

## Recitation 04 - Know Your Neighborhood

### OBJECTIVE

Develop an in-depth discussion of “what is journalism and who is a journalist?” Why is it important in a digital 24/7 media world for news consumers to know what “neighborhood” they are in? Students will learn the first rule of News Literacy: Know which neighborhood you are in.

### Organization

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1. Take attendance
2. Emphasize the importance of keeping up with assignments (40% of final grade)

### News Quiz (Instructor is responsible for questions.)

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In addition to the questions you are developing from your discussion board, or other methods, we supply stock questions about lecture and about readings. See the Google documents folder of Quiz Questions.

1. Question 1
  - a. comments
2. Question 2
  - a. comments

### Recap Lecture

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The characteristics of journalism:

- **Verification:** evidence that establishes or confirms the accuracy or truthfulness of a particular account, story, or claim
- **Independence:** free from the control, influence, support, aid, etc., of interested parties; avoiding conflicts-of-interest and other situations that can affect one's work
- **Accountability:** subjecting oneself to the standards of other journalists and to oversight from one's peers; being responsible and answerable for one's work

A journalist's primary focus is to **inform** the public. Journalists should never intentionally deceive or manipulate (by omission or commission). A journalist's first obligation is to the **truth**.

### Review Assignments

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#### *Taxonomy Chart*

Students were assigned to bring a filled-in taxonomy chart they completed. You will have a

completed copy in the background material. Go over their ideas and the standard chart in detail. You can do this on the board in front of the room. Go over the definitions again and ask the students to give other examples. This is a key document for the course. We will post a clean and correct version, but it is important students actively work to fill it out on their own so they wrestle with the ideas and with the taxonomy process. The in-class review usually takes 15-20 minutes, and is the kind of lower-order-thinking work that forms a foundation for higher-order analysis later. So we don't make students think that these categories are too rigid, it would be good to stress the "blurring of the lines." That is, make it clear that a bit of information may have elements from multiple categories. If they can identify those elements, they'll be in good shape.

# A TAXONOMY OF INFORMATION NEIGHBORHOODS

	JOURNALISM	ENTERTAINMENT	ADVERTISING	PUBLICITY	PROPAGANDA	RAW INFORMATION
<b>GOAL</b>	<u>To Inform</u>	<u>To Amuse</u> or engage people during their leisure time in activities in which they are passive participants	<u>To Sell</u> goods, services by increasing their appeal to consumers	<u>To Promote</u> talent/personalities by increasing their visibility	<u>To Build Mass Support</u> for an ideology by canonizing its leaders or demonizing its opposition	<u>To Bypass</u> institutional filters and distribution costs in order to Sell, Publicize, Advocate, Entertain, and Inform
<b>METHODS</b>	Verification Independence Accountability	Story-telling, performance, the visual arts & music	Paid Advertising staged events, sponsorships, product placement, web sites...	Public Relations activities. Press releases, public statements, staged events, web sites, viral videos, etc	One-sided accounts or outright lies, relying on emotional manipulation through images, appeals to majority values and fallacious reasoning	Facebook, YouTube, blogs, Twitter, websites, website comment sites, chain email, text message forwarding, flyers, graffiti
<b>PRACTITIONERS</b>	Reporters, Photographer/ Videographers, Editors, Producers	Actors, Musicians, Writers, Producers	Ad agencies,	Publicists, public relations experts, government spokespersons	Political operatives and organizations	Anyone with a web connection, photocopier, or can of paint
<b>OUTCOME</b>	Empowers citizens by educating them	Distraction from or changed view of daily life. Reinforcement or critique of social norms	Increased sales of products and services	Higher fees for talent being promoted	Helps an ideological group seize or maintain power, by influencing public opinion and motivating the public to take action consistent with the ideology	Outlet for self-expression, entertainment, promotion, advocacy, propaganda

*Applying VIA to the neighborhoods concept.*

	<b>Verification</b>	<b>Independence</b>	<b>Accountability</b>
<b>News</b>	An essential part of journalism is ensuring that stories are accurate and truthful.	In order to be fair and accurate, journalists must not fall prey to outside influence. Their goal is to inform the public.	Journalists and news organizations stand by their work, take responsibility for their methods and content, admit when they are wrong.
<b>Entertainment</b>	Dramatic storytelling often trumps truth and accuracy. Entertainers' goal is to amuse.	Entertainers are not really concerned with independence.	Entertainers usually stand by the quality of their work.
<b>Promotion</b>	Though laws prevent outright deception in ads and publicity, exaggeration and one-sidedness are the hallmarks of promotion.	Promotion is inherently not independent; the people doing the promotion have a vested interest in the thing or person being promoted.	It is often not apparent which ad agencies and publicity firms produce promotional materials.
<b>Propaganda</b>	Truthfulness and accuracy are the enemies of propaganda, which seeks to deceive and demonize with the purpose of rallying people to a cause or party.	Inherently not independent.	Propagandists are often opportunistic, attach themselves to a cause for their own benefit.
<b>Raw Information</b>	At this stage information has not been filtered or verified.	May or may not be, but it can be difficult to tell.	Often anonymous, especially on line, where user names and aliases disguise the people who share information.

