What is News and Who Decides?

(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.

Morningjoe.wmv

(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 <u>that</u> 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...

Housekeeping, Announcements & Notes

Last week's Quick Quiz results

1. The five freedoms protected by the 1st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution are RELIGION, SPEECH, PRESS, ASSEMBLY, PETITION.
2. Though the U.S. Supreme Court has declared there shall in general be No Prior Restraint on our freedom of the press, it has declared there are two exceptions: the government may prevent publication that poses a clear and imminent danger of serious threat to the **National Security** and government may prevent publication of material that meets the definition of **Obscenity** laid out in Miller v. California and other cases.

Student Questions and Comments:

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.

A News Literacy Opportunity:
Watergate Reporters
Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward

Thursday, October 16
Staller Center Main Theater
4 p.m.

An Extra Credit opportunity:
Eric Glisson did 18 years in Sing Sing
For a murder he didn't commit
Meet Eric, and the NBC reporter who helped free him,
Dan Slepian, Stony Brook class of '93

DATELINE

Wednesday, October 8
SAC Auditorium
8 p.m.
Doors open 7:45
No tickets required.
Swipe your ID card for extra credit

FULL EPISODE: 'A Bronx Tale'

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…

August 12, 2014

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

A More Typical News Day:
Differences in News Decisions

September 19, 2014

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?

Definitions of News

Which leads us back to today's lecture:
What the heck **IS** 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…

Definitions of News: What's On Society's Mind

ANIMATION: ONE CLICK BRINGS UP ALL THREE IMAGES

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

Definitions of News

News Is any "Scoop":
Information That Makes a
Reporters Primal Heart Beat Faster
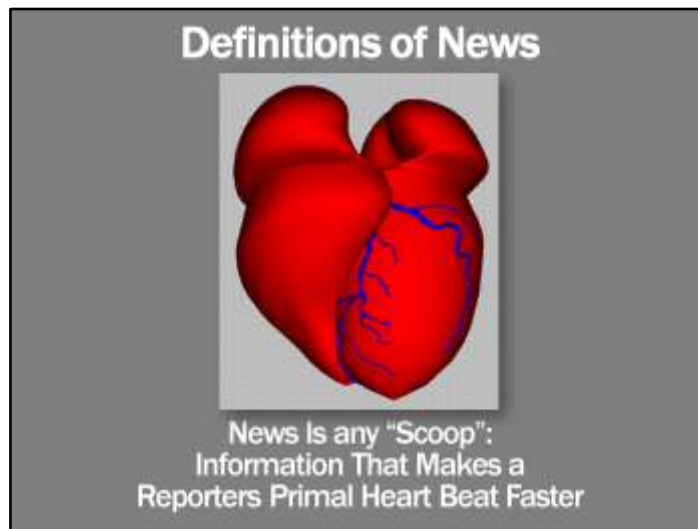
Great news organizations are driven by endless curiosity and dogged reporting.

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.

Definitions of News

10 MINS. TO STOCK SHOCK

EXCLUSIVE

Cyber pro says Nasdaq is wide open to attacks

News Is any "Exclusive"
A Story That Can Take Audience Away
From Competing News Organizations

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)

News : Things Powerful People Don't Want You to Know

The NYPD Division of Un-American Activities

When the New York Police Department built up its own intelligence-gathering team after the World Trade Centers attack, that might not have made people uncomfortable. But when undercover agents of that office sat in on Muslim Student Association meetings at Stony Brook, and even at campuses in other states…there was a storm of protest. New York Police Commissioner Ray Kelly didn't want you to know that, which is why it's news.

Definitions of News

Dog Bites Man vs. Man Bites Dog

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.

