

1

WHAT IS NEWS?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to

- Define the elements of news.
- Describe the state of the industry and learn current media trends.
- Identify different types of journalism and their function in society and at news organizations.
- Explain how digital products affect the industry and shape content creation.
- Consider journalism as a business, product, and service.
- Define the meaning of fake news and how to battle that rhetoric with facts.

LEADING OFF

Journalism has always mattered, but never more than now when the importance of having truthful, factual, and objective stories to counter social media accounts that deeply influence large percentages of the population. Mix together “fake news” and talking heads who share their opinions, and you have a recipe for the unrest with media, content, and platform distrust. Good journalism can combat this phenomenon.

Journalists are trained to be objective and present both sides of a story so an audience can be educated and weigh facts and make their own judgments. It is a news company’s responsibility to hire storytellers who present balance, do the research, write, and report with a strong emphasis on style and accountability.

And then there is you—yes, YOU. You are the student journalist being trained to be the best version of yourself. That means you can sniff out a story, define the value of the news, find the facts that matter, provide context with strong reporting, source the information, interview the subjects, and write a story that will inform an audience. You will also be able to tell that story in different ways through words, videos, photos, or graphics. You can best define the maximum value of distribution of your content through different platforms.

The state of the industry is constantly in flux—meaning it’s evolving. While some publications shutter and others burst onto the scene, the purpose and core of their existence has never mattered more: to report the news! If you are going to school for a journalism degree and aspire to tell stories for a living, you are entering a noble field that offers great power and responsibility. Don’t let anyone tell you differently. Journalism is a powerful aspect of a living and breathing democracy.

Freedom of the press is very real as journalists provide their audience a voice to explore issues, to hold those in power accountable, and inform on basic news and information that matter, whether it's about government, education, or health. Fired up yet? I am. Let's do this.

THE VALUE OF NEWS

So you want to be a journalist? Before you write a single word or shoot one clip of a video and before you head to an event for reporting, you should assess the value of every story opportunity. Is it newsworthy? Who cares about it? Who is impacted? Where did it happen? Is it interesting? Does it involve any notable figures? Is there a bigger issue that affects a larger group of people? These may seem like logical questions and they are, but a trained journalist should react quickly to story ideas and know exactly why they are reporting on something. These questions are a barometer check on if and why journalists should cover something.

If a story has *legs*, a term thrown around often in newsrooms, that means the story is worth telling and will be relevant to the audience for some time. Maybe it has a follow-up story. There could be potential for a series or larger piece of journalism. At the very least, you know that if it has one of the news characteristics of timeliness, proximity, impact, prominence, is bizarre, presents relevance, conflict, or human interest, it should be told.

In countless textbooks and journalism resources, you'll see those eight characteristics of news value. But let me tell you something: *We're extending the list*. Hold the phone—yes, we can do that here. Yes, things change and evolve. As platforms and content interests change and people expect increased amounts of content, there are more elements of news that serve audiences and their consumption habits. The additional elements of news include reaction, resourcefulness, entertainment, stickiness, and advocacy.

In many cases, some of these news values are interchangeable and relate to one another. For example, a prominent figure, like the mayor of a village, could make news for money laundering and fraud, and that story is important for timeliness, proximity, and impact. When you have a story that checks multiple boxes, then it's even more important to tell (see Figure 1.1).

FIGURE 1.1 ■ Elements of News



Let's look at news values and begin to build an understanding of how they help establish editorial ideation in news.

Timeliness

If a news moment is happening right now, especially in a breaking-news situation, and if the reportable material explains what is happening NOW, what's NEW, and what is NEXT, then tell that story based on its **timeliness**. There is no greater news rush for both a reporter and a reader than to know what happens as quickly as possible. Of course, make sure the information is credible and fact-checked before rushing to post something.

Oregon health officials said Thursday that federal officials are investigating the death of a woman in her 50s who developed a rare blood clot and low platelets within 2 weeks of receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine against COVID-19. —Associated Press (Flaccus, 2021)

Proximity

When a story takes place in a specific location, its news value is **proximity**. This is most prevalent in community journalism since local neighborhood news is extremely important for the folks living in certain areas. Don't forget that news about the weather is ultra-important, and you don't have to be a meteorologist to get this information to your audience. Consider weather updates as a method of digital engagement for proximity-based content. Likewise, news about traffic, roads, and infrastructure has significant value to residents commuting to work, driving to schools, or simply getting around for daily errands.

The Windy City beat out New York and Atlanta to host next year's Democratic National Convention, which will take place at the United Center from Aug. 19 to 22, 2024. President Joe Biden and Democratic National Committee Chairman Jaime Harrison selected Chicago at the end of a rigorous site selection process led by DNC Director of Convention Planning Alex Hornbrook. —Chicago Defender (Roebuck, 2023)

Impact

Impact can be defined by how many people are affected by the story. The larger the story, the more impact and the more value it has. This is not to say that stories smaller in nature and value are not worth being told, but a great impact may mean more space, words, and resources for the story and coverage.

Two of the nation's largest university systems say they intend to require COVID-19 vaccinations for all students, faculty and staff on University of California and California State University campuses this fall. —Associated Press (Gecker, 2021)

Prominence

One of the most important elements of journalism is to hold people in power accountable. Whether it's a school superintendent or politician, a business executive, or a celebrity, if someone has **prominence** in their role in society, there is large interest in their stories. The example below concerns the British Royal Family and how every move they make is international news.

Prince Harry has flown home to California—missing the Queen's first birthday as a widow—amid growing evidence that his visit to the U.K. did not significantly improve “strained” relations with his father and brother despite some positive signs. —The Daily Beast (Sykes, 2021)

Bizarre

Odd, **bizarre**, unique, out of the ordinary, you name it. If it's weird, wild, and makes your eyes pop, it fits in this category.

It's not unusual for rocks and other debris to crash through a windshield and injure a driver or passenger—but a turtle? A 71-year-old woman riding with her daughter on Florida's Interstate 95 suffered a gashed forehead Wednesday when a turtle smashed through the windshield of their car, striking her, the Daytona Beach News-Journal reports. —Associated Press (2021)

Relevance

What's most important right now? Who cares? Is it trending on social media or data dashboards? Gravitate toward the topics that people are talking about. You can localize national and international stories, too, and get traction for stories not necessarily in your coverage area by relating topics of **relevance** to your **beat** and community of coverage.

Drivers are starting to feel some sticker shock when they top off their tanks as gas prices surge. As gas prices hit their highest point during the pandemic, experts say things are only going to get worse. The average price per gallon on Long Island is \$2.60, which has increased 4 cents in a week and 6 cents higher than this date last year. —News 12 Long Island (2021)

Conflict

Any form of **conflict**, or struggle between two sides, makes for a strong news story. It also makes your life somewhat easier knowing there are two sides to that story, but reporting is needed to flush out the details.

A heated legal dispute between billionaire investor Bill Gross and his tech-entrepreneur neighbor is now in the hands of an Orange County Superior Court judge, as hearings that included allegations of voyeurism and loops of high-decibel sitcom theme songs came to an end Wednesday. —The Mercury News (Emery, 2020)

Human Interest

Human interest relates to stories about people with interesting storylines of adversity, goodwill, spirit, and characterization of the human psyche. Are the subjects you hope to write about interesting? Do they have a unique story to tell? Time to write a profile. These are often some of the best stories to tell, and you should aim to do this often very early in your career. The more people you speak to, the better you will become at asking the right questions and getting proper context and details.

