

David Carr, the New York Times columnist who wrote about the media business until his death in February of (2015), liked to say what news media managers avoid saying in public: what gets news is an expression of someone's values.

That's because there is so much that happens every day, you'd be overwhelmed and ignore ALL of it, if someone didn't prioritize it so that you got the most interesting, most important, most funny, most British, most Chinese, most business-oriented....items.

That's what we're talking about today.

What are the systems by which each day's information gets filtered and sorted to come up with the top news of the day...for a variety of audiences.

(Photo of Carr taken at Stony Brook during his My Life As event in 2012. Quote from his talk at Center for News Literacy Summer Institute for Teachers, July, 2014.)



(Set it up like this)

This is Mika Brezsinski. She's the co-anchor of "Morning Joe," a news talk show on MSNBC

In this segment, The anchors are on camera, chatting, about to launch their daily summary of the top stories of the day. Mika Brezinski and her co-anchor had been talking about U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar's critique of the President's war strategy when she looked down to see the first story on her script was Paris Hilton's release from jail, which was getting a lot of news coverage at the time.



NEWS FELLOW INSERT ABOVE-NAMED VIDEO HERE (After it runs)

Brezinski swears it was a spontaneous response and not a publicity stunt.

ASK: What do you think she is reacting to? If you are going to be effective consumers of news you need to have an understanding of how Paris Hilton's term in jail came to be the lead story on so many newscasts.

How, out of all the news in the world, does that story get served to you?

In the survey last month, about 80 percent of you said the press presents too much trivial news. And 60% said the press presents too much bad news. Why? 13% of you said that's reality, roughly a quarter said humans are drawn to tragedy and another quarter said the press does it to make money. That's the point of today's lecture. What IS news? And why.

What is **news** and who decides?

We have talked about three kinds of stories that are news in every culture.
What are those? (Alerts, Diverts, Connects)
And what traits differentiate news from other kinds of information? (Verification, Independence, Accountability)
So...it's pretty simple, right?
We all know what is news and what isn't...



Last week's Quick Quiz

- 1. "V.I.A." = Verification, Independence, Accountability
- The information in "Selma" would not be considered reliable: lacking "V" and "I" (and using actors, not actual film of the event).

Your questions and comments ...

- ❖ "Slow Down!" Almost Everystudent
- "What was that about extra credit My Life As" Snusan Subgrad
- "What can be done to keep journalists accountable?"

- Jessica Miller

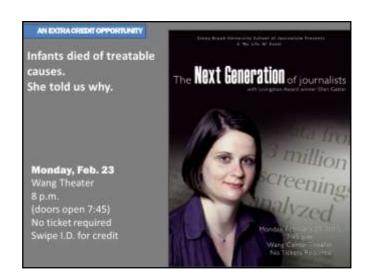
After this lecture, you should be able to:

- Use "News Drivers" vocabulary with precision to describe the kinds of information that tend to become news.
- Analyze the role played by editors/producers, the audience and market forces in deciding what is news.
- Use specific events and examples to illustrate the tension between journalism's mission and market forces.
- Begin to address the news media's preference for "bad" news.

This slide intended for instructors as a focusing tool, but can be shared with students to prime them. Each lecture will include a slide like this with specific lecture outcomes that refer to course outcomes.

Here is what the syllabus declares students will be able to do if they successfully complete the course:

- 1. Analyze key elements of news reports weighing evidence, evaluating sources, noting context and transparency to judge reliability.
- 2. Distinguish between journalism, opinion journalism and un-supported bloviation.
- 3. Identify and distinguish between news media bias and audience bias.
- 4. Blend personal scholarship and course materials to write forcefully about journalism standards and practices, fairness and bias, First Amendment issues and their individual Fourth Estate rights and responsibilities.
- 5. Use examples from each day's news to demonstrate critical thinking about civic engagement.
- 6. Place the impact of social media and digital technologies in their historical context.



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And what traits differentiate news from other kinds of information? (Verification, Independence, Accountability)
So...it's pretty simple, right?
We all know what is news and what isn't...



It's clear that everyone agrees this is news, right?



But that was just one day...

Here is a more typical day...

What the Whaat??

Aren't there immutable standards on which all journalists agree?

How could this be?



Which leads us back to today's lecture: What the heck <u>IS</u> newsworthy?

How can we make sense of all those different newspaper covers...AND the decision to lead the "Morning Joe" newscast with information Paris Hilton, a person with no obvious talent or education who is famous for...being famous.

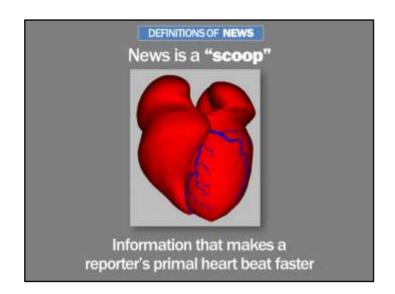
Really? That's News?

First, let's think about definitions you might have heard in movies or conversation...



ANIMATION: ONE CLICK BRINGS UP ALL THREE IMAGES

Increasingly we find this out by what's trending on facebook and twitter.



Great news organizations are driven by endless curiosity and dogged reporting.

Any time a reporter finds out something before everyone else, that's a "scoop" (START THE BEATING HEART ANIMATION WITH SECOND CLICK)

...and that newness in and of itself is sometimes enough to make information newsworthy, whether the scoop is information that alerts, diverts or connects us.



That word, "EXCLUSIVE" gets slapped on a story when the news organization thinks they have a story no one else has.

