The power of images
The peril of images

How to harness the power and minimize the peril

What is the power and peril of images?

America's Collective Memory in Photos

American Soldiers, Iwo Jima, 1945

Civil Rights Protest in Birmingham, Bill Hudson, 1963
Zapruder Film, JFK Assassination

Kent State University, John Filo, 1970

Vietnamese Children Fleeing Napalm Strike, Nick Ut, 1972

Tiananmen Square Standoff, Stuart Franklin, 1989
Sudan, Kevin Carter, 1993

Abu Ghraib Prison, 2003

Hurricane Katrina, 2005

The Obama Fist Bump, 2009
America's Collective Memory in Photos

Pelican, Gulf of Mexico, 2010

Mantoloking, NJ, Nov. 1, 2012 by Bonnie Jo Mount

Ferguson, MO, August 11, 2014
Photo Scott Olson/Getty Images

America's Collective Memory in Photos
The right 1,000 words?

THE POWER OF IMAGES CAN BE SEEN EVERY DAY IN ITS IMPACT ON NEWS JUDGMENT

The Quick Quiz RECAP

1. What two kinds of clues help you distinguish opinion journalism from reporting?
   LANGUAGE AND LABELING

1. What does Moynihan’s Maxim say about fact and opinion?
   Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts.
After this lecture, students will be able to:

1. Explain how photos and recorded sound serve as powerful verification of journalist truth, aiding the news consumer’s search for reliable information.

2. Explain how the same photos and recorded sound can trigger strong emotional responses without adding to your understanding.

3. Use journalistic methods and questions to test the reliability of photos and recorded sound.

4. Explain the burden social media creators and participants bear when they use these powerful tools.

There’s verification...
And then there’s verification
A social media truism

Pics or it didn't happen

Pics prove it did happen...

Unfortunately for some

“A PICTURE
SHOWS more AT A GLANCE WHAT IT TAKES
DOZENS OF PAGES OF A BOOK TO EXPOUND.”
I.S. Turgenev,
FATHERS & SONS (1862)
The Birth of American Photojournalism

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 1863
Timothy O’Sullivan

“One look is worth a thousand words.”

Printer’s Ink (trade journal)
10 March 1927 p. 114

Photography Launches a Visual Culture

National Press Photographers Association:
“Images can reveal great truths, expose wrongdoing and neglect, inspire hope and understanding and connect people around the globe...”

Professional Ethics (excerpt)

“...Our primary goal is the faithful and comprehensive depiction of the subject at hand”

✓ Be accurate, comprehensive (and) provide context
✓ Resist being manipulated by staged photo opportunities.
✓ Avoid stereotyping individuals and groups.
✓ Show private grief if the public has justifiable need to see.
✓ Do not intentionally alter or influence events you record.
✓ Do not manipulate images or add or alter sound in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresented subjects.
✓ Do not pay sources or subjects.
✓ Seek diversity by including unpopular, unnoticed points of view.
✓ Respect the integrity of the photographic moment.
The hungry eye: print

• Readers enter print pages through photos
• Only 25% of text is looked at

The hungry eye: online

• Readers’ eyes first seek navigational aids
• (story lists and teasers)
• Readers’ eyes spend more time on photos than text
• Readers retain more from items that include graphics/photos

Does each image tell the same story?
Pivot Point

Every other row,
Pivot to the row behind
To discuss in groups of four:

Which Tsarnaev photo is a “faithful and comprehensive depiction of the subject at hand”?
“...be accurate and comprehensive... provide context...”
-National Press Photographers Code of Ethics

What Is the Power and Peril of Recorded Direct Evidence?

Pivot Point

Every other row, Pivot to the row behind To discuss in groups of four:

How Much is Too Much in the Boston Marathon Photo?
PHOTOSHOP JUST MADE IT EASIER TO FOOL PEOPLE

History of Photo Manipulation

When soviet dictator Josef Stalin ordered the death of the head his secret police, N. Ezhov, he had his photo-retouchers “airbrush” the man out of existence.

Code of Ethics
Preamble: “Photographs can also cause great harm if they are callously intrusive or are manipulated.”

Bodies of the dead have not yet been buried after the three-day battle at Gettysburg, PA. July 1-3, 1863 between the U.S. army led by George Meade and the rebel army led by Gen. Robert E. Lee.
Pictured vs. Posed
Context explains symmetry/framing

The Space Shuttle Challenger Explodes, 1986

HOW ARE THESE TWO DIFFERENT?

BOTH ARE POSED, BUT ONLY ONE IS DECEIVING THE READER
Why is the burden on you to be a skillful news photo consumer?

If there’s a photo, we feel it must be true.