## *YouTube Video Assignment*

YouTube Video Assignment – discussion and debate: Push students to use/refer to the taxonomy during this discussion of the You Tube Videos assignment.

Are the **YouTube** clips that we posted on Blackboard journalism or unfiltered information? Can discuss what the proper name for information on the Internet is? Raw? Unfiltered? Can show the clips if you have a computer capable classroom, but watching these was part of the assignment. Discuss each clip:

### **1. Clip Produced by Military or other Organizations**

- a. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlNORX006-ch>
  - i. What neighborhood are you in?
  - ii. Who recorded it?
  - iii. Who are they answerable to?
  - iv. What process of verification did it go through?
  - v. Why is this not journalism or news?
  - vi. If students do not notice this, be sure to point out the source of each video.
  - vii. Is this reliable information on which you can base a decision or action?

### **2. YouTube Clip from a News Network**

- a. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDWzZBqZKqY>
  - i. What neighborhood are we in?
  - ii. The reporter is identified.
    1. Does it have verification? Independence? Accountability?
    2. Discuss what we mean by these terms regarding this video.
  - iii. Is this reliable information on which you can base a decision or action?
  - iv. Does anyone fear that this comes from someone other than CNN and was doctored on the Internet?

### **3. Random Clip by a Web User**

- a. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aE00804E8tc>
  - i. What neighborhood are you in?
  - ii. Who produced this video?
  - iii. What's their purpose seem to be?
  - iv. To whom is this person answerable?
  - v. Is being unaligned the same as independent?
  - vi. Is the creator of this video a journalist? Why or Why Not?
  - vii. Is this reliable information on which you can base a decision or action?

## **Class Discussion**

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### ***Who is a journalist?***

Is Jon Stewart a journalist? Why or why Not? Does he deserve this attention? Is he worth watching? Why? Why not? But is he a journalist? Is he independent? Does he verify his material? To whom is he accountable?

To distinguish journalists from non-journalists, test whether they meet the important criteria mentioned above:

- focuses above all else on informing the public
- subjects work to a disciplined-level of verification and transparency
- stands behind work and is accountable for it
- does not subjugate journalistic mission to other interests (e.g. financial or personal gain) or otherwise compromise independence
- does not intentionally deceive, manipulate information, or place entertaining an audience above the value of telling the truth

Ask: by these standards, do you think Jon Stewart qualifies as a journalist? What about other prominent public figures sometimes considered journalists, like Bill O'Reilly, Rachel Maddow, or Julian Assange? If students know who Morgan Spurlock and Anthony Bourdain are, they might be interested to know that they will be hosting weekend shows on CNN. Does that make CNN more of an entertainment network (at least on weekends)? See:

<http://cnnpressroom.blogs.cnn.com/2012/08/23/cnn-announces-morgan-spurlock-as-second-original-non-fiction-series-to-air-on-weekends/>

[http://www.mediabistro.com/tvnewser/anthony-bourdain-reveals-new-details-on-his-cnn-show-parts-unknown\\_b155951](http://www.mediabistro.com/tvnewser/anthony-bourdain-reveals-new-details-on-his-cnn-show-parts-unknown_b155951)

### ***Un-blurring the Lines Between Journalism and Other Information***

It can be instructive to use one topic or issue to illustrate the different information neighborhoods. For instructors with A/V equipment in their classrooms, perhaps this National Rifle Association video, which accuses Pres. Obama of hypocrisy for letting his daughters have armed guards while expressing skepticism about having armed guards in schools. The video has elements of publicity, political ads, and propaganda. And it's a timely story. Here's the link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=miSjgv1MH7s>

## **Announcements**

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As usual, check with your Lecturer to see how they have modified assignments. This week's assignments typically require students to:

1.

## **Additional Material**

### *Extra YouTube Clip*

A report from the Pentagon Channel that looks like journalism, but is not independent.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84yoe42p6eo>