It may be over-used, but one definition of news is information that reports raise the value of any 'scoop'



For better or worse, News is sometimes defined by the person in charge of the newsroom.

With all those stories to choose from every day, someone has to choose what gets priority and what does not.

(Ask for examples of stories they thought were buried that should have gotten more coverage)

On bad days, that means NBC News' Managing Editor and Anchor Brian Williams makes a national news story out of his actor daughter's latest role: Peter Pan on NBC entertainment.

On good days, an editor is well-tuned to the community and assigns reporters to cover the stories that matter, without fear or favor.

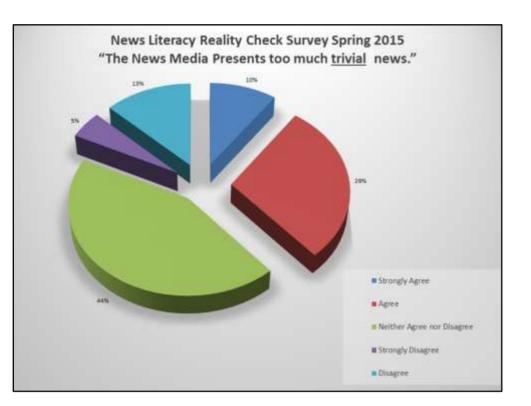


When reporters at an investigative reporting organization went looking, they learned that Jackson Kelly, a law firm with offices throughout Appalachia, as well as in Denver and Washington, D.C, that represents coal companies, they found the law firm's lawsuit strategy —included withholding evidence — which is against court rules and had significant consequences for sick miners and their families. That story won a Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting, by the way. As the noose tightened around Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber, whose girlfriend was accused of using her post in his office to benefit her paying clients, his staff tried to have all of his email erased before investigators could get to it. Needless to say those emails are newsworthy, but just the request itself was newsworthy...He resigned days after his attempt to scour the record was revealed.

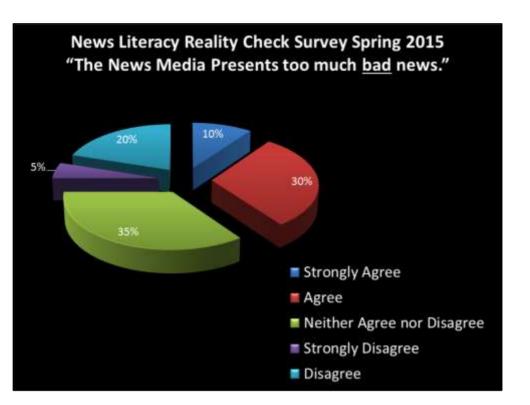


There's an old saying in newsrooms that the story of a dog biting a man is so common it's not news. It happens all the time...So what? BUT....

If you've got a story about a man biting a dog...now that's news.



(prompt with reference to primal needs for information that ALERTS, DIVERTS, CONNECTS...) Here's the breakdown of your opinions of the amount of trivial news that comes your way.



ASK: DO YOU PREFER TO READ SAD STORIES OR UPLIFTING STORIES?

ASK: WHY WOULD NEWS OUTLETS FOCUS ON THE BAD?

(prompt with reference to primal needs for information that ALERTS, DIVERTS, CONNECTS...)

Does bad news serve the audience or the news outlets profits? Is the preponderance of bad news a result of the dark worldview of producers and editors, or is it somehow linked to the watchdog role?



For the purposes of this course, here's our definition of news: "Timely nformation of some public interest that is shared and has been subjected to a journalistic process of verification."

That's a definition you need to be able to write and speak about, using examples from the news you are now reading every day.

(Every Day...right?)

Is this big news?

17-year-old Arkansas man killed in shootout with police

By Suzi Parker

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas | Sun Sep 8, 2013 1:56pm EDT

(Reuters) - A 17-year-old man was killed in a shootout with a police SWAT team at a home in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, where he had earlier threatened two people with a gun, authorities said on Sunday.

The fatal shots were fired on Saturday night after Pine Bluff police responded to a report that the man, Monroe Isadore, pointed a gun at two people in the home in Pine Bluff, a city of roughly 48,000 people about 45 miles south of Little Rock, according to police who confirmed local TV reports.

Not really. Over a thousand people are shot by police every year, more than 100 die.

But what if there was a wrinkle to the story?

Now is it big news?

17-year-old Stony Brook man killed in shootout with police

By Suzi Parker

Stony Brook, NY | Sun Sep 8, 2013 1:56pm EDT

(Reuters) - A 17-year-old man was killed in a shootout with a police SWAT team at a home in Stony Brook, where he had earlier threatened two people with a gun, authorities said on Sunday.

The fatal shots were fired on Saturday night after police responded to a report that the man, Monroe Isadore, pointed a gun at two people in the home, according to police who confirmed local TV reports.

(NEWS LITERACY FEED USERS. THESE HEADLINES CAN BE CUSTOMIZED TO YOUR TOWN. JUST CLICK ON THAT FAKE NEWS STORY AND YOU CAN CHANGE THE TOWN, ETC)

Wow. That gets their attention.

ASK: Why? What's different?

Now is it big news?

17-year-old Stony Brook Professor killed in shootout with police

By Suzi Parker

Stony Brook, NY | Sun Sep 8, 2013 1:56pm EDT

(Reuters) – The youngest professor in the U.S., 17-year-old Monroe Isadore, was killed in a shootout with a police SWAT team at a home in Stony Brook, where he had earlier threatened two people with a gun, authorities said on Sunday.