For years, Aaron Rodgers kept his life away from football as private as possible. Now, the Green Bay Packers quarterback wants to help fans, industry people, and potential marketing partners get to know him and his fellow athletes better. Rodgers has partnered with actor/producer Ryan Rittman to form the website Online Sports Database (OSDB), which debuted this week. They want it to be the sports version of the TV/movie site IMDb. —ESPN (Demovsky, 2021)

Reaction

Get people's **reaction** to relevant topics. In this case, the story is not specifically the trending topic, but what people think about it. Their reaction represents a viewpoint shared by many—not all, but many. This content generation is doable through content known as MOS or “man on

the street,” asking random people their thoughts on topics. If gas prices are increasing dramatically in your community due to political decisions out of their control, what better reaction than to grab people at the local gas pumps to get their take. You can also do this remotely via social media by asking the audience to comment on just about anything. If you’re gathering reaction from digital or social platforms, be mindful of not using anonymous accounts that are unverifiable or individuals posing as someone they’re not.

Business owners on Main Street in Branford say the area around Cherry Hill Road is tight knit, so it came as a surprise Wednesday afternoon when officials named Matthew Walker as the shooting suspect and no one really knew much about him. John Chambers is the owner of Shelly’s Garden Center and said a few weeks ago he helped Walker get inside his apartment next door when he was locked out. He didn’t think much about him. —NBC Connecticut (Jones, 2021)

Resourcefulness

How are you helping your readers with knowledge that will keep them informed, safe, and knowledgeable? **Resourcefulness** can come in the form of longform news stories or quick hitting listicles and guides that are easy to follow. Something as basic as a weather report is resourceful for commuters. A story about the top places to eat during restaurant week or environmental tips during Earth Day all go a long way in helping an audience. When it comes to more serious topics, like vaccine or virus information during a pandemic, these simple-to-follow guideline pieces, sourced through organizations like the CDC, could mean the matter between life and death for some readers.

The noble Florentine family of Marquises Antinori have been wine producers since 1325, when Giovanni di Piero Antinori entered the Arte Fiorentina dei Vinattieri, the Florentine Winemakers Guild. Antinori was recently voted “The World’s Most Admired Wine Brand 2023” by a jury of experts composed of masters of wine, sommeliers, buyers, journalists, and industry experts from throughout the world. This marks the first time a prestigious Italian winery is positioned at number one. Just a few months ago, the Marchesi Antinori Company itself was awarded the title of “World’s Best Vineyards 2022.” —America Domani (Benzoni, 2023)

Entertainment

From sports and **entertainment** to arts, drama, culture, and book reviews, people have endless interests. This also means there are endless content verticals that fall into this news value bucket.

The moment Lucia Scotti found out her mother had scored club-level seats for a recent Baltimore Orioles game, she raced to grab her mitt. The 10-year-old was going to the ballpark with one mission and one mission only—even if her parents did everything, they could warn her that she would probably go all day without putting her glove to work. “I just need you to know, it’s very hard to get a foul ball,” Katie Scotti told her daughter. “I’ve been to a lot of games, and I’ve never gotten a foul ball.” —Wall Street Journal (Beaton, 2021)

Stickiness

Is it shareable? Will people engage on social media about it? Will it turn into viral or trending content? If you have a story that presents strong digital value, then ride it on the proper platforms and make sure your social strategy enhances the offering. You should be assessing the value of stories based on digital and social metrics and have a gut feeling on what could potentially have **stickiness** on digital.

The South Slough of the Coos River is a beautiful place. Eelgrass flourishes within the shallow tidal waters of the estuary. Harbor seals haul out on the tideflats at low tide. Herons hunt along the shorelines while juvenile salmon mature in shady side channels before heading out to saltwater. Elk graze and bald eagles nest in tall cedars. This is the place where Coquille Elder Tom Younker was cited by Oregon State Fish and Wildlife officers in 2011. Younker's supposed infraction was harvesting clams, which he and his people have done since time immemorial. But in the eyes of the state, Younker should have gotten the same permit required for non-Indigenous fishers and followed rules set by state authorities, not the guidelines put in place by tribal government. —Indian Country Today (Walker, 2023)

Advocacy

This is fact-based journalism with a well-defined editorial viewpoint. **Advocacy** journalism has existed since the 1800s, and we've seen notable writers like Nelly Bly and Ida B. Wells work hard at reporting facts while helping make change. The genre exists today from the largest media outlets like the *New York Times* to nontraditional outlets like ProPublica or the Cato Institute.

The 2022 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) authorizes \$80 billion in additional funding over 10 years for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), with the lion's share going to increased enforcement. The Biden administration claims that the funding—enough to double the IRS workforce—will lead to the collection of hundreds of billions of dollars of unpaid taxes. Even if those higher revenues are realized, they would come at a high cost to the private sector. Although increased enforcement is often characterized as combating tax cheats, more-aggressive IRS enforcement would likely mean strong-armed actions against millions of individuals and businesses who are either blameless or who have made good-faith efforts to comply with the federal tax code, including middle- and lower-income Americans who are the least able to defend themselves. —Cato Institute (Henchman, 2023)

MINI ASSIGNMENT: APPLY NEWS VALUE TO WHAT YOU READ

Using each of the elements of news value in this section, find different stories from different publications to label the type of news. Provide a link and a brief description that defines why something is "sticky" or "entertainment" or "resourceful." Show an example for every news element.

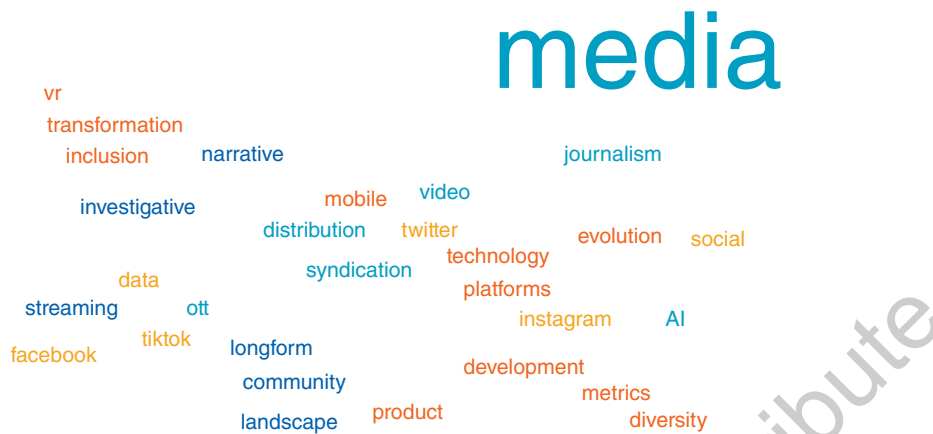
STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

In many ways, the flow of this book reflects the changing aspects of the industry. Almost every chapter includes major elements related to storytelling, the business of journalism, and audience engagement. At the simplest level, journalism strives to provide objective stories to an audience. When you consider the evolving nature of innovation, revenue, and personnel, journalism becomes more complicated. For decades, economic factors dictated distribution methods of media and impacted the way journalists told and reacted to stories. Today, the state of the industry is not about writing and reporting at large, but the workforce, organizational flows, audience consumption, and development through journalism education (Figure 1.2).

