

Modern policy problems are embedded in social systems and are not easily solved through traditional methods of policy analysis. These so-called wicked problems are more aptly dealt with through network management and other collaborative approaches. Communication can help bring diverse groups together to better address these issues, yet very little research has directly studied communication patterns surrounding wicked problems. This research analyzes national public discourse on wicked problems by content analyzing Associated Press newswire coverage of tailpipe emissions in the U.S.. Common themes, problem definitions, solutions, and actors are identified in the media coverage. The results are useful to administrators attempting to develop communication strategies in the context of wicked problem situations.