The fatal shots were fired on Saturday night after police responded to a report that the man pointed a gun at two people in the home.

How about this?
The youngest professor in the US?
What's different now?

Now is it big news?

17-year-old Clinton 'kin' killed in shootout with police

By Suzi Parker

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas | Sun Sep 8, 2013 1:56pm EDT

(Reuters) - A 17-year-old man was killed in a shootout with a police SWAT team at a home in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, where he had earlier threatened two people with a gun, authorities said on Sunday. Monroe Isadore has long claimed to be the illegitimate son of former President Bill Clinton.

The fatal shots were fired on Saturday night after Pine Bluff police responded to a report that the man pointed a gun at two people in the home in Pine Bluff, a city of roughly 48,000 people about 45 miles south of Little Rock, according to police who confirmed local TV reports.

Or this. OK. It's still someone you never heard of in a place far, far away, but something unusual has been added with a prominence angle

Is <u>this</u> big **news**?

107-year-old Arkansas man killed in shootout with police

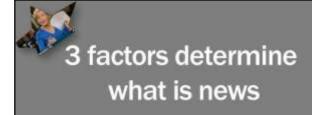
By Suzi Parker

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas | Sun Sep 8, 2013 1:56pm EDT

(Reuters) - A 107-year-old man was killed in a shootout with a police SWAT team at a home in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, where he had earlier threatened two people with a gun, authorities said on Sunday.

The fatal shots were fired on Saturday night after Pine Bluff police responded to a report that the man, Monroe Isadore, pointed a gun at two people in the home in Pine Bluff, a city of roughly 48,000 people about 45 miles south of Little Rock, according to police who confirmed local TV reports.

This is the real story, and it's news because of the age of the man



- 1. Universal News Drivers
- 2. Editorial judgment
- 3. Audience judgment

(Mika picture to connect this to the opening) It's not exactly a science, is it?

Let's organize our thoughts about what becomes news as follows:

Three factors seem to determine what becomes news and what does not.

- 1. Universal news drivers
- 2. Editorial judgment
- 3. Audience Judgment

This is the blueprint for the rest of the lecture. We'll examine each of these factors so you can analyze how a piece of information becomes news.



ANIMATION: CLICK TO BRING IN EACH NEWS DRIVER

The "news value" of a given piece of information is not governed by precise calculations.

But if it falls into these categories, it has a higher likelihood of going viral or becoming a big story. We observe that really big stories tend to fall in several

categories.

We call these News Drivers. Memorizing them wouldn't be a bad idea.

You don't have to be able to recite the list, but you'll do better in the second half of the course if you start to say, for example, "The drivers of this news story are prominence, change and proximity, but mostly prominence."

These are more nuanced expressions of our primal need for information that Alerts, Diverts, and Connects us.

You'll be asked in this course to apply the drivers to every story you read, stopping for a second to say...Why is THIS news? Which Drivers pushed this information to the fore?

NEWS DRIVERS make information into NEWS Importance (This has serious implications) Prominence (This involves a famous person) Human interest (This unique or universal experience explores the human condition) Conflict (Clashes of people, institutions or ideas) Change (For good or III, the world has changed) Proximity (MMSE). News in My Back Yard) Timeliness (Anniversaries or holidays or deadlines, the calendar is the oracial context of these stories.) Magnitude (Numbers are the essence of this story) Refevance (How wide is the story's impact and audience?) Unusualness (Peculiarity—Man Bates Dog, aferts and diverts)

ANIMATION: EACK CLICK BRINGS UP THE NEXT DRIVER. FINAL CLICK BRINGS UP DNA SLIDE FROM LECTURE 2

For the purposes of this course, here is how we <u>define</u> each driver.

You can assume that surrounding all of these is the human demand for information about what is happening NOW.

That's why it's called "NEWs."

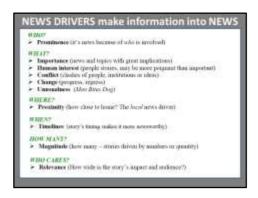
If a piece of information fits a driver <u>and</u> it is brand new information, that can propel it into newsworthiness or make it go viral.

(Read definitions)

The drivers are more specific expressions of those DNA-level needs we have for information that Alerts, Diverts and Connects us.

You'll be asked in this course to apply the drivers to every story you read, stopping for a second to say...Why is THIS news? Which Drivers pushed this information to the fore?

Coming next, I'll show you a story and you'll think about what News Drivers make it news. Ready?



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ANIMATION: CLICK TO BRING UP DRIVER WORD

The United Nations has estimated it will cost \$1Billion to contain the Ebola epidemic to West Africa, where the death toll is already in the thousands and the number of new cases is now growing exponentially, as opposed to arithmetically. (curving line, not straight line) Developed as Africa is, there are numerous potential vectors, most worryingly, air travelers.

ASK: What is the Driver?



ANIMATION: CLICK1= RAY RICE/TMZ, CLICK2=GIBSON, CLICK3=RHIANNA CLICK4=DRIVER WORD

More than 1 million American women are victims of physical assault by their partner each year, According to the CDC and U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, which acknowledges most cases are never reported to police.

There isn't enough airtime and newsprint in the whole world to cover every one of them. It's a routine crime, sadly enough.

(Pause)There are about 18,000 domestic violence crimes per year in Maryland, something like 1,500 per month, according to state statistics.

So why, other than the peddling of the videotape, did this particular beating become one of the biggest news stories of 2014?

There are about 30,000 domestic violence and spousal abuse reports per year in Los Angeles County, according to LAPD statistics at SafeLA.org. At least 1,000 per year in one neighborhood: Hollywood.