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FIGURE 1.2 ■ State of the Industry



Journalism's Role in Society

Journalism serves, protects, and informs. Based on news and information they trust, people are able to make better decisions in their lives. Reporters are the eyes and ears of the community; they hold the powerful accountable and tell the stories of the people and places that deserve the attention and coverage for their specific news value. Journalists, as you'll learn in this text, have a specific set of skills to find information and present information in a way the audience will understand. This is all possible because of a free press in a democratic society.

Diversity and Inclusion (D&I)

Newsroom staffs should reflect the area they cover. It takes a strong recruitment and management system to align staffing with community standards and expectations. A diverse staff that has varying experiences and backgrounds make for a more balanced and unique editorial experience in editorial decision-making, community outreach, and storytelling. Is this perfect at every news organization? Absolutely not. Are organizations such as the National Association of Black Journalists or the National Association of Hispanic Journalists advocating for their members? Certainly. There is still plenty of work to do in the industry to educate and build more professional development plans that speak to diversity and inclusion (D&I). There are historically Black colleges in need of building bigger journalism programs. There are communities situated in impoverished areas with high school students lacking funding or inspiration to gain an understanding of media to one day have a career in journalism. There are newsrooms that have not evolved with hiring and an adjustment of editorial decision-making to have a more diverse and inclusive content plan. You will read more about the topic of D&I in Chapter 4.

How Stories Are Told (and Consumed)

There is A LOT of content to consume—sometimes too much and sometimes never enough. We have seen the steady growth of new platforms and mediums dictate where consumers go for news. The easy delivery of content to inboxes, headphones, desktop screens, and social media channels has grown exponentially in recent years. These forms continue to evolve for storytellers and media companies. Companies have found ways to generate more and different revenue, while journalists have developed different specializations and interests in reaching their audience.

You might find someone who writes niche-focused daily newsletters on a news team, just as you'd find a journalist who specializes in investigative reporting. There are some contemporary

storytellers who only produce audio journalism or others who specialize in TikTok, while some are gifted graphic designers and can spin data into visual content. Find your focus, harness your passion, and you can tell stories that drive interest for any number of audiences hungry to consume news and information in the way they feel most comfortable. The state of the industry is about flexibility and convenience, and, of course, growth.

Here are some emerging areas to consider:

- **LIVE video:** You don't need to be on television to broadcast live. With features like Facebook Live, Instagram Live, X Live (formerly Twitter Live), or YouTube Live, content creators have continuously gotten closer to their audiences by going live whenever the moment permits.
- **Video is king:** Online video, video packages, vertical video for social media, streaming video, and short caption/text-focused video all help inform an audience tied to their phone. It's accessible on a desktop, too, but mobile visibility is just so important today.
- **Data visualization** and **interactive presentations:** Graphic designers and engineers keep getting smarter and more creative. They are presenting news and information in unimaginable ways that are both easy to consume and keep people clicking and scrolling. This is not to say you, as a journalist, need to be able to code or design, but you should have the organizational and interpersonal skills to work cross-functionally with those groups to help convey your story. It's story, data, and vision that can come to life with their help and skill. Teamwork is key.
- **Streaming:** Media companies continue to create more video and find ways to tell stories for larger audiences on **OTT** (over-the-top, meaning beyond broadcast television) platforms like Hulu, Roku, Amazon Fire, Apple TV, Pluto, Plex, Tubi, Local Now, and many others. There can be apps custom built for those platforms or feeds custom curated with fresh video daily. Remember that all media companies can do this with the proper resources. It's not limited to video or broadcast-centric organizations.
- **Drones:** They capture magnificent video and images and offer a new perspective and depth on everything from blazing fires, accidents, crime scenes, or beautiful landscapes.
- **Social messaging:** It's not exactly new, but sites and apps like Reddit and Clubhouse—and dozens more—are locations to mine for comments, story ideas, and sources for information.
- **VR, or virtual reality:** It's still new and not yet defined how the full industry will adapt to it. Places like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have larger resources to invest in this technology that offers a unique video experience and brings consumers to a virtual location. Keep an eye on how this will evolve.

Content Areas of Note

Journalism's core content areas are defined by what society cares about most and revolves around local news, policy, government and politics, and entertainment. How does the news affect the audience, and why do they care? It is based on personal interest (entertainment), community (local), personal well-being (policy), and personal freedom (government and politics). Everything funnels to those buckets. What matters most today may not be the focus of news stories tomorrow.

There will always be stories on crime, but there are also increasingly important stories about police reform. There will always be stories on weather, but climate change has been a hot-button issue to report on for much of the last generation. Race and diversity have also been main topics of news and have been amplified by many content areas associated with policy, business, health, sports, and other beats.

Community journalism is broad, but covering a local area is very important. Investigative journalism continues to uncover meaningful stories that help serve the greater good and create change or show wrongdoing. Throughout this text, we'll break down these areas of journalism and more as they not only define the state of journalism but have defined the entire profession for more than a century.

What Else Matters Today?

Call this the “everything else” bucket because there are just so many important things to mention in a section on the state of the industry. In many ways, this text is a road map for writers and reporters to navigate the state of the industry, but hopefully, this first chapter serves as a guide for things to consider. We'll open each one and break down details and information over the next 13 chapters.

Product Development

Apps, websites, and interactive features continue to evolve, and one of my biggest asks is that all modern and new storytellers have a firm understanding of **product development**, how their content should be displayed and how digital teams can display content in impactful and meaningful ways for audiences. You don't have to be an engineer and know code. You should have the knowledge of how to display data and assess multimedia value for every story you cover for the rest of your career. Digital platforms and tools, commonly referred to as news products, will help in this journey.

Platform Curiosity

You're a journalist. Don't just be curious and ask questions for stories; be curious about emerging platforms and how they can help the audience stay informed. Try whatever is new. Test it. Think about it. Scope out a plan and share with your news managers.

Journalism Start-Ups

Journalists hungry to tell stories have been kick-starting their own brands and platforms. They can tell stories, and they're going deeper into the business side to be publishers. You need an entrepreneurial mindset to grow, build, and conquer challenges, but it has happened continuously and will continue to define the expanding depths of digital media.

Integration and Convergence

How can we break silos? How can we get digital news people to work with video teams, product teams, and reporters to combine and integrate content forms for the best possible outcome? Can a broadcast news team show digital polls and social comments on air? Can a website populate a long-form narrative with clips of audio journalism? Can an assignment desk in a newsroom tell reporters to focus on Facebook Live when they get to a crime scene and then send in photos to the digital desk before writing a 500-word story and producing a 2-minute video package? **Convergence or integration** of platforms and story forms is to understand the various players in the news organization.

