

After this lecture, students will be able to:

1. Articulate the difference between a news outlet and a news Source.
2. Use the "I.M.V.A.I.N." criteria to evaluate sources in news stories.
3. Justify reasons for differential ratings of sources' credibility based on IMVAIN analysis.
4. Use specific examples to illustrate the difference between a source who asserts and one who verifies.
5. Use a three-part test to judge the reliability of anonymous sources.

These skills relate to course outcomes 1 & 2

Why Sources Matter

THREATS AND RESPONSES: INTELLIGENCE

THREATS AND RESPONSES: INTELLIGENCE; Defectors Bolster U.S. Case Against Iraq, Officials Say

By JUDITH MILLER
Published: January 24, 2003

THREATS AND RESPONSES: GERM WEAPONS; C.I.A. Hunts Iraq Tie to Soviet Smallpox

By JUDITH MILLER

CIA investigates informant's accusation that Iraq obtained

BOOKS OF THE TIMES; Sounding an Urgent Terrorism Alarm to Deaf Ears

By JUDITH MILLER

Judith Miller reviews book *The Age of Sacred Terror* by Daniel Benjamin and Steven Miller; photos

November 20, 2002

Why Sources Matter



What Are the Consequences When The Press Gets it Wrong?



U.S. Invades Iraq to Capture WMD

Why Critical Thinking About Sources Matters

Conflict in Iraq - msnbc.com

CIA's final report: No WMD found in Iraq

Recommends freeing detainees held for weapons knowledge

WASHINGTON — In his final word, the CIA's top weapons inspector in Iraq said Monday that the hunt for weapons of mass destruction has "gone as far as feasible" and has found nothing, closing an investigation into the purported program of Saddam Hussein that was used to justify the 2003 invasion.

To Be Fair...

"Saddam Hussein has spent the better part of this decade, and much of his nation's wealth, not on providing for the Iraqi people, but on developing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the missiles to deliver them."

President George W. Bush, Jan. 27, 1998.



"Iraq is a long way from [here], but what happens there matters a great deal here. For the risks that the leaders of a rogue state will use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons against us or our allies is the greatest security threat we face."

Sec. of State Madeleine Albright, Feb. 18, 1998.



"He will use those weapons of mass destruction again, as he has ten times since 1983."

Sandy Berger*, National Security Adviser, Feb. 18, 1998



"Fateful decisions will be made in the days and weeks ahead. At issue is nothing less than the fundamental question of whether or not we can keep the most lethal weapons known to mankind out of the hands of an unreconstructed tyrant and aggressor ..."

Sen. Joe Biden (D, DE), Feb. 12, 1998
Now Vice President

*later convicted of stealing documents from the National Security Archive

New York magazine

The Source of the Trouble

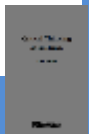
Pulitzer Prize winner Judith Miller's series of exclusives about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq—courtesy of the now-notorious Ahmad Chalabi—helped the New York Times keep up with the competition and the Bush administration bolster the case for war. How the very same talents that caused her to get the story also caused her to get it wrong.

If Miller is an extreme example of the Times' ultracompetitive mind-set, she is also an example of an inherent problem of journalism: its reliance on sources.

Democracy Demands Critical Thinking:

Active, persistent, and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds which support it and the further conclusions to which it tends. (Dewey, 1909, p. 9)

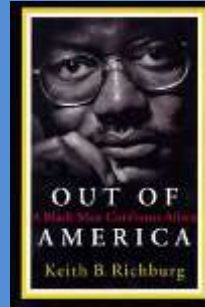
- identify the elements in a reasoned case, especially reasons and conclusions;
- identify and evaluate assumptions;
- clarify and interpret expressions and ideas;
- judge the acceptability, especially the credibility, of claims;
- evaluate arguments of different kinds;
- analyse, evaluate and produce explanations;
- analyse, evaluate and make decisions;
- draw inferences;
- produce arguments.





Housekeeping, Announcements & Notes

Extra Credit Event #3 May 1: The Power of Social Media in China



Keith Richburg

Veteran bureau chief for The Washington Post: 20 years in Beijing, Paris, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Nairobi and Manila and New York.