News Literacy Reality Check Survey Fall 2014
"The News Media Presents too much trivial news."
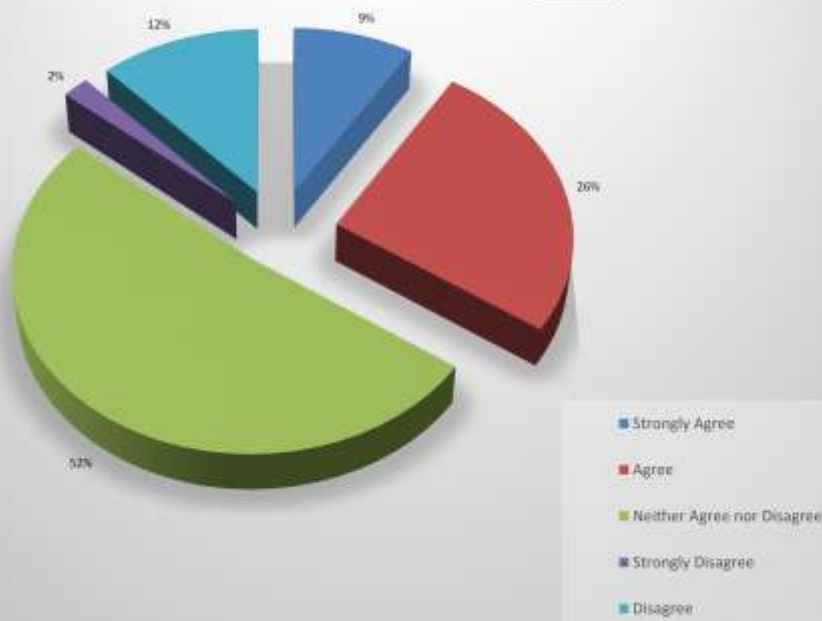
?
(prompt with reference to primal needs for
information that ALERTS, DIVERTS, CONNECTS...)
Here's the breakdown of your opinions of the
amount of trivial news that comes your way.

News Literacy Reality Check Survey Fall 2014
"The News Media Presents too much **bad** news."
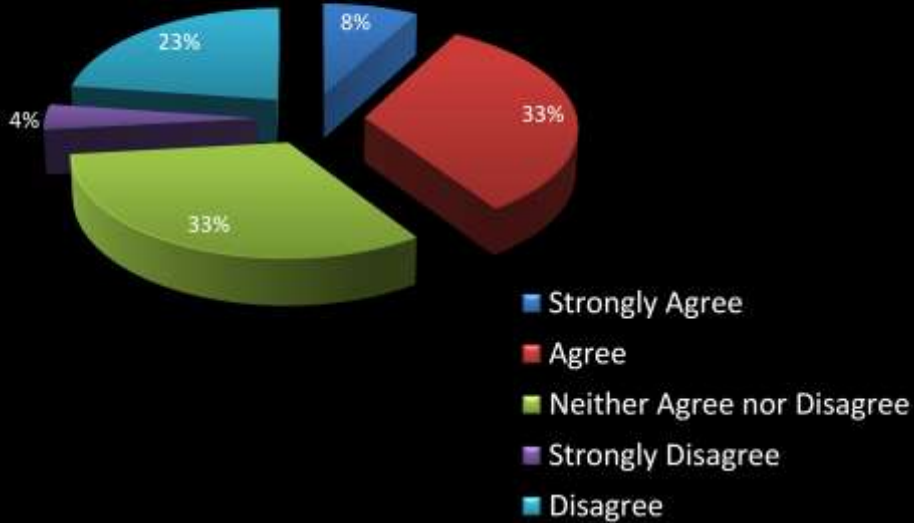
ASK: DO YOU PREFER TO READ SAD STORIES OR UPLIFTING STORIES?

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?

Definitions of News

News is Timely Information About a Subject of Some Public Interest That is Shared and Subject to the Journalistic Process of Verification

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 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 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 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 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 This 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

Three Factors Determine What Is News

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.

10 Universal News Drivers

Importance
Prominence
Human Interest
Conflict
Change
Proximity
Timeliness
Magnitude
Relevance
Unusualness

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 ill, the world has changed)
✓ **Proximity** (NIMBY: News in My Back Yard)
✓ **Timeliness** (Anniversaries or holidays or deadlines; the calendar is the crucial context of these stories.)
✓ **Magnitude** (Numbers are the essence of this story!)
✓ **Relevance** (How wide is the story's impact and audience?)
✓ **Unusualness** (Peculiarity— Man Bites Dog, alerts 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 "**<u>NEW</u>**s."