Transformation and Evolution

I'd say the same thing in 1950 as in 2000 and as in 2020 and beyond: We need to constantly evolve as people and as organizations and with process. Transform in accordance with trends, data, and

consumption habits, while measuring adjustments with objectives and goals. Try to be a trendsetter and take chances on how you tell stories, but do it with conviction, purpose, and a way to track results. As eventual news leaders, make decisions that help the organization you work for, especially at your campus media outlets where you are growing in the craft and expanding as interpersonal communicators. The strides you make as student journalists will define your work ethic, possibly for the rest of your career. This is the time to break out of your comfort zone. Don't settle for mediocrity. Be great, be detailed, have a plan, and evolve with the story and audience in mind, harnessing a deep understanding of platform development and tactics.

MINI ASSIGNMENT: POLL YOUR CLASSMATES AND PEERS ON THEIR CONSUMPTION HABITS

Using your classmates and school peers, conduct a poll to determine where they consume media. Develop three to five survey questions that map out the platforms and types of media and then dive deeper on the subject area and story content. Leave options for people to fill in the blank because there are many options. Also consider asking people to rank their media sources in order of most use. Finally, write a story about the survey results and report back to your class with the findings. Consider speaking to at least 10 to 15 people so there is a critical mass of data.

DEEP DIVE: MATT HALL



Matt Hall

Courtesy of Matt Hall

other newspapers in California and New Hampshire. He is a graduate of the University of New Hampshire and past president of the San Diego chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. He is on X @SDUncovered.

Matthew T. Hall is SPJ's 104th national president. He is the editorial and opinion director at the San Diego Union-Tribune, where he manages the Ideas and Opinion section, writing and editing editorials and overseeing editorial cartoons, commentaries, letters to the editor, and multiple podcasts. Previously, he managed the newsroom's social media, was a metro columnist, and worked as a beat reporter. He has reported at

What's something you wish someone told you when you took your first journalism class?

End every interview with some version of these two questions: "Is there anything I didn't ask that I should've or that we didn't discuss but should've?" and "Who else should I talk to?"

Define the current state of journalism.

Journalism is at a crossroads, still able and needed to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable, but increasingly losing trust. External forces are weaponizing fake news against us, but we are also suffering from self-inflicted wounds. As journalists, we need to include more and myriad voices in our work, correct our mistakes quickly and publicly, and listen to critics but not get trapped in fights with trolls. You can spend time in an X fight or time doing journalism, diversifying sources, and building trust with your audiences. Do that instead. We all need to think through and better explain to our communities what makes journalism so crucial, and we all need to consider what will boost our integrity and how to involve more people.

What is your personal assessment on the value of news? What is news to you?

News is the engine that makes the world go around, that builds strong communities, that fosters healthy civic dialogue. News stories make for stronger policy and change laws, a more informed electorate and candidate pool, an angrier and sadder and happier and more ecstatic public. We are truth-tellers, but we can't expect the public to know, appreciate, or even understand that. We must openly communicate with our sources, subjects, and neighbors what our intentions and goals are, and impress upon them what will happen with fewer journalists around as independent eyes and ears in a community. That's something to impart as well: We are **part** of our communities, not separate from them. Local journalism matters.

In an era where the term *fake news* is used often and media literacy is not embraced enough, how can modern storytellers battle media stereotypes and embrace their craft?

Modern journalists need to meet their audiences where they are. Whether you find them online or in coffee shops, talk to your readers, listeners, and viewers—treat them with respect. Listen to their criticism and compliments. Really understand what they are saying. Don't dismiss them unless they are being dismissive. Lastly and most importantly, make sure your sources and stories and social media networks and newsroom staff are diverse. Be inclusive.

Media has been emerging for a century now, but things are rapidly changing. What's your advice on grasping these changes, while remaining objective and truthful?

Change is faster and more constant than it's ever been. That fast pace will likely only increase. In storytelling, the medium may change, but the underlying framework shouldn't: The need to be truthful, fair, transparent, independent, and ethical will keep being crucial. Be those things.

Anything else you want to add along these themes worth sharing for student empowerment?

My best advice for students is this: When you go to job interviews, remember you are interviewing them as much as they are interviewing you. Don't take a job because you need it. Take a job because you want it. It's **your** career, and there will be other opportunities. You will obviously want to work at a place where you will thrive, so ask interviewers questions like how they demonstrate that they value diversity, both to their audiences and staffs, and how they protect their journalists' mental health, and how they are trying to build a better

community and business model. The bottom line is that a free press isn't free, journalism costs money, and less journalism costs society. We are part of the communities that we live in. We're in this together.

TYPES OF JOURNALISM

So. Many. Categories. Of. Journalism. If you have a passion or interest, then write about it. Some content areas are more obvious on a college campus because—like sports or general assignment reporting—some are developed over a period as you expand the types of stories you cover. Remember, everything and everyone is a story, and they fit into the content buckets in this section.

Let's get a working understanding of journalism types so you can understand the content sections of a news organization, but also to open your eyes and interests for other things to tell stories about (Table 1.1). And then when you're done skimming the text, immediately email your school paper editors, campus radio station directors, or college television station managers with story ideas. As our friends at Nike say, JUST DO IT. Journalism is only as good as YOU, the writer and reporter.

These forms of journalism are methods of storytelling, more so than a genre. It's worth a mention as you fill up your personal journalism dictionary. Learn more about beats and content areas in Chapter 6!

Photojournalism

Photography is powerful. Capture the moment that can live forever. Tell a story through a lens. Remember that you still need to gather detail on every photo—the same who, what, where, when, why, and how. This context is important for describing every detail of the photo for when it is presented

TABLE 1.1 ■ Twelve Types of Journalism

<p>General assignment: General assignment journalism is catch-all content. Generally, there are reporters in news organizations who are assigned to cover "general news" and wait until random stories come in to the assignment desk. This is some of the most valuable early-career experience that reporters gain because they are thrown into so many stories with varying topics. Sink or swim. Adapt or die. And always grow.</p>	<p><i>Story examples:</i> Stories range from human interest to breaking news.</p>
<p>Community journalism: Is there anything more important than the news in your own backyard? Community journalism serves local communities. Often referred to as neighborhood news or hyperlocal news, this is highly focused content on specific areas. It's very possible to localize national and international stories and generate local reaction to basically anything happening in the world. This is also extremely important journalism because it defines news and information about tax dollars, education, crime, and trending topics that have an impact on you, your family, and neighbors.</p>	<p><i>Story examples:</i> Stories range in coverage from schools and local village, county, or town governments to police and fire departments, nonprofits, civic associations, and profiles about local people of interest.</p>

TABLE 1.1 ■ Twelve Types of Journalism (*Continued*)

Investigative journalism: Reporters and editors who investigate stories of wrongdoing, corruption, or anomalies report on the facts of their findings. Some define this form of journalism as “discovering the truth.”