SAC Auditorium, 8 p.m., Tickets not required, but early arrival is. Doors open at 7:45

News Matters!

*Which Matters Made
News on Your Homepage
TODAY?*

And

*What Course Concepts
Were on Display This Week?*

Shattered Glass

View it through:

- NetFlix,
- Online (see Blackboard™ link)
- Melville Library (copies on hand)



Recapping Last Week's Lecture on Truth and Verification



Code of Ethics

Society of **News-Literate** Citizens

1. Ask: Did the Reporter Open the Freezer?
2. Follow The Story

Reminder: Bring Deconstruction Workbook to Next Lecture



Print it.

Read it.

Bring it

Journalists are people who need people



Says Who?



Critical Evaluation
of people interviewed
for News Reports



Smart Questions to Ask Yourself:

- ✓ Who is this source?
- ✓ How would this person know?
- ✓ Does anyone corroborate?
- ✓ Does this person verify or assert?
- ✓ Do they have a dog in the fight?

(Don't copy these. Wait for the mnemonic device)

Can Cell Phones Crash Airliners?



Says Who?

Says Who?

Cellonplane.wmv

Judging the Reliability of Sources

Independent Sources Are **Better Than** Self-Interested Sources

Multiple Sources Are **Better Than** Single Sources

Sources Who **Verify** Are **Better Than** Sources Who Assert

Authoritative/**I**nformed Sources Are **Better Than** Uninformed Sources

Named Sources Are **Better Than** Unnamed Sources

(Mnemonic Device: **I'M VAIN**)

How Journalists Pursue the Truth Look Who's Talking

Direct Evidence:

- Driver's testimony
- Eyewitnesses' accounts
- Breathalyzer Report
- Driving Records
- Accident Reports for the Road

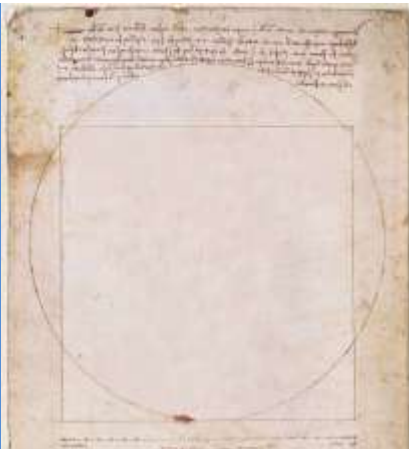


Indirect Evidence:

- Police reports
- University officials' statements
- Driver's lawyer's statements
- Statements of victim's family & friends
- Statements of driver's family & friends
- Statements from Stony Brook students

Judging the Reliability of Sources

Independent Sources
Are **Better** Than
Self-Interested Sources



A Self-interested source...

The New York Times

Shell Suspends Drilling for Arctic Ocean in 2013

"We've made progress in Alaska, but this is a long-term program that we are pursuing in a safe and measured way," Shell Oil Co. President Marvin Odum said in the announcement. "Our decision to pause in 2013 will give us time to ensure the readiness of all our equipment and people following the drilling season in 2012."

Environmental groups opposed to drilling cheered the announcement.

"This is the first good decision we've seen from Shell," said Mike Levine, an Alaska spokesman for Oceana. "Given the disastrous 2012 season, our government agencies must take advantage of this opportunity to reassess the way decisions are made about our ocean resources and to reconsider the commitment to explore for oil in the Arctic Ocean."

Independence: A Ruthless Standard

Libyan Woman Claims Rape By Soldiers, Is Dragged Away

HERSELF AL BURLIN | 02/27/11 2:44 PM

Her story could not be independently verified, but the dramatic scene provided a rare firsthand glimpse of the brutal crackdown on public dissent by Moammar Gadhafi's regime as the

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Judging the Reliability of Sources

Multiple Sources Are **Better** Than a Single Source

TIME

Multiple Sources

South Korea's North Korea Trip Affects U.S. Policy



South Korea's trip to Pyongyang, where regime leader Kim Jong Il met with the nation's people and pressed for the return of the U.S. nuclear weapons.