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?

Universal News Drivers

Importance

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.

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?

Universal News Drivers

Human Interest³

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!

Universal News Drivers

"Millions around the world increasingly see America not as a model of democracy but as relying solely on brute force, cobbling coalitions together under the slogan "you're either with us or against us."

"He has made (Russia) a friend to tyrants and an enemy to the oppressed…"

Russian President Vladimir Putin, in the New York Times

U.S. Senator John McCain, responding in Pravda

Conflict

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

Last year, 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?

Universal News Drivers

Supreme Court Bolsters Gay Marriage With Two Major Rulings

Change

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.
ASK: What is the driver?

Universal News Drivers
Proximity

There are about 27,000 car crashes per year in Suffolk County, NY.
So why is this one news in the college paper in Stony Brook?

ASK: Which driver makes it news?

Timeliness

ANIMATION: CLICK TO BRING UP DRIVER WORD

The calendar makes it news. When September 11 rolls around, the news will be dominated by stories of the anniversary events.
ASK: Which driver makes it news?

Insert video here.

The 2014 "King" and "Reading" fires in California are a big deal.

Listen to how the story is described in this report:

Doubling in size

Nine major fires

2,000 homes

44 square miles

5% contained

3,400 firefighters

Thousands of residents

Get out in a matter of minutes

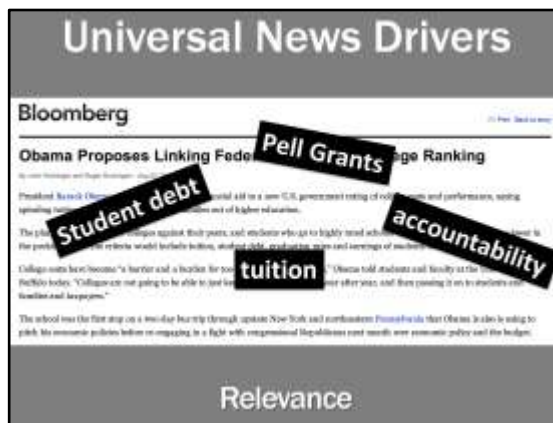15 helicopters

Universal News Drivers

King Wildfire Doubles in Size, Thousands of Homes in Danger

UP NEXT

Magnitude
(driven by numbers)

DRIVER WORD CLICKS UP ON NEXT SLIDE

ASK: Which Driver makes this news?

http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/capital-weather-gang/wp/2013/09/16/colorados-biblical-flood-by-the-numbers/

Universal News Drivers

Bloomberg

Obama Proposes Linking Fede... ge Ranking

Relevance

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?

http://www.bloomberg.com/news/print/2013-08-22/obama-said-to-propose-tying-college-aid-to-school-ranking.html

Universal News Drivers

Unusual

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.

Factor 2: Editorial Judgment

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.

RATING STORIES FOR YOURNEWS.COM

IMPORTANT?

INTERESTING?
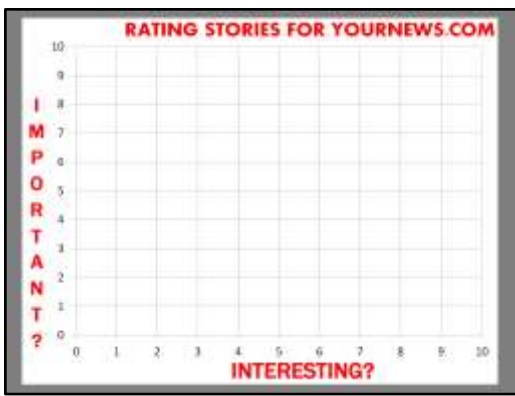
Today, you're the Editor of YOURNEWS.COM
Your subeditors bring you the list of stories produced by the staff and you have to pick the top stories.
You've got some self-respect. You want to do real journalism.
But you also want to attract a lot of customers.
Let's warm up. First, I need you to clap, on 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.