But one case from 2010 got more attention than all others, that of Actor Mel Gibson. (Gibson pleaded no contest in 2011 to one count of misdemeanor spousal battery of his former girlfriend Oksana Grigorieva. He was sentenced to three years of probation, domestic violence counseling and two days of community service.)

A Federal Bureau of Justice study from 2001 found that African American women suffer domestic violence at a rate 35% higher than white women and at a rate 2.5 times that of women of other races.

But the beating of a black woman by her partner goes from routine to viral news when the criminal is singer Chris Brown, who in 2009 was arrested for beating his then-girlfriend, the global singing star Rihanna.

(OJ Simpson case was a murder)

ASK: Which driver makes it news?



ANIMATION: FIVE CLICKS 1=LEFT BOY, 2=MIDDLE, 3=RIGHT, 4=DRIVER WORD, 5= "CUBED" SYMBOL.

CLICK 1: In 1980, Robert Shafran started college in upstate NY only to find that everyone already knew his name: Eddy. After a few too many cases of mistaken identity, Robert discovered that Eddy Galland, who had transferred that year to Nassau Community College, was in fact his long lost twin! CLICK 2: After their story was published in Newsday, David Kellman, a freshman at Queens College, saw himself in their pictures, called the Gellman household and revealed that he, too, was their brother! CLICK 3
They later went on to open a restaurant called 'Triplets' in Soho

ASK: Which driver makes it news? CLICK 4
Or in this case (CLICK) Human Interest cubed!



ANIMATION: CLICK1 = Putin and quote from letter CLICK2 = McCain's reply CLICK3 = DRIVER WORD

In 2013, Russian President Vladimir Putin published a letter to the American people in the New York Times, urging them to resist President Obama's call for military action against the Syrian dictator, Bashar alAssad for using chemical weapons. A week later, U.S. Senator John McCain attacked Putin in a letter to the Russian newspaper Pravda (Truth), saying no Russian citizen would be allowed to write this letter, and criticizing Putin for human rights violations.

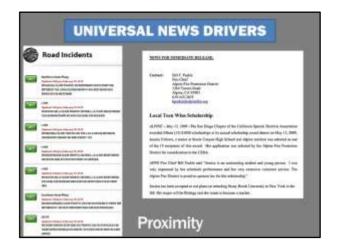
ASK: What's the main News Driver here?



ANIMATION: CLICK TO BRING UP DRIVER WORD

In a pair of major victories for the gay rights movement, the Supreme Court in 2013 ruled that married same-sex couples were entitled to federal benefits and, by declining to decide a case from California, effectively allowed same-sex marriages there. All of a sudden, much of the gay marriage debate had been settled, except for a few final skirmishes.

ASK: What is the driver?



ANIMATION: CLICK TO BRING UP DRIVER WORD

Road closures and traffic slowdowns on Nicholls Road in Stony Brook are only news if....you live in or are travelling to Stony Brook.

Thousands of teens win scholarships to Stony Brook University every year. Jessica Fellows' scholarship was newsworthy in Alpine, California because...

(She is from that town.)

ASK: Which driver makes it news?



ANIMATION: CLICK TO BRING UP DRIVER WORD

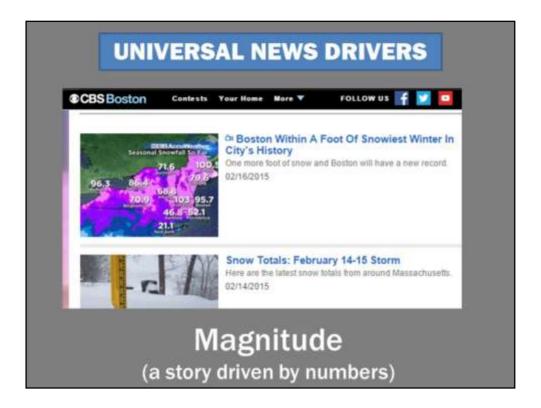
The calendar makes it news.

When the anniversary of the civil rights march across the Selma, Alabama bridge comes to pass, this year's event is significant because it connects to a past event. That's one form of timeliness, which is a tricky driver.

The other form of timeliness is when something gains significance by virtue of its proximity to a holiday or anniversary.

So, if a truckload of reindeer crashes and the reindeer scatter through town...and it's December 23^{rd} ...Timeliness will be a big factor in its newsworthiness.

ASK: Which driver makes it news?



DRIVER WORD CLICKS UP ON NEXT SLIDE

ASK: Which Driver makes this news?



ANIMATION: CLICK1 = ALL FOUR KEY WORDS POP UP AT ONCE; CLICK2 = DRIVER WORD

The Obama Administration's plan was to give more aid to students who go to universities that achieve the government's goals of reducing costs and student debt, while increasing the graduation rate and average earnings of graduates. Less aid would be given to students at universities that are found to score lower on those measures.

ASK: What is the driver?



ANIMATION: CLICK1 = \$5 PRICE TAG COVERS AIR FARE GRAPHICS; CLICK2 = TO BRING UP DRIVER WORD

Glitches happen on websites all the time, but the United Airlines glitch, was a great boon. A September flight to Hawaii from NY costs about \$926, but for a short period of time all tickets on United Airlines cost between \$5-\$10 due to a human error.

United Airlines decided to honor the tickets.

