

# INDIRECT CONTACT REPORTING GUIDANCE

This document has been developed to provide guidance on indirect contact reporting when operating as a K-State Research and Extension employee.

## NEWSPAPER

Readers count as indirect contacts. Before the internet, this was an easier metric. But now you may need to ask your local newspaper for multiple data points:

- Physical distribution
  - Print subscriptions (audited; these can be daily or weekly, depending on the paper, and can be via carrier or via mail delivery)
  - Single-copy distribution (audited)
- Online distribution
  - Digital subscriptions (audited)
  - Pageviews (commonly accessible via Google Analytics)

Most newspapers have their distribution figures audited/verified by the Alliance for Audited Media, which provides the standards by which newspapers and other publishers can legitimately tell potential advertisers about their readership/audience size. You should be able to ask your local newspaper about its audited distribution numbers, which are what they provide to advertisers when trying to attract business.

Newspapers typically report three main sets of numbers:

- **Circulation:** The number of copies distributed on an average day/week
- **Paid circulation:** The number of copies actually sold (some newspapers are provided for free)
- **Readership:** An algorithmically determined number that is higher than circulation because it is assumed that many copies will be read by more than one person.

Any of these can be used to legitimately tally

indirect contacts. But for whichever one you choose, stick with that metric from reporting interval to reporting interval for consistency.

Additionally, you may be able to ask your newspaper for specific website pageviews depending on whether and how they post your content on their website.

## PODCASTS

Listeners count as indirect contacts. Podcast hosting services such as Libsyn and Blubrry provide episode-level download statistics. Numbers of unique downloads can be counted. Obviously, we don't know whether someone listened or how much of the episode they listened to, but just like newspaper subscriptions, we assume the content was at least partially consumed if it was downloaded. Some services use the term "streams" instead of downloads. Those words are interchangeable in this case. If a podcast episode is streamed, it is still technically downloaded to the device for consumption.

When reporting downloads, be sure to check if your hosting service keeps its Spotify download stats separate from the rest of your downloads. Libsyn does this, so the Spotify numbers need to be manually added to the standard downloads.

## RADIO

Listeners count as indirect contacts. Ask station management for an audience reach number within that station's signal area and/or the listenership number for the time slot in which the KSRE staff member appears (if it's a regular appearance).

## TELEVISION

Viewers count as indirect contacts. When you appear on a local TV news program, whether on location as part of a feature segment or if you appear live in-studio, you are likely to be able to

report indirect contacts in the tens of thousands for that one appearance.

- Follow up by sending an email to the news director or assignment editor.
  - Reporters and anchors likely won't have the information you need, so you may need to ask them to whom in management you should direct your follow-up email.
  - Email is much preferable to phone calls because it can be forwarded and not forgotten by busy news people.
- Note in your email the day you appeared on air and how many times the piece aired.
  - If it was a pre-recorded news feature, it could air on multiple newscasts in a day.
  - Also note if the piece was included on the TV station's website.
- Ask them to give you an audience estimate for the newscast(s).
  - TV measurement is generally done in two ways: Ratings and Thousands.
    - Ratings are too complicated to parse for our purposes.
    - Thousands refer to how many thousands of households viewed the program at a given interval.
  - TV stations regularly receive these kinds of requests for this information.
    - PR agencies and advertisers ask for these numbers for their clients.
    - Charities ask for these numbers to report back to their donors.
    - So you don't have to be shy about asking for these numbers for our reporting; it's common.
  - If you appear on TV with any regularity, make this audience estimate request part of your checklist of things to include and prepare for.
- If you have a standing feature on a local TV station, say a weekly or monthly appearance, you can ask for an audience estimate on an annual basis because TV ratings/thousands do not fluctuate that much. The station can

provide an annual average for you.

- There is no one-stop shop in the state, unfortunately, so if you have an appearance that originates, say, in Topeka and is picked up by a sister station in Wichita, you'll need to reach out to each station individually.

Source: Johnny Faith, director of sales at KSNT in Topeka

## WEBSITE

Viewers count as indirect contacts. When you share resources on a website, it is likely a user will download and/or view those resources. Utilizing a service like Google Analytics will allow you to see data that is beneficial to collecting indirect contacts.

- If a user downloads a resource, this counts as an indirect contact.
- If a user fills out a contact form, this is considered "doing regular" business and does not count as an indirect or direct contact.
- Page view does not count as an indirect or direct contact unless you can see they made a physical interaction with your resources.
- Video views on a website count as indirect contacts. You can gather this information from the YouTube dashboard.
- Viewing the local unit newsletter counts as an indirect contact.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Counting contacts via social media can be tricky. Use these quick references below in helping you determine how to count interactions. Utilizing your insights information from your webpage will help you determine these numbers. If you have an Instagram, be sure to make it a business or professional account and link it to your facebook. If you do this, you can gather data for up to 90 days at a time. If you don't, you'll have to check your post performance weekly to track data. All other data should be pulled quarterly. After you collect this information, it is not necessary to go back and add or update additional contacts that may have occurred after you collected the initial data.