US President Barack Obama welcomed Scots' decision to stay in the UK. "Through debate, discussion, and passionate yet peaceful deliberations, they reminded the world of Scotland's enormous contributions to the UK and the world," he said.
Police Scotland said Thursday's vote "passed off smoothly" with just six arrests across the country mainly for alleged breaches of the peace and assaults.
Share prices rose as Scotland voted against independence.
Polling officials said they were investigating 10 cases of suspected electoral fraud at polling stations in Glasgow.
Royal Bank of Scotland said it would keep its headquarters in Scotland following the "No" vote.
Wales's First Minister Carwyn Jones has called for more funding for his country after Scotland voted to stay in the Union.
Northern Ireland First Minister Peter Robinson said a vote on the future of Northern Ireland's border was not necessary following Scotland's 'No' vote.
Scotland rejected independence by 55% to 45%. For latest results and full coverage, go to bbc.co.uk/scotland-decides.

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

ASK: Which drivers are in play?

http://www.newsday.com/entertainment/celebrities/miss-america-nina-davuluri-takes-traditional-dip-in-atlantic-city-waters-1.6081681

Interesting? Important? Place it on each axis

NASA awards contracts to Boeing and SpaceX to carry out manned missions to the International Space Station from 2017 onwards, ending U.S. reliance on Russia for space transportation services. Lost in the business news story is this, after abandoning manned space travel, America is going back to space under its own steam.

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

ASK: Which drivers are in play?
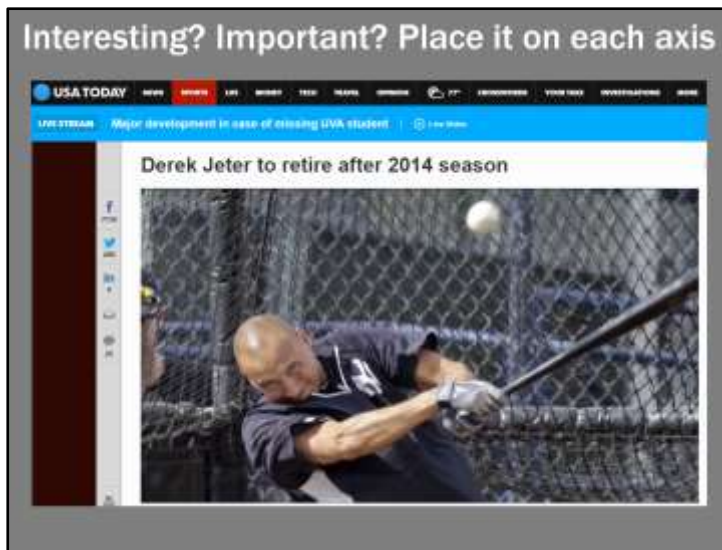
Mr. Positive. Mr. Baseball. Mr. Bye-Bye. How's this story fit into the mix?

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

Interesting? Important? Place it on each axis

Notch Sells Mojang for His Sanity, Not the Money
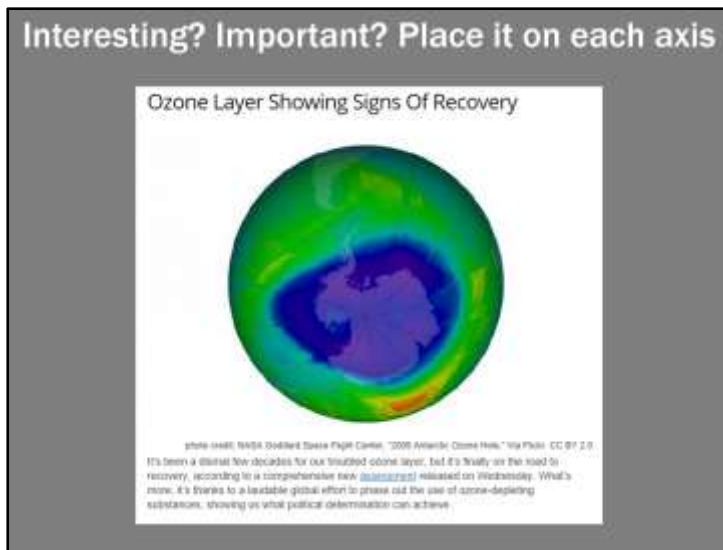
2.5 bbbbbillion. That's what an indie game-maker called "Notch" got from Microsoft for his wildly popular game: Minecraft.
He sold it, he said, to get rid of the hassles of running a giant game franchise so that he could get back to designing new games.