SECOND CLICK: brings up \$5 price tag

ASK: Which driver makes it news?

http://www.theguardian.com/business/2013/sep/13/united-airlines-honours-cheap-flight-tickets



ANIMATION: CLICK1=IMAGES AROUND MICHAEL BROWN AND HIS DEAD BODY ENLARGE AND CONTRACT UNTIL END OF SLIDE

It's important to remember that most stories get attention or go viral because of <u>multiple</u> drivers. By that logic, more drivers means more attention.

Let's take a look at the drivers in play in Ferguson, Missouri, where the shooting of an unarmed teenager, Michael Ferguson on August 9, and subsequent police reactions to public pressure led to a week of riots, looting and police action in the streets.



ANIMATION: CLICK= NEWS DRIVER APPEARS

Ferguson is a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri, home of the major paper in the state.

When riots break out in Ferguson, the simplest reason it is news in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch is? It is happening nearby.

CLICK-proximity

That's what we mean by proximity



ANIMATION: CLICK= NEXT NEWS DRIVER APPEARS

Gunfire. Looting. Fights.

Protest marches. Criticism of the police. Criticism of the community.

CLICK conflict

The other driver that makes this newsworthy is the conflicts, both actual and metaphoric.



ANIMATION: CLICK= NEXT NEWS DRIVER APPEARS

On this day, the situation in Ferguson had the attention of the Governor of Missouri, a U.S. Senator from Missouri and the President of the United States.

What driver makes unrest in one of a dozen suburbs worth the whole front page of a major metropolitan newspaper?

CLICK prominence

Governor and Senator are probably enough prominent people to command the full attention of every news organization in Missouri, but when the President turns his attention to a problem, that story becomes national and international news.



ANIMATION: CLICK= NEXT NEWS DRIVER APPEARS

What's notable in the comments of the Governor and the President is they both make references to the 1st Amendment to the Constitution and its guarantee of the rights to free speech, petition for redress of grievances and peaceable assembly. What driver is now in play?

CLICK importance

Importance is a terribly subjective word, but I think we can agree that constitutional questions are important, and that's one aspect of the Ferguson story: The issues being raised are important.



ANIMATION: CLICK FADES OUT PHOTO, BRINGS IN EDITORIAL JUDGEMENT ELEMENTS Now for Factor Number Two: Editorial Judgment

While the innate characteristics of a piece of information (prominent people...peculiar doings...and so forth) determines if it is newsworthy, there are other forces at work.

How does a news organization decide which information is news and which is not? An Editor or Producer makes those judgments, weighing these factors:

CLICK

In the past, American journalists wrapped themselves in the flag and first amendment and emphasized Importance, Relevance, Conflict and Change when choosing top stories.

As marketing data improved, and competitors stole customers, newsroom leaders began paying attention to what interests the audience and who is the audience.

Today, a big part of the job of leading a news organization is finding the balance between what the audience wants, vs. what it may need.

To be honest, it's somewhere between gut and science.

And those judgments of Want vs. Need are also reflected in how a story is handled once it is selected.

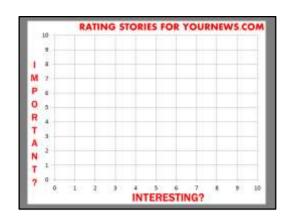
That's what we call Presentation... How a story is displayed, illustrated and described...in relation to the other stories that are selected by that news outlet.

Presentation is best described in terms of Tone and Weight.

Tone: humorous, serious, conversational, scholarly indicates whether editors think the story alerts, diverts or connects.

Weight: The time and space devoted to a story indicates how important and/or interesting editors think it is.

For starters, Let's work as a class on giving stories the right attention based on importance versus interest.



Today, you're the Editor of YOURNEWS.COM Your subeditors bring you the list of stories produced by the staff and you have to pick the top stories. You've got some self-respect. You want to do real journalism.

But you also want to attract a lot of customers. Let's warm up. First, I need you to clap, on three. 1-2-3

Clapping is how you'll rate the IMPORTANCE of each story to the audience and then its INTEREST to the audience. From 0 through a 10.

(Assistant's Name) will slide the story along the scale. You clap ONCE and at ONLY the moment the story hits the place you think it belongs on each scale. If it's huge, wait until 10. if it's not, clap right away We'll graph each story and the ones that end up in that upper right hand corner l...They are the bomb. They will be the stories your organization will focus on for the day.

Very Scientific...Ready?

Remember, only clap when the meter is correct. And let's work swiftly...deadline approaches and you can't have all these stories, just the best ones.



From CNN: President Barack Obama, <u>speaking at his summit</u> <u>on countering violent extremism</u> Wednesday, sought to strike a balance between appealing for more acceptance of Muslim-Americans while emphasizing the need to remain vigilant against radicals who could turn violent. "We are not at war with Islam. We are at war with people who have perverted Islam," Obama said during his remarks, adding later that Muslim leaders "need to do more to discredit the notion that our nations are determined to suppress Islam."

Importance? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score?
Interest? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score?

ASK: Which drivers are in play?



Importance? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score? **Interest?** AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score?

ASK: Which drivers are in play?

From the NY Times: "The proliferation of 3-D printers has had an unexpected benefit: The devices, it turns out, are perfect for creating cheap prosthetics. Surprising numbers of children need them: One in 1,000 infants is born with missing fingers, and others lose fingers and hands to injury. Each year, about 450 children receive amputations as a result of lawn mower accidents, according to a study in Pedatrics.. E-nable, an online volunteer organization, matches children like Dawson in need of prosthetic hands and fingers with volunteers able to make them on 3-D printers. Designs may be downloaded into the machines at no charge, and members who create new models share their software plans freely with others.