Story examples: It’s wide-ranging. Looking at recent winners of the Pulitzer Prize—one of the highest honors for journalism in the United States—for investigative reporting, you can see some depths in coverage:

- **Brian M. Rosenthal of the *New York Times* (2020)** For an exposé of New York City’s taxi industry that showed how lenders profited from predatory loans that shattered the lives of vulnerable drivers, reporting that ultimately led to state and federal investigations and sweeping reforms.
- **Matt Hamilton, Harriet Ryan, and Paul Pringle of the *Los Angeles Times* (2019)** For consequential reporting on a University of Southern California gynecologist accused of violating hundreds of young women for more than a quarter century.
- **Staff of the *Washington Post* (2018)** For purposeful and relentless reporting that changed the course of a Senate race in Alabama by revealing a candidate’s alleged past sexual harassment of teenage girls and subsequent efforts to undermine the journalism that exposed it. (The Pulitzer Prizes, 2022)

Watchdog journalism: Not to be looped in with investigative, **watchdog journalism** is the process of holding others accountable, while investigative journalists look deeper into details and uncover wrongdoing not recognized without that level of reporting. It’s important that the organization conducting the watchdog journalism is regulated and held accountable, too, so that the reporting is objective.

Story examples: Holding police departments accountable on the use of body cam footage; reporting on the government impact of ground pollution in neighborhoods and coverup of information.

Political journalism: Covering government, politics, and policy at the local, regional, national, and international levels allows citizens to stay informed about some of the most important aspects of society that affect them. This form of journalism also holds powerful elected officials and their staff accountable. In political journalism, it’s vital to keep it simple so a broad range of readers can understand all aspects of the topic. The last thing a reporter should do is write something that a reader cannot understand. This also should provide readers (voters!) with enough information to make their own opinion about issues. Remember, this is about truth and objectivity and covers both sides of every issue.

Story examples: News about elections, voting, policy issues being debated by political leaders, amendments to bills, political stances on important issues, and the inevitable infighting between politicians and pundits on those same key issues.

TABLE 1.1 ■ **Twelve Types of Journalism (Continued)**

<p>Environmental journalism: Journalists must collect, verify, and produce content about the environmental landscape and how it affects society. This is heavy on science, and writers should be well versed in all aspects of the environment and current trends.</p>	<p><i>Story examples:</i> Topics might include water supply, atmosphere, climate, biodiversity, illness, agriculture, energy, sustainability, disasters, forestry, transportation, and population.</p>
<p>Criminal-justice journalism: These journalists cover crime, courts, police, and prison beats. They write as much about alleged crime, court verdicts, and sentencing as they do reform and injustice.</p>	<p><i>Story examples:</i> Be able to write about a breaking-news crime story as much as you can cover a trial or write about changes to the criminal-justice system based on policy changes from elected leaders.</p>
<p>Medicine, health, and science journalism: Connect the dots. Medicine and health stories are often related to science. Having a strong understanding of these vital news areas will take lengthy research and asking the right questions from the right sources. The better you understand impacts of medicine or important information about public health, the more you can inform an audience. There has been no greater and important time in medical, health, and science journalism than covering the COVID-19 pandemic. Keep in mind that there are varying opinions when it comes to medicine and science. Presenting the facts with balance and very strong sourcing will allow the readers to decipher the details needed to make informed decisions.</p>	<p><i>Story examples:</i> Public health (and its crises), outbreaks, research, tests, trials, resource guides, hospital infrastructure, how-to and need-to-know pieces, and all content that can define mental, physical, and social well-being are possible topics.</p>
<p>Business and trade journalism: Covering the economy, financial sector, and business field involves analysis, interpretation, and a clear explanation to the audience of news and information that has a major impact on them. Topics extend to local, national, and international business. Stories in this genre also bleed into government and politics, and, in some cases, all other areas of journalism you can cover—for example, the business of sports and the business of health.</p>	<p><i>Story examples:</i> You might write about interest rates or the price of gas or tell stories about the average home cost or a local business opening on Main Street.</p>
<p>Sports and entertainment journalism: While this category may seem self-explanatory, sports journalism is far more than game recaps, and entertainment journalism is deeper than movie reviews. Telling in-depth stories about the people, organizations, and moments involved allow an audience to appreciate the content even more. Not everything is fun and games, and not everything is cookie cutter in nature when it comes to creating context. Try to think outside the box to find story ideas that resonate so your sports or entertainment journalism is different from so many others trying to write those same stories.</p>	<p><i>Story examples:</i> From profiles on star players or entertainers to recaps of major events and moments associated with teams and organizations, these genres feature content about all levels of sports and entertainment from amateur to pro.</p>

TABLE 1.1 ■ Twelve Types of Journalism (Continued)

Weather, disasters: News about impending weather, as small as a rainstorm or as large as a hurricane, is all vitally important to the safety of readers. This news can help them prepare for commutes, prepare their homes for possible damage, or protect themselves or families by leaving a certain area. Specific weather details should be transmitted and translated by trusted weather sources like WSI or Weather.com and given proper credit. Broadcast news outlets generally have a meteorologist who should be relied upon for information. Covering disasters is a larger task and comes with risks if reporters are in the field. This takes a strong understanding of the details before and after a disaster, plus a level of empathy, as they may be dealing with people who suffered loss or devastation. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—also known as NOAA—provides constant updates about weather and serves as a source for news organizations and meteorologists.

Story examples: You might write about basic storms to wind advisories, hurricanes to tornadoes, mud slides to avalanches, or torrential floods to hailstorms. Writing about good weather, sunny skies, and beach or lake weather is also part of the coverage responsibility.

Data-driven journalism: Numbers, numbers, numbers. These stories are led by the data gathered and reported and then presented in a decipherable way so that the audience knows the details without struggling to do math or deeper research on their own. This data, which can also be documents or other assets combined to offer a full story, should be accompanied by explanatory text so there is a lead paragraph, nut graph with more information, and the same who-what-where-when-why-and-how details to keep the reader fully informed. Also vitally important is the attribution of material and a way to show all sides of the story as well. **Data-driven journalism** offers journalists and media companies the ability to be creative in how they present the data. Aside from an understanding of the data gathered, use of digital tools to format and analyze the data is helpful in the process. This can be something more mainstream like Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets to custom third-party data-engineering platforms. This also probably means there is a team of journalists from writers and reporters to engineers and designers who help manufacture the data to a presentable outcome.

Story examples: You could show the differences between the wealth disparity between nations. Locally, show a drop or increase in school enrollment or school taxes over a period. Nationally, show the impact of vaccines in specific areas or regions. Elections, voting, and policy are all ripe for data stories as well. Think maps, colors, charts, and presentations.

on a platform. Every moment, in almost every situation, could generate an image: from mundane meetings to crime scenes to rallies of social unrest to kids selling lemonade in their driveway. Use your mind as a lens to visualize the impact of a moment and then capture it with a camera or your phone.

Broadcast Journalism

Television and radio-oriented storytelling is a major form of journalism. Make sure you take college courses in both! Be the most well-rounded storyteller you can be, even if you don't prefer one medium over another. Writing should be at the core of your ability, but go and get familiar with video, studios, and audio so you have a working knowledge of how to set up those stories.

Hard News, Features, and Editorial

There are three types of news to keep in mind: hard news, features, and editorial. Each has a defined style, structure, and tone.

- **Hard news**, which is the basis for almost everything in this book, provides the most important information in a concise format for readers to stay informed.
- **Features** are more detailed, perhaps longer in length and wide-ranging in topic, usually having enough information to be broken up into sections or include multiple layers of complementary content like photos.
- **Editorials** are opinion based and take a specific stance on behalf of an organization or individual. They present or defend arguments and stray from the fundamental objective nature of news and features.