Like Stalin, you doctor photos.

No Eye Candy From Strangers.
How can you tell?
Again with the language and labelling!
• Check Photo Credits
• Check Photo Captions
• Note: “File photo”, photo archive
• Look for these words:
  • “Photo enhancement”
  • “Digital photo manipulation”
  • “Photo composite / illustration”

Which photo outlets can you trust?

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<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Social Media</th>
<th>Anonymous, REDDIT, ETC</th>
<th>Marginal or Partisan Outlet</th>
<th>Reputable News Outlet</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accountable for professional ethics and standards</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>RARELY</td>
<td>PUTATIVELY</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervised by experienced journalists</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>RARELY</td>
<td>USUALLY</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>Payroll-based Independence</td>
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<td>USUALLY</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject to Peer Review</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>RARELY</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neutrality enforced</td>
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<td>TRUST RATING</td>
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<td>MODERATE</td>
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Is This North Korean Hovercraft-Landing Photo Faked?

Caption

Jampa Yeshi, a Tibetan protestor self-immolated in New Delhi, against Chinese President Hu
Jintao's visit to India, March 20, 2012.

Credit
On Big News Days, Be Skeptical

Inside the BBC’s Verification Hub:
‘What everyone wanted to know, on Twitter and in the newsroom, was this: Was the video real or fake? That is the kind of question the [User-Generated Content] Hub is there to investigate.’

Crowd-sourcing Via Social Media Means Organizations Like BBC, CNN, Reuters Hire Information Forensics Experts

How Can You Be Sure?
Two Simple Tools: Tin Eye™ and Google Images™ Can At Least Tell You Who Else Is Using the Same Image

Citizen watchdogs
Amnest International trains supporters to help spot bogus images from crisis spot
Ethical Photos “Open the Freezer”: A photo credit declares who is accountable for the integrity of the image. The caption provides cross-checkable detail and provides the context that makes a depiction “faithful” to the truth.

The Quick Quiz

1. What two parts of a photo indicate accountability and verification?

2. Why are photos such an important part of news coverage:
   Give two reasons

3. Confusions? Comments? Suggestions?
Harnessing the Power of Images

1. Ethical Photos “Open the Freezer”: A photo credit declares who is accountable for the integrity of the image. The caption provides cross-checkable detail and provides the context that makes a depiction “faithful” to the truth.

2. Be skeptical of the too-perfect composition. Photo Journalism is documentation, not ornamentation and rarely looks Photoshop™ Perfect.

3. “News re-creations,” posed photo ops and “photo composites” are rarely reliable evidence of journalistic truth.

Ethical News Consumers Seek (and Share) Faithful Depictions

Blow Your Whistle when:
- Editing alters faithful depiction
- Addition of sounds alters reality
- Journalist pays the source/subject
- Journalist stages/recreates a scene
- No public good results from intrusion
- Missing context renders images unfaithful
- Journalist is not accountable (captions and credits missing or incomplete)

Visuals Drive Story Selection

Broadcast news-like dominoes story compared to same-day story slighted

“It took police dogs in Birmingham To sell civil rights in Des Moines.”
- Allard Lowenstein
Skewed, Distorted, Sensationalized?

Or, “seeking truth and providing a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues”

“Think Twice”

A Silent Minute to Absorb the Material

Harnessing the Power of Audio

1. Ethical Audio can “Open the Freezer,” providing direct evidence. A sign-off declares who is accountable for the integrity of the recording. Voice-overs provide cross-checkable detail and context.

2. Be skeptical of the too-perfect sonic detail. Audio journalism is evidence collection, not dramatic recreation. Real life does not come with a sound-track of mood music and sound-effects to emphasize turning points.

3. Seek transparency: The producer noting when a recording has been heavily cut or when interviews were recorded on different days, for instance.

What Is the Power and Peril of Recorded Audio?

Is this journalism that “…seeks truth and provides a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues”

-Codes of Ethics, Society of Professional Journalists
Wireless Podcasts

America’s Collective Memory On Audio Recordings

Edward R. Murrow during the Bombing of London and Adolph Hitler, Live

[Translation] “...if the international Jewish financiers in and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a World War, then the result will not be the Bolshevizing of the earth, and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.”

Audio is Powerful Verification

“After my election, I have more flexibility”

“We’re gonna win this”

NBC Original
The Power and Peril of Ambient Sound

Think of a Deer...

Sound Effects Change Meaning

What is the power and peril of images?

Is this journalism that “…seeks truth and provides a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues”?

- Code of Ethics, Society of Professional Journalists
AND NOWHERE ARE IMAGES MORE POWERFUL THAN ON TV.
STAY TUNED!