The materials for a 3-D-printed prosthetic hand can cost as little as \$20 to \$50, and some experts say they work just as well, if not better, than much costlier devices. Best of all, boys and girls usually love their D.I.Y. prosthetics."



From Big League Stew: "Major League Baseball games are sometimes too long, there's no doubt about it. In 2014, for the first time, the average game exceeded three hours. On Friday, MLB took its first steps in speeding up the game by announcing new pace-of-play initiatives. The new rules, announced by MLB, the MLBPA, and Pace of Game Instant Replay Committees, focus primarily on batters and non-game action.

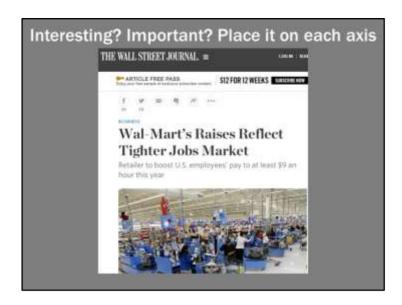
The batter's box rule will now actually be enforced, requiring batters to keep at least one foot in the batter's box at all times unless exceptions, such as timeouts or wild pitches and passed balls, occur. If the batter leaves the box the umpire can award a strike. The rule was in place and enforced in the minor leagues in 2014.

The committee also wants play to resume shortly after television broadcasts return from between-inning commercials. Timers will be installed in two locations in every ballpark to measure non-game action and the breaks between innings."

Importance? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score?

Interest? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score?

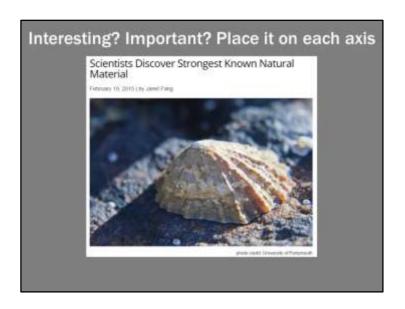
ASK: Which drivers are in play?



From the Wall St. Journal: "Wal-Mart's pledge to raise pay for half a million U.S. employees reflects a tightening labor market and rising competition for lower-paid workers. It also could amplify gains for low-wage workers across the nation as other companies follow the nation's largest private employer.

The retail behemoth on Thursday said it would boost wages for its U.S. employees to at least \$9 an hour this year, and to \$10 an hour by Feb. 1, 2016. The move by Wal-Mart, alongside similar action from large employers, could signal a turning point for wage growth after weak gains since the economic expansion started almost six years ago."

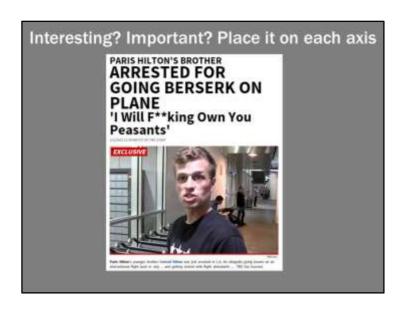
Importance? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score? Interest? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score? ASK: Which drivers are in play?



From the IFLS (I Fucking Love Science) website comes this: "What's stronger than spider silk? Limpet teeth! And what's a limpet? They're small aquatic snails with wide, conical shells. Their tiny, millimeter-long teeth are now the record holders for the world's strongest natural material, according to findings published in the Journal of the Royal Society Interface this week.

Limpets are gastropods like slugs and abalone, and while they hang out on the surface of rocks in shallow water, don't mistake them for barnacles. When the tide is in, limpets feed on algae by scraping along rock surfaces with their tongue-like appendage called the radula. The bottom side of the radula contains a set of teeth that are constantly exposed to tremendous forces as the critter rasps across hard, jagged surfaces."

Importance? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score? Interest? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score? ASK: Which drivers are in play?



From USA Today: "Conrad Hilton, 20, Paris Hilton's youngest brother, shuffled into U.S. District Court on Tuesday in ankle chains, with his hands manacled at his waist, reports AP. He was answering to charges of interfering with flight crews — "going berserk" is how TMZ characterized it — on a trip from London to Los Angeles in July. And it sounds like TMZ got it right. So what happened? Authorities say Hilton called other passengers "peasants," hurled expletives and made children cry with his raging death threats. According to a 17-page FBI affidavit, Hilton's rage continued for almost the entire 10½-hour flight."

Importance? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score? Interest? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score?

ASK: Which drivers are in play?



How much student debt has accumulated? Enough that some economists think it may depress home sales at a time when the U.S. economy is just starting to recover. According to the Washington Post: "Americans are struggling to make timely payments on student loans, according to new data from researchers at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York — even as we dutifully shrink other types of balances. Student-loan delinquencies increased at the end of 2014: 11.3 percent were at least 90 days overdue in the last three months of 2014, up from 11.1 percent in the previous quarter."

Importance? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score? Interest? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score?

ASK: Which drivers are in play?



ASK:

- -Was it hard to decide?
- -Were they satisfied with the stories they had to choose from?
- -If not, what was missing?
- -Does the overall outcome What's Hot and What's Not – surprising? Why or Why Not?
- -Did they have an audience in mind?
- The balancing of what is interesting versus what is important has a way of defining the values of a news organization.
- If they ignore the important stories in order to focus on celebrities...that's one kind of news outlet.
- If they ignore the fun stuff, that's another. Many, if not most, news organizations try to balance the two.



That weighing process – Important versus Interesting – is all about trying to serve an audience...should a news organization only give the people what they want – photos of Miley Cyrus Twerking, or should it tell them they bloody well need some cod liver oil, so siddown, shaddap and read this 4,000-word article about missile throw weights in the former Balkan Republics.