MINI ASSIGNMENT: PONDER YOUR GOALS AND DREAM ASSIGNMENTS

As it stands today, what type of journalism and storytelling interests you the most? Why? What are your goals? Does anything listed in this section inspire you to set and reach those goals? Write a personal narrative about what inspires you in journalism and what you hope to get out of this course.

UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

This book has an underlying theme of digital, social, audience, and real-world tactics associated with content creation, but rather than wait until chapters specifically about digital, it's important to stress your understanding of this right from the beginning of the journey with this textbook and in journalism at-large. Digital cannot come secondary and is not something to worry about after your story is written or shot and edited. It should be top of mind and front burner in all instances. It should be at the foundation and core of your storytelling.

Too often, journalists, young and old, are not thinking about layering content for the sake of **multiplatform storytelling**. **Content layering** is the essence of using words, video, audio, social media, and graphics simultaneously to help tell a story. Not every story needs each one of those elements, but a story plan will help define your workload and keep things organized. Communicate with your editors to map out the best way to tell a story. If this means telling it one way on social media and another with video on a website, mobile app, and television, then do what's best for your multiplatform audiences. In some cases, you need to help create these layers,

but in many news organizations, there are digital and social teams who help cut, edit, and place content in communication with reporters from the field.

In an ideal workflow, a reporter is always in communication with their editors, either from the assignment desk of their direct section, or at smaller outlets, with the person who runs the whole ship. They'll know a note or two about where they are going and why they are gathering info for a story. When it comes to breaking news, there may be less information available, so the reporter must dig and gather whatever notes they can and be ready to relay that back to the digital team for placement on the website and brand's social media accounts. While this is happening, it's expected that the reporter will squeeze in time to alert their social media channels about updates as well.

With that same communication back to the desk—most likely via text or messaging apps like Slack or Teams so it's quicker—the network or org's social team can read and react and either share the reporter's posts directly or start to take those posts and embed them directly into the online article that has started since the reporter has been on the scene. This process continues until all news and information is relayed and available.

It's an **iterative approach to journalism**. If this is a television reporter, they may be doing stand-ups on camera throughout the process. If this is a reporter at a newspaper or online publication, they have already started writing the story on their phone. There is no sense in writing something hours later when the audience has the core news value from digital and social platforms at this point. And keep in mind, if you don't capture the info and relay online, then someone amongst the competition of news outlets covering the same event will do it first. That's not to say both organizations, or many, can't cover the same story, but you want to capture market share and make sure the audience views your platform's and not the competition's.

Social media and digital platforms extend far beyond the realm of breaking news. Every day, regular content flows constantly, and audiences continue to grow with varying consumption habits. At the very least, your goal is for the audience to interact with your content: share, comment, like, and favorite. The more interaction on content, the more likely other hands will click and other eyes will read. It's just as important for you to chase a good story and report with the best of your ability as it is for you to be digitally minded in all you do as a journalist.

Here are some other early takeaways and things to think about associated with digital and social platforms:

- **Know your tools:** How are you communicating with your team? How are you posting to digital and social? What is the easiest way for you to relay news and information? Those should be innate and inherent tools from the moment you get hired, and you should help build communication patterns that work for your organization. Other tools to consider are reporting tools—something we will speak in detail about in this book! It's important to have a working understanding of how to gather video, audio, and photos and how to publish in quick order.
- **Embrace multimedia:** This almost sounds like an older term—*multimedia*. But it still stands for visuals, whether it be video, audio, or graphics, or a combination of forms. So many journalism students go to school and say they want to be a writer. They want to tell stories with words. Outstanding, yes, I get it. I have a degree in “print journalism” and consider myself a writer first. But you'll benefit greatly by not only being able to write, but by understanding video, audio, and graphics. The more you can understand—maybe not master, but be able to sufficiently use—then the more you are marketable as a new hire, and the greater range in storytelling you'll have. Trust me, it's

worth the time to take some other courses outside of your current vision of storytelling and embrace those tactics and traits that the other professors specialize in and talk so passionately about. Be a jack of all trades rather than a master of one.

- **Break the silos:** Last but certainly not least is the possible legacy-minded sluggishness of news organizations to evolve and your place in making that a reality. There are many old-school individuals who are incapable of pushing change because it's not what they are used to, and that's okay. It takes new voices and different perspectives for organizations to adapt. Not every organization needs this—at least not at the onset—but many do, and many need to keep pushing the envelope on how they communicate, work together, and ultimately distribute the news. Be part of the process of **silo-breaking** with positivity, structured ideas, and a clear plan. Also be willing to take advice and guidance from others trying to help make change in the news business.

MINI ASSIGNMENT: MAKE A LIST AND CHECK IT TWICE

No, we're not trying to find out who's naughty or nice, but we do want you to cultivate social media lists of respected and trusted reporters to learn how to be strong with social media reporting. Using X-platform lists, put together a list of reporters from your school or hometown community and review the list of people in class. Be prepared to speak about why you put certain people on the social list and how you can use it to your benefit as both a news consumer and student of media.

JOURNALISM AS A BUSINESS

Make no mistake: Journalism is a business. Writing words and producing video to tell stories can be powerful, rewarding, and a privilege, as well as a key aspect of a democratic society, but companies need resources to pay staff, buy equipment, and maintain operational efficiencies. To manage a media company, you must have a business model that generates revenue for the company and allows employees to support themselves and their families. Reporters focus on journalism, while sales and business teams focus on growing the company. It helps, however, for the editorial team to understand the business and what goes into the full media ecosystem.

Avenues of Revenue Generation

Don't be alarmed—it's okay to understand the price of news and how your organization (and future places of employment) generate revenue and pay your salary (Table 1.2). It's my continued hope to have you completely in the know on all aspects of the business and operations of media. One day in the future, you may be a newsroom leader and executive making crucial business decisions.

Revenue

It's helpful to know about the business models of media and learn how your company makes revenue and profit. You may be your own publisher, so then it's even more important to learn and

TABLE 1.2 ■ News Companies Generate Revenue in Seven Key Ways

Traditional ads and commercials	You see these every time you check the news online. You probably try your hardest to use ad blockers or change the channel, but they are one of the biggest sources of revenue because of traffic on web and mobile pages. These can be sold directly by a sales team or placed programmatically through ad networks. Programmatic ads are set up through platforms like Google Ad Manager that serve, track, and analyze the ads that run on your platforms.
Sponsorships	Sponsored content means a segment, show, special, or feature is sponsored by a client. This is most common in television and radio. There may be a weekly segment on environmental news that is brought to you by the local power company that has a campaign on sustainable and renewable energy.
Subscriptions	These you pay to watch, read, or listen. The audience is asked to pay a weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annual subscription fee to access content.
Branded content	This is not journalism, but many people producing this work have a background in journalism because they know how to write and produce. Branded content generally tells the story of a brand, for a brand, and that brand pays for the content creation and placement. It's an advertorial in that its editorial content is produced as an ad. This should be marked as branded or sponsored content, so it's clearly separate from regular journalism on a site or app.
Content recirculation	Scroll down on a web article on some pages and you'll see additional content that has ads that look like articles mixed with some of your company's content. Those generate revenue on visibility and clicks. Content recirculation , as the name suggests, helps recirculate your existing content in additional areas of the site, while mixing in lucrative third-party content.
E-commerce	Increasingly present on media platforms are "shops," usually managed by third parties and offering products to customers. The media company takes a cut of the revenue or profit and helps promote the shop materials in stories or video bits. Again, not journalism, but e-commerce provides digital revenue that continues to emerge.
Nonprofit news	Nonprofit news organizations depend on private donations or grants to pay for expenses. Most U.S. states have at least one nonprofit news outlet; most work in specialized journalism niches. The study identified nonprofit news outlets in all but nine U.S. states. (Mitchell et al., 2013)

understand how to create a sustainable business for the sake of your survival. Revenue in media can be generated in several ways, but the most dominant ways are directly sold, programmatically or via subscriptions.

