

Print Journalism: Reporting, Writing and Editing

Syllabus

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Print Journalism: Reporting, Writing and Editing

Tutorial

Introduction to Journalism

Journalism is the social work and work-craft, and profession (high-level) of reporting on the events, facts, and people that are the "news of the day," such that a society is "informed," to some non-trivial degree. The medium varies, depending on the output format, but gathering, processing, and "dissemination" ([sic. common.] 'distribution of report,' svp.), of news, and information related to news, goes to an audience. The word applies to the method of inquiring for news, the literary style which is used to disseminate it, and the activity (professional or not) of journalism.

The media that journalism uses vary diversely and include: content published via newspapers and magazines (print), television and radio (broadcast), and their digital media versions — news websites and applications.

In modern society, the news media is the chief purveyor of information and opinion about public affairs. Journalism, however, is not always confined to the news media or to news itself, as journalistic communication may find its way into broader forms of expression, including literature and cinema. In some nations, the news media is controlled by government intervention, and is not a fully independent body.

In a democratic society, however, access to free information plays a central role in creating a system of checks and balance, and in distributing power equally amongst governments, businesses, individuals, and other social entities. Access to verifiable information gathered by independent media sources, which adhere to journalistic standards, can also be of service to ordinary citizens, by empowering them with the tools they need in order to participate in the political process.

The role and status of journalism, along with that of the mass media, has undergone profound changes over the last two decades with the advent of digital technology and publication of news on the Internet. This has created a shift in the consumption of print media channels, as people increasingly consume news through e-readers, smartphones, and other electronic devices, challenging news organizations to fully monetize their digital wing, as well as improvise on the context in which they publish news in print. Notably, in the American media landscape, newsrooms have reduced their staff and coverage as traditional media channels, such as television, grapple with declining audiences. For instance, between 2007 and 2012, CNN edited its story packages into nearly half of their original time length.

This compactness in coverage has been linked to broad audience attrition, as a large majority of respondents in recent studies show changing preferences in news consumption. The digital era has also ushered in a new kind of journalism in which ordinary citizens play a greater role in the process of news making, with the rise of citizen journalism being possible through the Internet. Using video camera equipped smartphones, active citizens are now enabled to record footage of news events and upload them onto channels like YouTube, which is often discovered and used by mainstream news media outlets. Meanwhile, easy access to news from a variety of online sources, like blogs and other social media, has resulted in readers being able to pick from a wider choice of official and unofficial sources, instead of only from traditional media organizations.

- Role,

In the 1920s, as modern journalism was just taking form,¹ writer Walter Lippmann and American philosopher John Dewey debated over the role of journalism in a democracy. Their differing philosophies still characterize a debate about the role of journalism in society and the nation-state.

Lippmann saw journalism's role at the time as acting as a mediator or translator between the public and policy-making elites. The journalist became the middleman. When elites spoke, journalists listened and recorded the information, distilled it, and passed it on to the public for their consumption. His reasoning behind this was that the public was not in a position to

deconstruct the growing and complex flurry of information present in modern society, and so an intermediary was needed to filter news for the masses. Lippmann put it this way: The public is not smart enough to understand complicated political issues. Furthermore, the public was too consumed with their daily lives to care about complex public policy. Therefore, the public needed someone to interpret the decisions or concerns of the elite to make the information plain and simple. Lippmann believed that the public would affect the decision-making of the elite with their vote. In the meantime, the elite (i.e. politicians, policy makers, bureaucrats, scientists, etc.) would keep the business of power running. In Lippmann's world, the journalist's role was to inform the public of what the elites were doing. It was also to act as a watchdog over the elites, as the public had the final say with their votes. Effectively, that kept the public at the bottom of the power chain, catching the flow of information handed down from experts and elites.

Lippmann's elitism had consequences that he came to deplore. An apostle of historicism and scientism, Lippmann did not merely hold that democratic government was a problematic exercise, but regarded all political communities, of whatever stripe, as needing guidance from a transcendent partisanship for accurate information and dispassionate judgment. In "Liberty and the News" (1919) and "Public Opinion" (1921) Lippmann expressed the hope that liberty could be redefined to take account of the scientific and historical perspective and that public opinion could be managed by a system of intelligence in and out of government. Thus the liberty of the journalist was to be dedicated to gathering verifiable facts while commentators like himself would place the news in the broader perspective. Lippmann deplored the influence of powerful newspaper publishers and preferred the judgments of the "patient and fearless men of science". In so doing, he denigrated not only the opinion of the majority but also the opinion of those who had influence or power as well. In a republican form of government, the representatives are chosen by the people and share with them adherence to the fundamental principles and political institutions of the polity. Lippmann's quarrel was with those very principles and institutions, for they are the product of the pre-scientific and pre-historical viewpoint and what for him was a groundless natural-rights political philosophy.