The State Department offered a virtually identical response. "We have almost thousands of communications with the DPRK," Agency spokesman Patrick Ventrell said shortly before reporting the rest of Carney's response almost verbatim.

"The United States has drawn thousands of communications with the DPRK," explained White House spokesman Jay Carney, using the acronym for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "Not instead of spending money on whether spending money to rehabilitate the state of that country, the North Korean regime should focus on the well-being of its own people who have been starved, imprisoned and denied their human rights."

PHOTOGRAPH BY AP/WIDEWORLD

Not really, say some North Korea experts. "We have learned something more about Kim Jong Un's level of leadership," says Charles Armstrong, a Korea specialist at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. But, he adds, Kim's fixation was

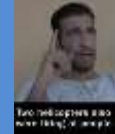
Jong Il are known as fans of American movies and other cultural exports. "Hollywood and NBA may be American icons, but Kim's demonstrated affinity for such forms of entertainment does not signal an overture to Washington," adds Sung-Yoon Lee of the Yale University Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. "It certainly does not indicate intentions of reform or opening, coming just a couple of weeks after a nuclear test."

Reconstructing the Blackwater Incident in Nusoor Square



Blackwater.wmv

In Pursuit of Truth Blackwater shooting



Judging the Reliability of Sources

Sources Who **Verify**
Are **Better** Than
Sources Who **Assert**

Verifying or Asserting?

The New York Times

Texas Senator Goes on Attack and Raises Bipartisan Hackles



Saying that he had serious doubts about the source of payments that Mr. Hagel had accepted for speaking engagements, Mr. Cruz declared, "It is at a minimum relevant to know if that \$200,000 that he deposited in his bank account came directly from Saudi Arabia, came directly from North Korea."

"He basically came out and made the accusation about money from North Korea or money from our enemies, and he just laid out there all of this accusatory verbiage without a shred of evidence," said Senator Claire McCaskill, Democrat of Missouri. "In this country we had a terrible experience with innuendo and inference when Joe McCarthy hung out in the United States Senate, and I just think we have to be more careful."

Verifying or Asserting?

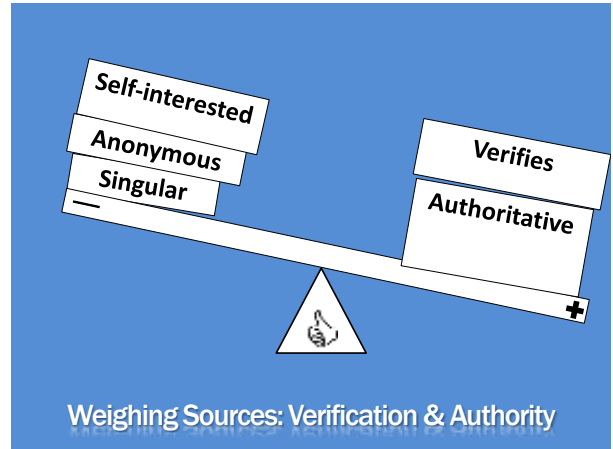
The Washington Post

Tunisians worry about loss of freedoms gained under the Arab Spring

Tweet Email Print RSS Social

By Elizabeth Bryant | Religion News Service, Published: October 6 | Updated: Monday, October 8, 10:42 AM

"I have no figures, I have no scientific studies," said Khadija Cherif, Tunis-based secretary-general of the International Federation of Human Rights. "But the assessment I make daily is that the vast majority of women are willing because of pressure from their family or neighborhood or political manipulation."



A Corollary to Last Week's Lesson:



Just Like We
Always ask:
"Did the Reporter
Open the Freezer?"

You can also ask"
"Did the Source
Open the Freezer?"

Judging the Reliability of Sources

Authoritative/Informed Sources
Are **Better** Than
Un-informed Sources

Vaccines are Dangerous? Sez Who?



Vaccines are Dangerous? Sez Who?