- Facebook, Instagram and Instagram Stories
  - Post Engagements: Comments, Messages

and DM's

- Count as indirect contacts unless there is a direct exchange of resources, helpful information, etc. Then it is considered a direct contact.
- Exchanging information about events, contact info, etc. is considered regular business and is not a direct or an indirect contact.
- Post Engagements: Shares
  - Counts as an indirect contact
- Post Engagements: Likes, dislikes, love, haha, mad, etc.
  - Counts as an indirect contact
- Post Reach
  - This is a vanity metric. It does not count as a direct or indirect contact as no action was taken on the post.
- Educational Video (posted directly to platform)
  - Views over 15 seconds: Indirect contact
  - Comments: indirect contact unless you comment with an exchange of programming, resources, helpful tips, etc. Then it is considered a direct contact.
  - Exchanging information about events, contact info, etc. is considered regular business and is not a direct or an indirect contact.
  - Likes, dislikes, love, haha, mad, etc.: indirect contact
- Tags
  - This counts as an indirect contact
- Engagement: link clicks counts as an indirect contact
- Twitter
  - Post Engagements: Comments and Messages
    - Count as indirect contacts unless there is a direct exchange of resources, helpful information, etc. Then it is considered a direct contact.
  - Exchanging information about events, contact info, etc. is considered regular business and is not a direct or an indirect contact.
- Post Engagements: retweets
  - Counts as an indirect contact
- Post Engagements: favorite (hearts)
  - Counts as an indirect contact
- Post Reach or impressions
  - This is a vanity metric. It does not count as a direct or indirect contact as no action was taken on the post.
- Live - Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc.
  - Viewers count as indirect contacts
  - Comments count as indirect contacts unless there is a direct exchange of resources, helpful information, etc. Then it is considered a direct contact. This can even be answered in the livestream rather than answered in the comments.
- Facebook events:
  - If someone engages in the discussion tab, it is indirect contacts.
  - Post Engagements: Comments, Messages and DM's
    - Count as indirect contacts unless there is a direct exchange of resources, helpful information, etc. Then it is considered a direct contact.
    - Exchanging information about events, contact info, etc. is considered regular business and is not a direct or an indirect contact.
- How to access data/insights for each platform:
  - Facebook: [The Ultimate Guide to Facebook Analytics](#)
  - Twitter: [Twitter account activity analytics – engagement, impressions and more](#)
  - Instagram: [View Account Insights on Instagram](#)

## OTHER

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- Email
  - Simply sending e-blasts, list-servs and announcements does not count as a direct or an indirect contact. The user must engage with the content
    - If you are utilizing a service like Constant Contact or Mailchimp, you can see your click rate per email campaign. This number is reportable and considered an indirect contact. Take special care to build information in your email campaigns that require a “click” to view the rest of the information. Otherwise, no actions will be taken on your campaign – just views, no clicks (Ex: “read more” text linked to the full text on your webpages)
  - Emails back and forth sharing resources or providing valuable knowledge and information is considered a direct contact
  - Exchanging information about events, contact info, etc. is considered regular business and is not a direct or an indirect contact.
    - How to collect Mailchimp data: [About Delivery Insights](#)
    - How to collect Constant Contact data: [How to Interpret Your Email Marketing Results \(Without Spending All Day Doing It\) | Constant Contact](#)
  - Giveaways, promotional handouts
    - Providing resources in goodie bags or giveaways counts as an indirect contact. Track how many you give out and report this number.
  - Zoom presentations
    - If there is more than one viewer in a room together, a strategy for capturing a number is utilizing the chat feature. You can ask participants to comment with their town, county, etc.. Encourage them to include an answer for each person in the room. Download the chat when you are done. Another strategy is to ask them to change their name

to how many viewers there are and where they are from. Ideally, you would have participants pre-registered for your Zoom events so counting these contacts during the Zoom would not be necessary.

- Unstaffed displays at fairs, events, etc.
  - Count the number of handouts you have on the table when you set it up. When you return to tear down, count the number you have left. These are considered indirect contacts.
  - Another strategy is to do a giveaway. Ask participants to drop their contact info in a container. Count how many you receive. These are considered indirect contacts.

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### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS? CONTACT:

#### Laurie Chandler

*Associate Program Leader*

K-State Research and Extension

[lchandle@k-state.edu](mailto:lchandle@k-state.edu)

#### Jennifer Wilson

*Leader, Extension Operations*

K-State Research and Extension

[jrwilson@k-state.edu](mailto:jrwilson@k-state.edu)