But Lippmann turned against what he called the "collectivism" of the Progressive movement he encouraged with its de-emphasis on the foundations of American politics and government and ultimately wrote a work, "The Public Philosophy" (1955), which came very close to a return to the principles of the American founders.

Dewey, on the other hand, believed not only that the public was capable of understanding the issues created or responded to by the elite, but also that it was in the public forum that decisions should be made after discussion and debate. When issues were thoroughly vetted, then the best ideas would bubble to the surface. Dewey believed journalists should do more

than simply pass on information. He believed they should weigh the consequences of the policies being enacted. Over time, his idea has been implemented in various degrees, and is more commonly known as "community journalism".

This concept of community journalism is at the centre of new developments in journalism. In this new paradigm, journalists are able to engage citizens and the experts and elites in the proposition and generation of content. While there is an assumption of equality, Dewey still celebrated expertise. Dewey believed the shared knowledge of many to be far superior to a single individual's knowledge. Experts and scholars are welcome in Dewey's framework, but there is not the hierarchical structure present in Lippmann's understanding of journalism and society. According to Dewey, conversation, debate, and dialogue lie at the heart of a democracy.

While Lippmann's journalistic philosophy might be more acceptable to government leaders, Dewey's approach is a more encompassing description of how many journalists see their role in society, and, in turn, how much of society expects journalists to function. Americans, for example, may criticize some of the excesses committed by journalists, but they tend to expect journalists to serve as watchdogs on government, businesses and actors, enabling people to make informed decisions on the issues of the time.

Power &

Journalism can shape a nation. Many people vote based on what the media conveys to them about candidates, decide crucial ethical issues from information they read about in newspapers, and live their lives according to what they believe as reported by journalists. Journalism is inherently powerful, and journalists must wield that power with the utmost integrity, salted with wisdom and discretion.

Journalistic power is one of the most effective creative forces at our disposal for bringing about needed change. Journalism can bring the forces of the nation to bear upon an injustice that must be righted, a situation that must be fixed, an evil that must be overthrown, or a need that must be met. A nation can be brought to

its knees◆conquered or convicted◆by powerful journalism. As John Oldham is quoted as saying, "I wear my pen as others do their sword" ("John Oldham Quotes").

The ideal role of the media is a precise one that is often overstepped by overeager, dishonorable, or greedy journalists who try to manipulate journalistic power to effect their own ends. This should not be tolerated by a public hungry for truth and well acquainted with the disaster that can result from dishonorable activities. The media's real charter is to convey truth with integrity, passion, and objectivity, and to present it with sensitivity and wisdom that respects the opinions, the griefs, and the convictions of all. This is not to say that journalistic opinion pieces have no place; certainly they do. In fact, such pieces are the heart and soul of much journalistic endeavor. But journalism that purports to report the news must report the news factually, and in as unbiased a manner as possible, recognizing the influence attached to that journalism. As Bob Williams writes in his excellent essay on journalistic integrity:

Ethics form the foundation on which is built the basic social contract that has to exist between the credible journalist.

In general, **censorship in India**, which involves the suppression of speech or other public communication, raises issues of freedom of speech, which is nominally protected by the Indian constitution.

The Constitution of India guarantees freedom of expression but places certain restrictions on content, with a view towards maintaining communal and religious harmony, given the history of communal tension in the nation.^[1] According to the Information Technology Rules 2011, objectionable content includes anything that *"threatens the unity, integrity, defence, security or sovereignty of India, friendly relations with foreign states or public order"*.

In 2016, the report Freedom in the World by Freedom House gave India a freedom rating of 2.5, a civil liberties rating of 3, and a political rights rating of 2, earning it the designation of *free*. The rating scale runs from 1 (most free) to 7 (least free). Analysts from Reporters Without Borders rank India 136th in the world in their Press Freedom Index,^[4] In 2015, the report *Freedom of the Press* by Freedom House gave India a press freedom rating of "Partly Free", with a Press Freedom Score of 40 (0-100 scale, lower is better), a Legal Environment rating of 11 (0-30 scale), a Political Environment rating of 20 (0-40 scale), and an Economic Environment rating of 9 (0-30 scale).