VaccineBachman.wmv

Authoritative vs. Uninformed Los Angeles Times

Steroid-related meningitis cases rise to 7 dead, 64 sick



"All patients who may have received these medications need to be tracked down immediately," said Dr. Benjamin Park of the Centers for Disease Control in a news release. "It is possible that if patients with infection are identified soon and put on appropriate antifungal therapy, lives may be saved."

Authoritative/Informed Sources vs. Un-informed Sources

Madison lab solves mystery of Arkansas bird die-off

Blunt-force trauma from flying into homes, cars cited as cause

By Lee Bergquist of The Journal Sentinel
Jan. 6, 2011 | 19 | 242 COMMENTS

The mystery of the deaths of thousands of blackbirds in Arkansas this month has been solved.

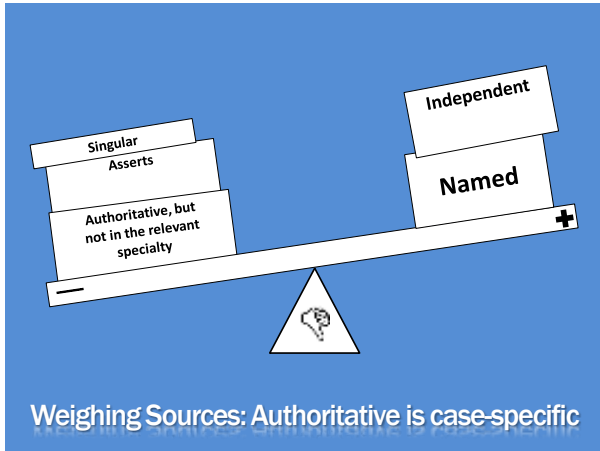
They died of blunt force trauma, according to the National Wildlife Health Center in Madison. Samples of the blackbirds - and other blackbirds from a separate area die-off about the same time in Louisiana - were brought to the little-known laboratory on Madison's west side for necropsies.

"They died of impact force to their bodies," said Galt Knight, chief of disease investigations at the center.

He said the birds clearly showed signs of injury.

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission said tests for evidence of pesticide poisoning were negative.

Associated Press
Dead birds lie on the ground after



<http://mysbfiles.stonybrook.edu/~mspikes/teeter/>



Judging the Reliability of Sources

Named Sources
Are **Better** Than
Unnamed Sources

Who Was 'Deep Throat'?



The Most Famous Unnamed Source in History

Characterizing Unnamed Sources



Thousands displaced as Syrian authorities demolish Hama neighborhood

By Amir Atwood, CNN

Updated 9:22 AM EDT, May 10 October 1, 2011



"Most of the residents have left their homes. The majority of them went to neighboring areas in the province. Some are still sleeping in the streets, and only a few of them remain in their homes," Abdallah said.

Another resident reached by phone Sunday said she's been living on the street, along with her two kids, for five days after her husband was detained by authorities and her home was burned. She did not want to be named for safety reasons.

Anonymous Source Characterized

Feeling the Pressure to Drink for Work



© 2011 AP/WIDEWORLD. Tony Lawrence

"There is a perception almost that you're impotent," said one nondrinker, an editor at a liquor-focused lifestyle magazine who asked not to be identified because many of his co-workers don't know he recently entered a 12-step program.

The
New York
Times

Characterizing Unnamed Sources

Despite Promise of Reforms, Syrian Forces Try to Disperse Protesters With Gunfire

By THE NEW YORK TIMES

DAMASCUS, Syria — The political crisis in [Syria](#) deepened on Monday as the armed forces in the restive southern city of Dara'a fired live ammunition in the air to disperse hundreds of pro-democracy demonstrators who had taken to the streets.

"They were marching peacefully, asking for their rights, when the army opened fire at them," said one witness who declined to be identified for fear of reprisals. "But this is not the end."

Evaluating Anonymous Sources

The Washington Post

NEWS | LOCAL | POLITICS | SPORTS | OPINIONS | BUSINESS | ARTS & LIVING

Still falling short on anonymous sources

By Andrew Alexander
Columbiana

"Senior administration officials" said they were frustrated with how Deeds was handling his campaign "administration officials" predicted he would lose on Tuesday.