- **Direct-sale advertising:** This is when your sales team directly sells advertising opportunities to businesses near and far. They reach out, present a deal, and lock in the business to an ad, whether a **display ad** on a site or app, a commercial on linear

television, online or streaming services, or a traditional print ad in a magazine or newspaper.

- **Branded content.** This is a form of advertorial when a media company allows a brand to have their story told and placed on their platforms for a fee. This should be marked as branded content and not regular editorial content. A car dealership could place a standard ad about their vehicle inventory, or they can have the media outlet tell a story about their 75 years of family-owned tradition and what the true meaning of their business is to the four generations of operators in the company. Branded content offers companies the ability to go deeper into the messages they want to instill to an audience, but it comes at a premium cost because the effort to produce and distribute that content is greater than placing a single ad. Who produces this content? Hopefully, it's coming from the client or advertiser with some editorial oversight from the media company. In the case of the *New York Times*, they have a full-fledged branded content team that works exclusively with brands to tell their story, and they operate differently than the editorial team.
- **Sales reach.** Depending on the size of a media company, there may be sales teams that focus on local, regional, and national sales efforts so that they have a full canvas of different areas and businesses.
- **House ads.** This is an ad that a media company places on its own platforms about itself. A small percentage of the total advertising and marketing budget should be used to help promote owned-and-operated (O&O) content.
- **Pre-roll ads.** This is the video ad that runs before a video you watch. They are very valuable and sell at a higher value than display ads, which are flat and graphic based.
- **Sales bundle.** Sales teams and media organizations often bundle their sales items together for their clients. For example, you can bundle display ads, pre-roll, and linear broadcast commercial ad impressions. Each item must have a value and represent income, and nothing should be “thrown in” or given away for free.
- **Programmatic advertising:** Programmatic ads dominate several places, including digital platforms from the top, side, and bottom of stories to directly in the middle of text in between paragraphs. They are plugged onto websites, mobile applications, social media channels, and in your email newsletters. These are automatically served for companies who buy into ad distribution networks. This is helpful if you don't have an advertising team and must rely on a plug and play or set-it and forget-it method of ad sales.
- **Subscriptions:** Paywalls or subscription models allow for users to sign in to view or read content. There is no perfect model for this other than to suggest that a user pays as little as \$1 or higher to receive content that they wish to consume. Some media companies offer their content entirely behind a wall; others don't use this model at all and opt to generate revenue solely from advertising.
- **Revenue share,** or rev share: Partnerships should benefit both parties involved. Many news partnerships exist today for the sake of content sharing. When one brand shares content with another or allows them to use a specific tool (let's say a video player that runs ads), then the purpose of the relationship is to share revenue. It varies per platform and per deal, but these revenue shares make up a growing percentage of revenue for media companies.

- **Recirculation content.** An example of rev share comes in the form of ads that look like stories at the bottom of web pages and articles. Many news companies use ad services that place those stories—commonly called clickbait—and hope the audience clicks, or at the very least, scrolls through them. Every time they are clicked or viewed, there is a revenue share on that action. The share exists between the media company and the ad service.

Some additional revenue streams include these:

- **Expansion and growth:** Grow your audience by expanding your coverage area. Is there an emerging market or region in your coverage area? Can you expand your brand, beat, and overall reach on digital and social platforms?
- **Service-oriented subscriptions:** Aside from subscriptions to overall website or content access, other specific subscriptions could be to access newsletters, text messages, desktop messages, or specific member-content verticals.
- **Event-driven vertical:** Create a community calendar that businesses can pay a fee to enter events or an additional fee to promote that event with greater prominence on the actual digital calendar page.
- **Bundles and packages:** Of the handful of revenue opportunities listed in this chapter, sales teams get creative to offer packages that combine various elements for different fees. Clients like options.

MINI ASSIGNMENT: HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE PAYING FOR CONTENT?

Conduct a survey with your peers and close contacts to find out how many people are paying for content services, for news and entertainment purposes. Ask them how much they spend per month and which platforms they pay for. Be prepared to talk about the data in class and compare with classmates to see if there is an overall correlation with people's survey results.

FAKE NEWS

There may not be a more notorious term associated with modern media than *fake news*.

To be clear, **fake news** is a story that is deemed as false or misleading. The term does not refer to content that you disagree with.

Many journalists battle a perception that they report fake news or their organizations present misinformation. Fake news is not just something journalism is battling because people don't like the facts that are presented, but a growing trend in digital media because there are many open platforms—from social media to websites to mobile applications to the dark web—that allow for open distribution of content without fact-checking, without ethical reasoning, and without the core tenets of journalism.

What Types of Misinformation Exist?

Misinformation is not always spread with the intent to deceive. Therefore, it's important to identify different forms of misinformation that comprise fake news.

- **Manipulated content:** Info or images changed deliberately to alter the story
- **Misleading content:** Info presented to steer the audience in a specific direction
- **Satire:** The content is meant to be funny or a play on reality, but it unintentionally results in misinforming people who don't understand the offhand meaning that is presented
- **False content:** This content is just wrong, lacks any truth, and is posted to deceive

Who Produces This Content and Why?

Certain individuals who create fake news have an agenda, others generate content for profit, and some simply have too much time on their hands. In some cases, posters don't mean harm and don't understand the depths of their misinformation. But in many situations, there is a distinct bias in which they produce content to please a certain audience with a key objective in distributing the faulty material. Then, there are folks who write for the sake of being funny (parody and satire), but it's not funny when it's perceived as real.

Barstool Sports creates a lot of content that mocks actual stories from that day's sports news cycle. You might find yourself laughing at a story with a blogger's hot take, more so than consuming facts. You also might find yourself disagreeing and getting angry with other commentary, depending on your personal feelings and beliefs on the subject matter. For example, *The New Yorker*, well known for long-form journalism that is packed with exquisite detail, has a satire section on their website that offers cartoons and humor-driven narrative.

How Do You Recognize Fake News?

Trained storytellers and media-literate audiences can identify truth from misinformation or fake news from objective reporting. Tracking the source of a news story to a big media company like the *Washington Post* or *LA Times* helps readers identify content as credible but does not mean that only large media outlets present real news.

Here are some tips on how to decipher what is fake news:

- **Source:** Where did the information come from?
- **Platform:** Where is it posted? Is it mainstream media? If not, what else can you learn about the site, app, or company?
- **Author:** Who wrote it? Can you find more information about this content creator?
- **Multiple viewpoints:** Read more than one story to help define key points and define balance in sources to develop an objective viewpoint.
- **Complementary sourcing:** Beyond the people sourced in the story, what other material and information is presented? Where did the journalist get that material? Are they credible, primary, and recognizable sources? Can you click the links and dive deeper on the online sources?