Press

In 1975, the Indira Gandhi government imposed censorship of press during The Emergency. It was removed at the end of emergency rule in March 1977. On 26 June 1975, the day after the emergency was imposed, the Bombay edition of *The Times of India* in its obituary column carried an entry that read, "D.E.M O'Cracy beloved husband of T.Ruth, father of L.I.Bertie, brother of Faith, Hope and Justica expired on 26 June". In 1988 'defamation bill' introduced by Rajiv Gandhi but it was later withdrawn due to strong opposition to it .

- Making of a Newspaper

a) News Reporting,

Types of News Reporting

There are different types of news reporting which are as under:-

1. Investigative Reporting
2. Court Reporting
3. Accidence Reporting
4. Political Reporting
5. Fashion Reporting
6. Business Reporting
7. Sports Reporting
8. Specialized Reporting

Requisites of News Reporting

A News Reporter should follow the following steps

1. A reporter must appreciate the importance of having a good reputation for absolute reliability. For this purpose he must be systematic in his habits and punctual in keeping his appointments. By observing these principles, every reporter can make his path smooth and trouble free.
2. A reporter should have the ability of news reporting and writing skills in the language of his paper. He should possess the quality to compose in a condensed manner as per allowable space.
3. The reporter of any local newspaper occupies a unique position and he becomes quite popular with the people of his town. He reports the local events, functions, fairs, socials etc. and comes closer to the social life of the town. A reporter should follow some professional ethics in his work. Sometimes, while engaged in his profession, he may come to some persons and develop confidential relations with them.
4. Sometimes, a reporter may be asked to write short length paragraphs regarding the local intelligence or about the city news. For this he should keep his eyes and ears open and develop a nose for local news. He should develop a system to ensure that none of the interesting news is missed by him. He should try to know the secretaries of social, religious, political, musical dramatic, legal, official and other organizations and should call upon them

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5. Every reporter should keep an engagement diary. In this way he can systematize his working and attend to all his appointments properly and punctually. By keeping an engagement diary he can know about the important engagements and other events in the future and cover them without fail.
6. The reporter should not forget to give a head line to his typed copy. Every copy which goes to the printer to be set is given a catchline. The catchline is a key word, because during the production it identifies all the sheets of the copy. The catchline is given on each sheet so that the printer can collate the whole story. The catchline should be chosen very carefully. It is better to choose an uncommon word, which may not resemble with another news catchline.

b) Investigative and Interpretive Reporting,

Interpretive reporting often involves the same skills but takes the interpretation to a different level.

The fundamental difference between the two is that original investigative reporting uncovers information not before gathered by others in order to inform the public of events or circumstances that might affect their lives.

Interpretive reporting is as a result of careful thought and analysis of an idea as well as dogged pursuit of facts to bring together information in a new, more complete context which provides deeper public understanding.

Investigative reporting as it were could be vague and may make no cogent or reasonable meaning to its reader or general public without a thorough interpretive reporting a case in point is the New York Times publication of the pentagon papers in 1971.

The paper themselves were a secret study obtained by an investigative journalist who cover the American involvement in Vietnam War, this was written by the government reporter Neil Sheehan.

c) Sub Editor,

Press **sub-editors**, or subs, check the written text of newspapers, magazines or websites before it is published. They are responsible for ensuring the correct grammar, spelling, house style and tone of the published work. Subs make sure that the copy is factually correct and that it suits the target market.

d) Headlines,

a heading at the top of an article or page in a newspaper or magazine.
"a front-page headline"

e) Feature Writing and Interviews.

Features are not meant to deliver the news firsthand. They do contain elements of news, but their main function is to humanize, to add colour, to educate, to entertain, to illuminate. They often recap major news that was reported in a previous news cycle. Features often:

- Profile people who make the news
- Explain events that move or shape the news
- Analyze what is happening in the world, nation or community
- Teach an audience how to do something
- Suggest better ways to live
- Examine trends
- Entertain.

HARD NEWS AND SOFT NEWS

A news story can be hard, chronicling as concisely as possible the who, what, where, when, why and how of an event. Or it can be soft, standing back to examine the people, places and things that shape the world, nation or community. Hard news events--such as the death of a famous public figure or the plans of city council to raise taxes--affect many people, and the primary job of the media is to report them as they happen. Soft news, such as the widespread popularity of tattooing among athletes or the resurgence of interest in perennial gardening, is also reported by the media. Feature stories are often written on these soft news events.

There is no firm line between a news story and a feature, particularly in contemporary media when many news stories are "featurized." For instance, the results of an Olympic competition may be hard news: "Canadian diver Anne Montmigny claimed her second medal in synchronized diving today." A featurized story might begin: "As a girl jumping off a log into the stream running behind her house, Anne Montmigny never dreamed she would leap into the spotlight of Olympic diving competition." One approach emphasizes the facts of the event, while the feature displaces the facts to accommodate the human interest of the story. Most news broadcasts or publications combine the two to reach a wider audience.