Perhaps the most famous tabloid headline in history is this one about a horrific crime. It is, as one headline writer said, the kind of story you wait for your whole career. It was a legitimate story, but the Post's headline writers whittled it down to the most livid essentials.

When we talk about editorial judgment including not just story selection, but also presentation, this gives clues as to the audience sought by the Post on that day.



ASK: why are these two magazine covers so different?

ASK: is this pandering, or is it public service, or is it good business? Editors and producers add value to information and news by how much space or time they give to a story, and by its prominence. Beware of a simplistic dismissal of those who are audiencedriven.

Often a magazine like People can bring many more people to a serious health story, for instance, because as people browse the celebrity news, they will stop and read an important story.



Once the decision has been made which stories to emphasize for the desired audience, there are more decisions:

TONE: Sober, comedic, caustic? What kind of words will be used in headlines and lead-ins, scripts and stories.

What kind of photo is appropriate?

WEIGHT: In the overall report, what weight does each story get?

PROPORTIONALITY: This is how the weight is expressed, through the amount of time or space each story gets in the overall report.

DISPLAY: All of those values are expressed in the way the story is displayed: what kinds of visuals, placement on the page or in the list of stories at that time.

Sometimes, the quality of the visuals can bump a minor story up the list. Exciting video or a spectacular photo are so powerful, they influence the attention a story gets.



So, while Editorial Judgment of what's important versus what's interesting (We call that the Mission versus the Market) plays a major role in determining What is News, there's another big factor.

You can't run a good news organization unless you run a profitable news organization.

So competition and profit also determine what gets covered...and what gets ignored.

Let's start with the simplest form of Competition.

A few cities still have pairs of newspapers slugging it out to gain the most readers and almost every town in America has three local television stations.

ASK: How does this competition determine what is news and what is ignored?

Consider New York, where the Post and the Daily News are hawked on the street, from news stands and from coin boxes on every corner.

Some days, what's news is what one paper has that it knows the competition does not have. How can that warp news judgment? Some days, they are both competing on the same story, seeking to outdo one another with the cleverest headline or most outrageous photo.

Are they competing with each other or are they competing for your attention? Or both?

ASK: What kind of stories are less likely to be covered in that competitive environment?

(OR) Which pressure wins out, Journalism's mission or the market forces?



ASK: Why is there so much sports news on local TV and in local newspapers?

We can debate this all day...but it may have to do with the mostly-male audience for sports and the mostly-male editors and news directors.

It might be because once one station starts, the others feel compelled to follow.

But it is also because sports fans are among the most loyal customers of a newspaper or TV Station and if you stop providing that coverage, they go away.

It's profitable. That's Why.

ASK: CAN YOU SUSTAIN AN INDEPENDENT NEWS ORGANIZATION IF YOU DON'T BRING IN THE TV RATINGS OR INCREASE SALES OF THE NEWSPAPER?



Animation: CLICK1= ERASES OVERALL PAGE

CLICK2= Most emailed CLICK3= Most Viewed

CLICK4= Most Facebooked CLICK5= Most searched

CLICK6= Most popular movies

CLICK 7=Most Tweeted

Let's take a look at how audience choices may drive news judgment. While editors exercise their judgment each day to select some mix of interesting and important stories, reader data on lists like this from the New York Times website restacks the editors choices into a virtual newspaper edited by the audience.

ASK: Who uses these lists to guide their reading?

Why?

How can that affect what you learn each day?

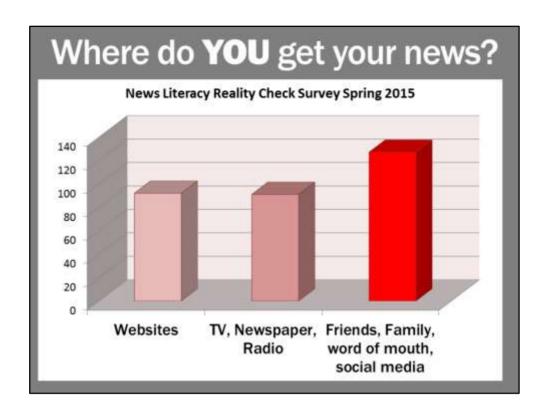
Is there a downside?

Some websites rely entirely on these audience measures.

The editorial function-or mediation- has been totally replaced.

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ASK: what do you think works best? Why?



PERCENTAGE OF EDITOR-DRIVEN, VS PERCENTAGE AUDIENCE DRIVEN EXPLAIN HOW THIS IS CHANGING AND DOES AUDIENCE HAVE WISDOM OF CROWDS

According to your Reality Check survey results, the biggest group of you get news from Websites: 92. Combined, 91 get news from TV and newspapers, and social means (both virtual and actual) deliver news to 127 students in this class.

Audience news judgment

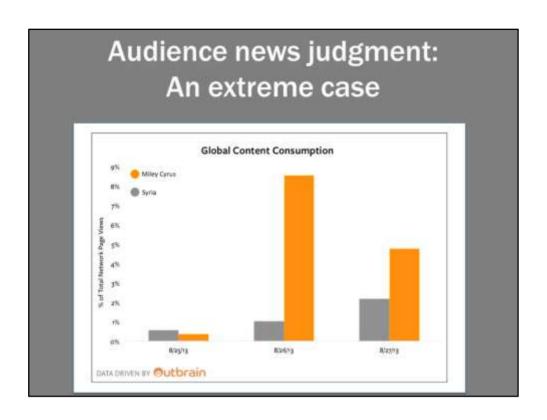
TwerkMontage.wmv

When Miley twerked at the VMAs last year, netizens went wild, cranking out 300,000 tweets a minute. ASK:

Is it Interesting?