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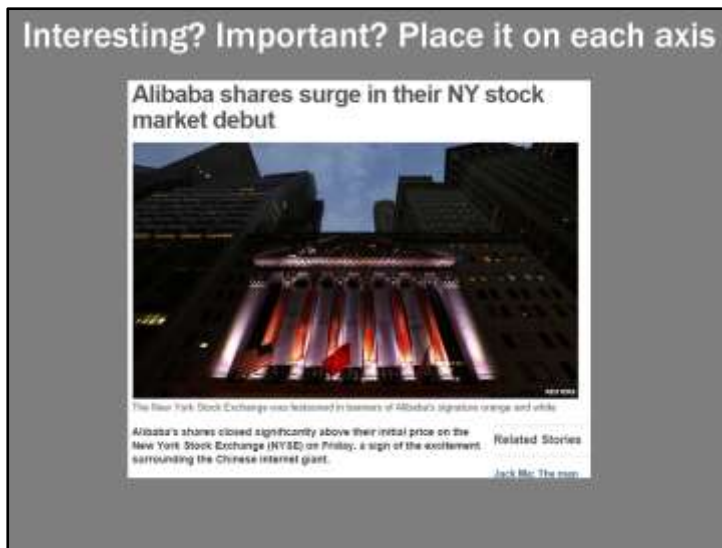ASK: Which drivers are in play?

From the IFLS (I Fucking Love Science) website comes this Goddard Space Flight Center graphic, showing how restrictions on CFCs and other Ozone-eroders are allowing the earth's ozone layer to heal.

Importance? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score?

Interest? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score?

ASK: Which drivers are in play?

Interesting? Important? Place it on each axis

Alibaba shares surge in their NY stock market debut

The operator of the leaking Fukushima nuclear plant said Tuesday that it dumped more than 1,000 tons of polluted water into the sea after a typhoon raked the facility.

Importance? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score?

Interest? AFTER RATING ASK: Why this score?

ASK: Which drivers are in play?

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/17/fukushima-polluted-water-sea_n_3939014.html?view=print&comm_ref=false

Interesting? Important? Place it on each axis

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.

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.

Tabloid Journalism

HEADLESS BODY
IN TOPLESS BAR

An Extreme Case of Mission vs. Market

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.

Who Is Your Audience?

The silent tsunami

FROM REHAB TO ARREST IN 11 DAYS

The Importance of the Customer in Making Decisions

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 audience-driven.

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.

Presentation and design aim for specific audiences

August 12, 2014

Back to those August 12 covers.
Even though they all emphasized the same story, why do they all look different?
The Post and Newsday, small tabloid-sized, are for commuters.
The Times, Post and USA Today are for home-delivery.
That's an over-simplification, but how does the design and size reflect differences in audience?

ASK: Are they all serving the same audience?
How can you tell what assumptions they make about the people who'll buy their daily report?

The New York Post and Daily News Slug it Out

Competition & Profit

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?

Why $ports$ is Big News

The Best Sports Town

BACK WITH A BANG

WE WANT ANSWERS, ROG!

DAILY NEWS
Jeter opens final home stand with HR as Yanks win on error

PARTING GIFTS!

NBC New York's Bruce Beck, at Spring Training

Competition & Profit

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?

Is the audience taking over?

Most Popular

Power shifts from editor to consumer

Animation: **CLICK ERASES OVERALL PAGE, PIECES OF IT APPEAR**

Let's take a look at how audience choices may drive news judgment. While the 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 re-stacks the editors choices into a virtual newspaper edited by the audience.