Today's media use many factors to determine what events they will report, including

- timeliness
- proximity
- consequence
- the perceived interest of the audience
- competition
- editorial goals
- and the influence of advertisers.

- Press codes & Ethics

a) Code of Ethics in Indian Journalism,

The Society of Professional Journalists created a code of ethics that are in effect today. The main mantra of the code is "Seek truth and Report it!"(Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478) The code also states that: "Journalists should be honest, fair, and courageous in gathering, reporting, and interpreting information. Journalists should:"

- "Test the accuracy of information from all sources and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error. Deliberate distortion is never permissible."(Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Diligently seek out subjects of news stories to give them the opportunity to respond to allegations of wrongdoing."(Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)

- "Identify sources whenever feasible. The public is entitled to as much information as possible on sources' reliability." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Always question sources' motives before promising anonymity. Clarify conditions attached to any promise made in exchange for information. Keep promises." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Make certain that headlines, news teases, and promotional material, photos, video, audio, graphics, sound bites, and quotations do not misrepresent. They should not oversimplify or highlight incidents out of context." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Never distort the content of news photos or video. Image enhancement for technical clarity is always permissible. Label montages and photo illustrations." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Avoid misleading reenactments or staged news events. If reenactment is necessary to tell a story, label it." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information except when traditional open methods will not yield information vital to the public. Use of such methods should be explained as part of the story." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Never plagiarize." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even, when it is unpopular to do so." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Examine their own cultural values and avoid imposing on those values on others." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, or social status." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Support the open exchange of views, even views they find repugnant." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Give voice to the voiceless; official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting. Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or content." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Distinguish news from advertising, and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)

- "Recognize and special obligation to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open and that government records are open to inspection." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)

Minimize Harm "Ethical journalists treat sources, subjects, and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect. Journalists should" (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)

- "Show compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or guilt." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Recognize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others who seek power, influence, or attention. Only an overriding public need can justify intrusion into anyone's privacy." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Be cautious of identifying juvenile suspects or victims of sex crimes." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Be judicious about naming criminal suspects before the formal filing of charges." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Balance a criminal suspect's fair trial rights with the public's right to be informed." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)

Act Independently "Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know. Journalists should" . (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)

- "Avoid conflict of interest, real or perceived." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)

- "Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel, and special treatment, and shun secondary employment, political involvement, public office, and service in community organizations if they compromise journalistic integrity." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 478)
- "Disclose unavoidable conflicts." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 479)
- "Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 479)
- "Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence news coverage." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 479)
- "Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; avoid bidding for news." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 479)

Be Accountable "Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers, and each other. Journalists should:" (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 479)

- "Clarify and explain news coverage and invite dialogue with the public over journalistic conduct." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 479)
- "Encourage the public to voice grievances against the news media." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 479)
- "Admit mistakes and correct them promptly." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 479)
- "Expose unethical practices of journalists and the news media." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 479)
- "Abide by the same high standards to which they hold others." (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, Pg 479)

All of these guidelines are for the betterment of society and regulation of media.

b) Press Councils guide to Journalistic Ethics

Part A: Principles and Ethics

1. Accuracy and fairness
2. Pre-publication verification
3. Caution against defamatory writings
4. Parameters of the right of the press to comment on the acts and conduct of public officials
5. Criticism of public figures/music reviews

6. Right to privacy
7. Privacy of public figures
8. Recording interviews and phone conversation
9. Conjecture, comment and fact
10. Newspapers to eschew suggestive guilt
11. Reporting-proceedings of legislature
12. Caution in criticising judicial acts
13. Corrections 1
4. Right of reply
15. Letters to editor
16. Editor's discretion
17. Obscenity and vulgarity to be eschewed
18. Glorification/encouragement of social evils to be eschewed
19. Violence not to be glorified
20. Covering communal disputes/clashes

Part B: Guidelines on specific issues

- a) Norms for observance by the Press in the wake of communal disturbances
- b) Coverage of handouts of Militants/Terrorists-Guiding Principles 1991- 1992
- c) HIV/AIDS and the Media
- d) Financial Journalism
- e) Election Reporting
- f) Allotment of Houses to Journalists
- g) Undue Favours to Journalists
- h) Right to Privacy-- Public Figures and the Press
- i) Model Guidelines For Publishing Overseas Advertisement In Accordance With Emigration Act 1983
- j) Study Report - Working Journalist Act vis-à-vis Appointment of Journalists on Contract