre. It should be counted and coded:
  Item form: NEWS
  General subject: AE
  Subject detail: AE19 (Theatre)

A story about arts and entertainment venues should be coded under AE even if they are about the business operations of the venue.

- Example: A story about a Toronto theatre closing down should be coded:
  Item form: NEWS
  General subject: AE
  Subject detail: AE19 (Theatre)

- Example: A story about a Toronto-based film distributing company merging with an American company should be coded:
  Item form: NEWS
  General subject: AE
  Subject detail: AE08 (Film)

Coding for celebrity AE02 versus Film, Pop music, or Theatre

- Example: Story of an artist or other celebrity that discusses the artist's life beyond their art: code them as a celebrity (i.e. movie star's battle with cancer)
  Item form: News
  General subject: AE
  Subject detail: AE02 (Celebrity)

- Example: Pop singer comes to Toronto to perform and the story is primarily about their latest tour, album, music
  Item form: News
  General subject: AE
  Subject detail: AE16 (popular music/jazz)

- Example: Photo/Story about visiting film star/maker/producer/director in town for TIFF would be coded under film
  Item form: News/foto
  General subject: AE
  Subject detail: AE08

General stories about restaurants and food should be coded as AE24 (Restaurant reviews/openings and food (general)). Stories that focus on the ethnicity of the food or the ethnic community that makes the food should be coded as RI10 (ethnic foods).

- Example: A review of a new Italian restaurant opinion in Toronto should be coded:

        Item form: REVW
        General subject: AE
        Subject detail: AE24 (Restaurant reviews/openings…)

- Example: A story about a market in Toronto that features various ethnic foods and the backgrounds of the people who make the food should be coded:
  Item form: FEAT (Feature)
  General subject: RI (Religious-cultural diversity/multiculturalism…)
  Subject detail: RI10 (Ethnic foods)

For stories written in bullet form (e.g. "Briefly"), if there are multiple local topics within an item that deal with different subjects (e.g., If there is one bullet about a local play and one about a local fashion designer), code the subject detail as AE20 (Art/entertainment – other).

Federal or provincial politics
- Example: The minister of finance announces the provincial budget at Queen's Park. This is happening locally and is of general interest to local residents so it gets coded.
  General subject: FP
  Subject detail: FP01 (provincial budget /finances– local impact/local events related to it)

- Example: The federal Minister of Finance gives a speech on his budget to the Bay Street business community at the Royal York. This is an event happening locally so it gets coded.
  General subject: FP
  Subject detail: FP02 (federal budget/finances – local impact, local events related to it)

Travel
- Example: A **travel article** written by a couple from Newmarket traveling in Nepal is considered local and should be counted, assigned an Item ID and coded because there would be local interest in individuals. It should be coded:
  Item origin: COM (Community contributor…)
  Item form: COMC (Community contribution)
  General subject: OT (Other)
  Subject detail: OT04 (Travel – experience of GTA residents abroad)

The item origin of travel articles written by local people should be coded as COMC (community contributors…), unless the writer is a freelancer, in which case it would be coded as FRE (freelance).

If a travel article is written by a *Toronto Star* journalist, it should be considered a feature. It should be coded:

      Item origin: STA (Staff)
      Item form: FEAT (Feature)
      General subject: OT (Other)
      Subject detail: OT04 (Travel – experience of GTA residents abroad)

NOTE: Do not code general travel articles about a place (e.g. tips on where to go, what to see), even if the writer is from the GTA. Only code items where the focus is the *experience* of a local person travelling abroad.

VARIABLE: Number of Spatial References (NoSptlRef)

Count the number of references to geographic locations within an article. Geographic locations can include addresses, named buildings with a known address (ie. City Hall), etc.

VARIABLE: Canadian Press Stylebook consistent (CP_Style)

Does the article adhere to the Canadian Press Stylebook guidelines? Select TRUE or FALSE.

VARIABLE: CP_Details

If FALSE was selected for CP_Style, copy the supporting text into this field to show which phrase(s)/sentence(s)/paragraph(s) do not follow the CP Stylebook guidelines.

Things to Remember

Photos

Photos that accompany an article will have the same subject code as the article.

Letters:

- Example: A letter about the City of Toronto's budget from an Ottawa resident is considered local because it is about a GTA issue. The following coding is appropriate in this case:
  Item origin: LTO (Letter writer who lives outside the GTA)
  Item form: LETR
  General subject: MU (Municipal politics…)
  Subject detail: MU12 (Budget/finance)

A letter that refers to a local story should be considered local and coded even if there are no specific local geographic references in the letter, because the letter is relevant to discussions about a local issue. But the subject of the letter should be determined by the content of the letter, rather than the original story it refers to.

- Example: A reader submits a letter in response to a story about a fire in a Toronto home. The reader writes about a lack of proper fire safety systems in social housing. The letter should be coded:
  Item form: LETR
  General subject: SO (Social supports/affordable housing…)
  Subject detail: SO02 (Social/affordable housing/availability/quality)

Sports
All stories about Toronto-based sports teams/athletes, whether they are pro or amateur, are considered local stories, whether they are playing at home or away.

"Around the NBA/NHL/NFL", etc. are to be treated as news stories, not columns.

"High School Athletes of the Week" is to be considered a feature, and coded SP11 (Amateur sports – individual performance). But "Top 10" lists of local school sports performance, e.g. Top 10 schools in boys basketball in the GTA, are to be considered a school sports summary (SP14). School sports summaries and "Top 10" lists are to coded SSPS (School Sports Summary) for Item Form, and COM (community contributors) for Item Origin.

Stories about the management, operation and funding of a specific sports team should be coded as stories about the team. But stories about sports entertainment companies should be coded as business stories.

- Example: A story criticizing the management of the Toronto Maple Leafs player being traded should be coded:
  General subject: SP (Sports)
  Subject detail: SP02 (Pro sports – Leafs)

- Example: A story about the Maple Leafs Sports and Entertainment company's profits over the past five years should be coded:
  General subject: BU (Business)
  Subject detail: BU01 (Locally based company/entrepreneur (non financial sector)…)

For stories written in bullet form (e.g. "Notepad"), if there are multiple local topics within an item that deal with different subjects (e.g., If there are two bullets about Leafs and one about the Marlies), code the subject detail as SP20 (Sports – other).

Business
A business story is considered local if it is about a local company/entrepreneur, or the local economy.

A story that names a company but gives no indication that it is a local-based company will not be coded.

TSX – if the story is about the overall direction or trend of the TSX (located at 130 King St. W.), code the story. Do NOT code stories about non-GTA based companies that include info on what happened to company shares on the TSX.

The Fixer

For the regular feature "The Fixer", code the subject of the first topic in the story. (Other items that follow are responses or follow-ups to past topics.)