Is it Important?

There's only so much time in any given day. So, what got ignored while we were gorging on Miley Twerk Tweets?



War, for one thing.

Globally, there were almost 2.5 times as many available stories on the civil war in Syria and the Assad Regime's use of Sarin gas as there were on Miley Cyrus.

Yet *consumption* of those Miley stories outpaced Syria by a factor of 8-to-1.

And in the United States? 12-to-1!

http://links.outbrain.mkt5284.com/servlet/MailView?ms=NDI1NjU4NDES1&r=NjI1MDk0ODIzNDYS1&j=MjAyNjgyNDcyS0&mt=1&rt=0



The results you get from a Google or Yahoo or Bing search are determined by mathematical formulas known as algorithms. Search software seeks out the words in web pages to see how closely they match what you're looking for. For years, savvy web providers have gamed this through something called Search Engine Optimization and the search engines keep responding with alterations. We'll talk about this more later in the course, but here's the latest gambit in this ongoing chess game.

Because Google's algorithm also pays attention to what YOU the audience pay attention to. So is it a feedback loop, or a greater way to find reliable information?

What actually shows up for these "in-depth article" results?

What is clear is that currently, these new results seem to favor "big brands." Meaning, well-known publishers are being favored, though Google does promise that "you'll also find some great articles from lesser-known publications and blogs." So stay tuned. Obviously their primary measure of "quality" right now (as far as these types of results are concerned) is based on reputation, hence the big brand names.

What does this mean for you? Quality content that is well-researched, thorough, and original is a must have. The idea is for your content to be non-commercial, which means not focused on "selling" your business, products, or services. To show up in these results, your content should reportedly be about 2000-5000 words -- not all of it, but about 10% of your content should -- and it should be thoughtful and well-written so that it remains relevant for months even years to come.

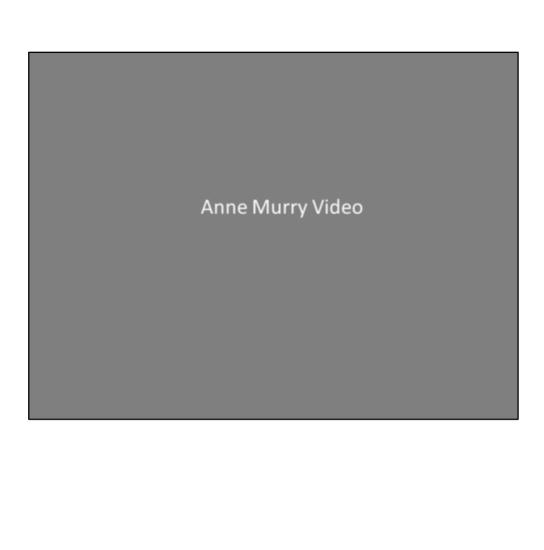
PIVOT POINT

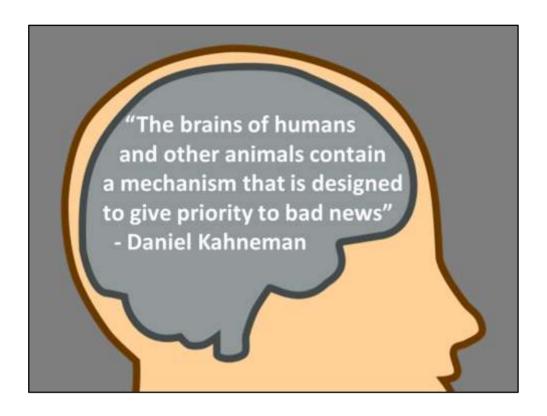
• Is society better off or worse off because of this shift in the power to decide what is news?



SLIDE: IS THERE TOO MUCH BAD NEWS? (NEXT SLIDE LAUNCHES THE ANNE MURRAY SONG) So...we've been thinking about four factors that determine what is news: the Universal News Drivers as the day-to-day expression of our need for news that alerts, diverts and connects us...editorial judgment of the stories' importance and interest...audience impacts on what attracts readers and viewers...and the bare-knuckle fight for market share.

Here are the thoughts of one song-writer about one of the most common complaints leveled against the news media.





"The brains of humans and other animals contain a mechanism that is designed to give priority to bad news. By shaving a few hundredths of a second from the time needed to detect a predator, this circuit improves an animal's odds of living long enough to reproduce" — Thinking, Fast and Slow, by Daniel Kahneman

Daniel Kahneman is a psychologist and winner of the 2002 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences. This finding of the many studies he has done can be boiled down to this funny observation by the psychologist Paul Rozin: A single cockroach will completely wreck the appeal of a bowl of cherries, but a single cherry does little to make a bowl of cockroaches appealing.

The Quick Quiz

- Name three of the universal news drivers (i.e. Prominence).
- Name one of three factors that determine what is news.
- Write a question we can answer to clarify today's lesson ... or a comment that will help us improve our work.

EMAIL OR HAND THE ANSWERS TO YOUR RECITATION INSTRUCTOR

Every lecture, we'll stop and give you a quick quiz, just three questions.

This helps cement key lessons in your memory.

Plus, it helps us see if we explained things well.

And the third question is a chance for you to improve your own course.

We'll start lectures with a selection of your comments and suggestions.