All these anonymous sources were too much for Post reader Dee Elison of Falls Church.

She's right. Anonymous sources often are necessary. And too many of them appear in The Post.

But there's another problem. When they must be used, The Post doesn't do a good enough job of explaining why.

Evaluating Anonymous Sources

THE POST MEDIA

Media Ethics: Issues Raised by Michael Lewis's Obama Article in Vanity Fair

Posted: 09/16/07 11:30 pm

Put baldly, those sources who do not want to speak for attribution and/or edit their own quotations often speak for their own purposes and deliberately try to mislead the media. As Lord Northcliffe, owner of the London Times and Daily Mail once remarked, "News is what someone, somewhere is trying to suppress."

"The rest is advertising,"

Evaluating Anonymous Sources

Transparency
 Characterization
 Corroboration (evidence/sources)

Evaluate The Sources



Sources



Outlets

US to spend \$200 mn a day on Obama's Mumbai visit

Obama's record on the economy

Obama's record on the economy



Source Evaluation Workshop (Great Practice for the Final)

COOPER200mIL.WMV

Evaluate The Source



<http://mysbfiles.stonybrook.edu/~mspikes/teeter/>



When Is A Self-Interested Source A Reliable Source?

Women in Texas Losing Options for Health Care in Abortion Fight

Many San Carlos patients struggle to reach Edinburg from their homes in impoverished neighborhoods called colonias. Maria Romero, a housecleaner with four children, who had a lump in her breast discovered at the San Carlos clinic, has no way to get there.

Ms. Parra, 33, the mother of five, managed to borrow a car to get to Edinburg after a pap smear at the San Carlos clinic indicated she might have cervical cancer. Further tests showed she was cancer-free.

Both women worry about getting birth control pills; the clinic may now have to charge them up to \$20 for a month's supply.

"I will have to go without," Ms. Parra said as she left an English class at a community center and was walking to pick up her two youngest children from a Head Start program. "If I get pregnant again, God forbid."

When is a Self-Interested Source a Reliable Source?



The New York Times

Veterans Wait for Benefits as Claims Pile Up

Each appointment and lost document has added weeks to the processing, now in its 15th month. So have skeptical department examiners, who have requested additional information on whether Mr. Selsky's heart palpitations and vision loss are related to his multiple sclerosis. "This should be a slam dunk," Ms. Selsky said. "He keeps getting worse, and they keep fighting and fighting and fighting with us. The stress is unbelievable."

Self-Interest and Informed-ness: Can a Weakness Also Be a Strength?

The Case of the Clinic Clients and the VA



Source Evaluation Workshop (Great Practice for the Final)

CampDeath.wmv



Judging the Reliability of Sources

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(Mnemonic Device: **I'M VAIN**)

Key Lesson:

Evaluate Sources

Evaluate Sources

Evaluate Sources

Judging the Reliability of Sources

Independent Sources Are Better Than Self-Interested Sources

Multiple Sources Are Better Than Single Sources

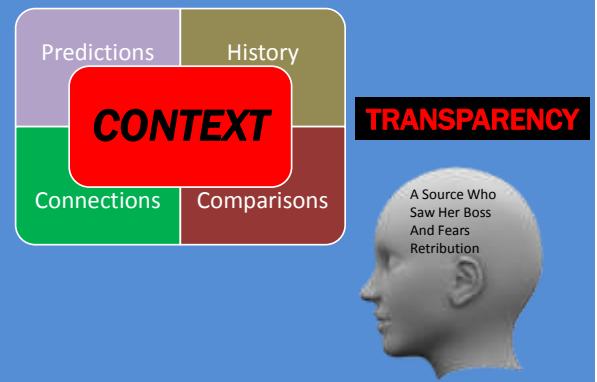
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Looking ahead: Two Ideas Students Struggle With



Reminder: Bring Deconstruction Workbook to Next Lecture



Print it.

Read it.

Bring it



hus endeth the Lesson...