ASK: Who uses these lists to guide their reading?
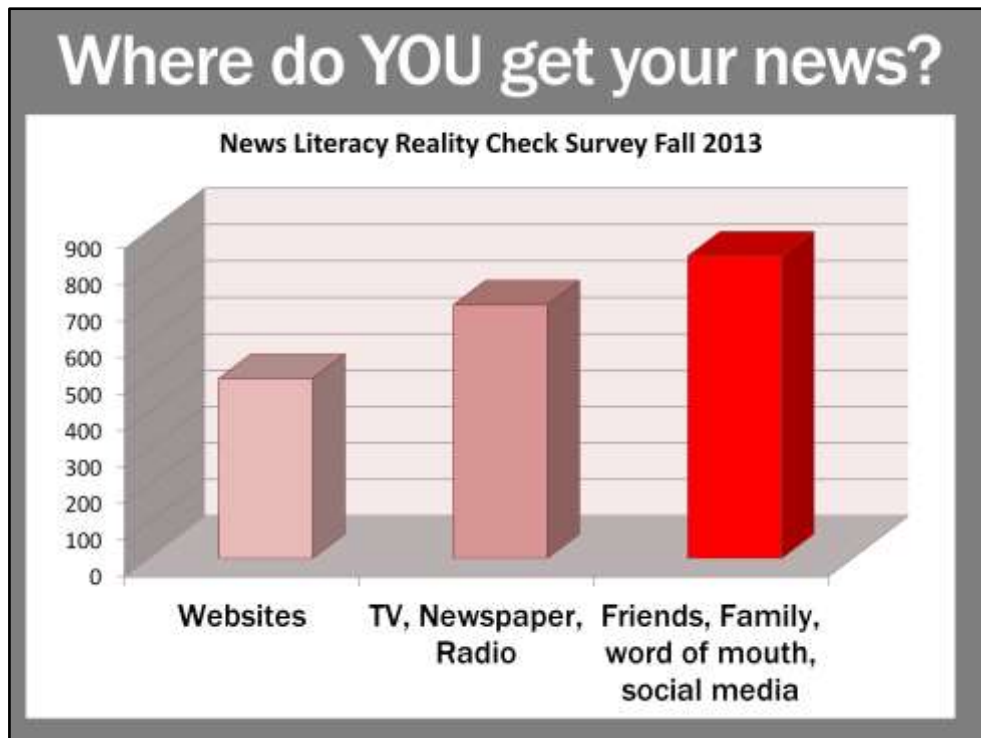   Why?
    How can that affect what you learn each day?
    Is there a downside?

Some websites rely entirely on these audience measures. The editorial function-or mediation- has been totally replaced.

ASK: what do you think works best? Why?

Where do YOU get your news?

News Literacy Reality Check Survey Fall 2013

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, 449 of you get your news from websites, 696 from traditional news outlets such as TV, newspapers and radio, but 830 get your news socially; from friends, family, word of mouth, and social media. So who's your editor? A veteran journalist serving as Producer/Editor or your Uncle Jimmy?

Audience News Judgment

- TwerkMontage.wmv

When Miley twerked at the VMAs last year, netizens went wild, cranking out 300,000 tweets a minute.
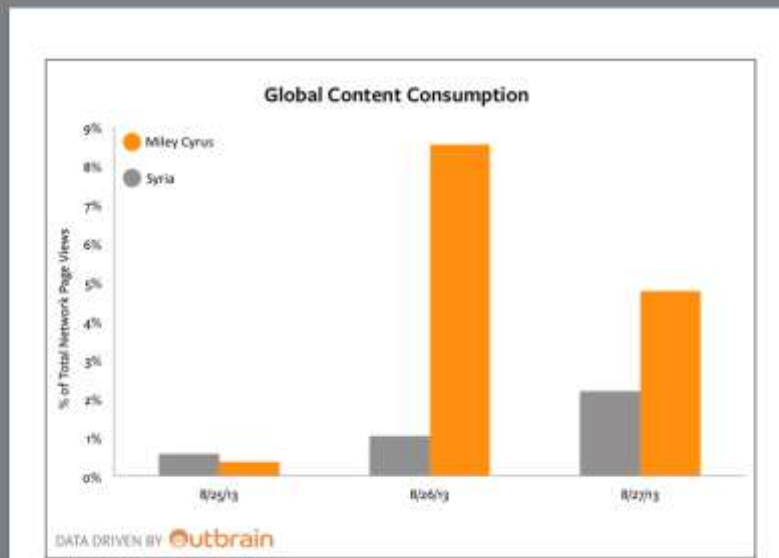ASK:
Is it Interesting?
Is it Important?
There's only so much time in any given day. So, what got ignored while we were gorging on Miley Twerk Tweets?