- **Ask someone:** If you are second-guessing the content, check with an expert in the field. This could be a college professor, who may be more accessible than a professional in the industry that the story is about.

There have been research studies created, think tanks formed, and misinformation tools built by engineers, and ample stories written about fake news and its impact on society.

One option to stop misinformation is to apply overlays to visual mediums and assets. It prevents us further amplifying harmful content simply by reproducing the original and stops readers from reusing it in other contexts (Shane, 2021). To enhance the assets and make the audience more aware, NiemanLab, a think tank that exists to help journalism figure out its future, suggests media outlets use watermark logos, provide context, meet all accessibility standards, and provide a way for the audience to verify the overlay. If this can be completed as part of the user experience on images, videos, and graphics, it could cut down on other people taking those original assets and distorting the truth.

THE WRAP

The elements of this chapter should stick with you for the rest of your life and career. The fundamental backbone of news will be your storytelling ability's core. Having a strong sense of how to tell stories, why something is newsworthy, and asking the right questions to gather necessary detail will be the most important tactics and traits you should already have started to develop. Everything else, like editing, understanding multimedia, and expanding the types of stories you tell, will all fall into place afterward.

You must understand the industry you are learning about and will soon be working in. Trust me—you will. If you want it, you'll make it happen. But it would be in your best interest to know the ins and outs of the business of journalism and how organizations are evolving today. Your future employers will crave a well-rounded and thoughtful journalist who can write, edit, understand how digital works, and be a team player in enhancing the organization and its value as the voice of its audience.

Of the various types of journalism, hopefully there are a few genres you find interesting to explore. Now is the time to start generating clips on various topics by reporting at several types of events on and off campus. A bulk portfolio stuffed with everything from business to sports to features and hard news will go a long way in showing your understanding and worth as a more novice journalist.

And for the love of all things journalism, please embrace digital and social media. Don't take them for granted just because you likely grew up with those platforms, but be an expert on how to create content for every platform that seems to be front of mind in society and the industry. Have a working knowledge of what drives engagement and pushes traffic to websites and apps or what platforms are the biggest win for emerging audiences, not yet mainstream. Get out of your comfort zone and explore as many media forms as you can so you can then offer those same skills to a news organization, both on and off campus.

CAREER ADVICE

The whole purpose of your degree, the course you're taking, and this textbook is to land you a job and build a career of purpose and promise. Here are some tips to help in your journey:

To be a journalism student means far more than just taking classes and reading textbooks (thank you in advance for reading every word on every page of this book, by the way!). You should remain a student of journalism for the rest of your career and life. Read, watch, listen, and scroll through as much content as you can. Do this for your personal consumption and because you can learn and grow from taking in many stories from a diverse range of platforms and journalists.

You will likely be asked where you get news and information when interviewing for internships. Please don't let this be a mundane and perfunctory answer. Answer this question with great detail—not just because it will show you are well-read, but because you consume media and are an informed citizen. You can tailor your answer based on the position you are being considered for, but do not embellish; rather, steer the answer to show you know the discipline and genre well. The more well-rounded you are as a person and citizen, the more adept you are at thinking deeply and telling stories with a new perspective and skill your potential employer may not be used to.

Here is a mock interview answer:

Media company: What are you reading today, and where do you get your news and information?

Me: One of my favorite questions. From a news perspective, I really try to keep it hyperlocal. I need to know what's happening in my region and neighborhood, so I go to News12.com to watch videos and read content about Long Island. If I want a quick glimpse into the top stories and have more time, I'll watch their live stream of the linear television broadcast. For national and international news, I'll skim X and Instagram since I follow a balance of news companies across the political spectrum. I'll first check trending topics and then check Fox, CNN, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post* to gather various perspectives and make educated decisions on what I read after that multiprong content analysis. I also follow a range of journalists' accounts from my home region on Long Island to see what they're covering from a breaking-news perspective. I'm a big New York Mets and New York Islanders fan, so I religiously consume all content from the local beat reporters. I know many people consume podcasts, but when it comes to audio broadcasts, I only have two guilty pleasures: *Howard Stern* in the morning on Sirius XM, and *VICTORY! The Podcast*, which is a niche program about the HBO series *Entourage*. And I still read one magazine, believe it or not: *Rolling Stone*! I patiently wait each month for its arrival in my mailbox and devour every story almost immediately. Finally, I'm unsure if you meant books, but I read all nonfiction, mostly biographies and history. Right now, I'm reading a book about Italian American baseball legend Tony Lazzeri. I can go deeper on emerging platforms, watching streaming services like Pluto or Plex and defining newer avenues for distribution as a method for how I study media. I also make it a point to read industry blogs and websites like NiemanLab or Poynter to stay up on the trends defining journalism, technology, and communications. I can talk about content types or features on specific platforms like vertical videos in Instagram Stories or Reels, but I also assume I'll be asked about platforms and content development in different questions, so that I may save those answers for later in the interview.

WRITING AND REPORTING WORKOUTS

Test your knowledge of the chapter material with these exercises:

1. **CONSUMPTION HABITS:** Where do you get your news? This can be done in class or on the days between classes. Chronicle your habits as someone who reads, listens to, or watches the news. And if you want to be a journalist, you need to read and watch content, so don't tell your professor otherwise!
 - Write down the media company, the platforms, the type of content, how often you consume content, and what times you usually do this.
 - If you are doing this in class, keep it short and to the point. If this is a take-home assignment, be more detailed, develop the entries with context, and offer specifics on what you are consuming.
2. **ANALYZE THE NEWS:** Go to your school newspaper or local media company's website and check out the top-five stories on the homepage. Take note of the who, what, where, when, why, and how for each story. Now focus your attention on the video or broadcast. Using either your local TV news station or your streaming news service of choice, watch the first five stories that appear and write down the same news elements. What makes these stories news, what is their value, and why did editors place them high on their content selection? For bonus points, list an alternate method of how those same five stories could be told—that is, could you tell the video story with an interview on Facebook Live or share data from the second story specifically on an infographic on social media?
3. **THINK CRITICALLY:** To be used as a discussion topic in class, share your thoughts about the meaning of fake news and how your consumption habits have been affected by social media platforms. List at least three ways you sniff out truthful and objective reporting from regular unsourced commentary. Take it one step deeper and define how the media industry can evolve with its content distribution in the face of public opinion and lack of media literacy.

KEY TERMS

advocacy	entertainment
beat	fake news
bizarre	feature
branded content	general assignment
community journalism	hard news
conflict	human interest
content layering	impact
content recirculation	interactive presentations
convergence or integration	iterative approach to journalism
data-driven journalism	LIVE video
data visualization	multiplatform storytelling
direct-sale advertising	nonprofit news
display ad	OTT (over-the-top)
e-commerce	pre-roll ads
editorial	product development

programmatic advertising
prominence
proximity
reaction
relevance
resourcefulness
revenue share

sales bundle
silo breaking
stickiness
streaming
timeliness
virtual reality (VR)
watchdog journalism

Do not copy, post, or distribute