**Audience News Judgment
An Extreme Case**

Global Content Consumption

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

Algorithmic News Judgment

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.

Anne Murry Video

The Quick Quiz

1. Name three news drivers (i.e. Prominence)

2. Name one of three factors that determine what is news

3. Write a question we can answer to clarify today's lesson...or a comment that will help us improve our work.

Write your name and Recitation Instructor name on your Quiz

Hand your QUICK QUIZ to your recitation instructor as you leave, and practice saying her or his name. (i.e. *"Hi, Professor Schmedlapp"*)

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.

Thus endeth the Lesson...

Here's a crucial review from last week: In the daily tsunami of information, reliable information is found in the sweet spot.
It takes all three characteristics:
Independence,
Accountability
Verification.
The reliable information we're teaching you to seek has not just one or two of these characteristics. It has all three.
 These are three terms students are expected to begin using to characterize information in class and in homework assignments, <u>starting today.</u>
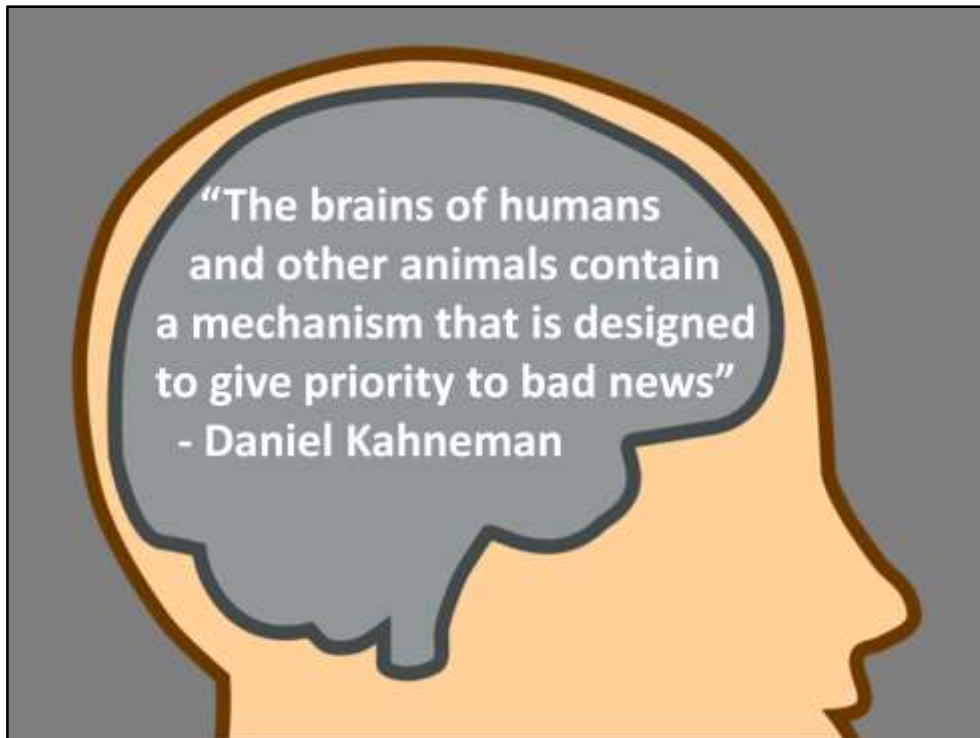--**Verification:**
--**Independence**
--**Accountability**
A lot of things try to look trustworthy by looking like journalism.
But only at the intersection of all those characteristics lies the sweet spot where you'll find actionable, reliable information.
That's the standard journalism claims to hold itself to: Verification, Independence AND Accountability.

"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.