

It's Not You, It's Me... or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Press

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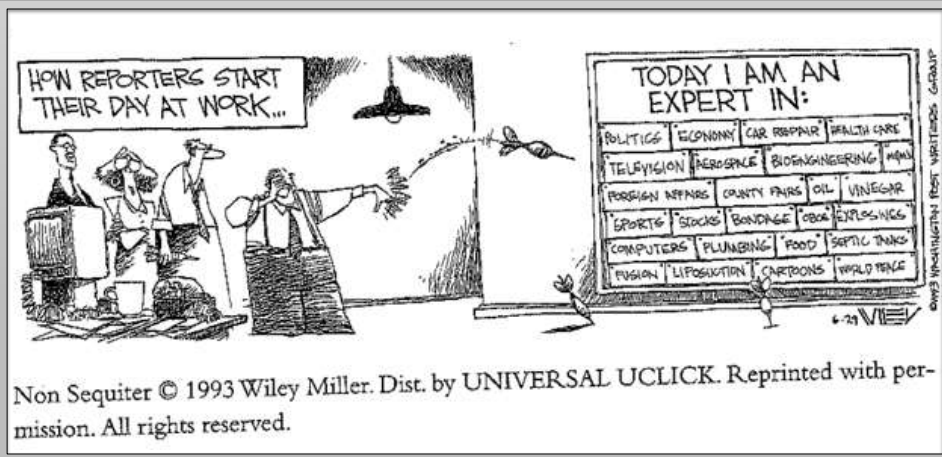
Metcalf Institute for Marine & Environmental Reporting

Expanding Accurate Environmental News Coverage

Training for journalists, scientists, and other science communicators to build a deeper public understanding of science and the environment.



JOURNALISM 101

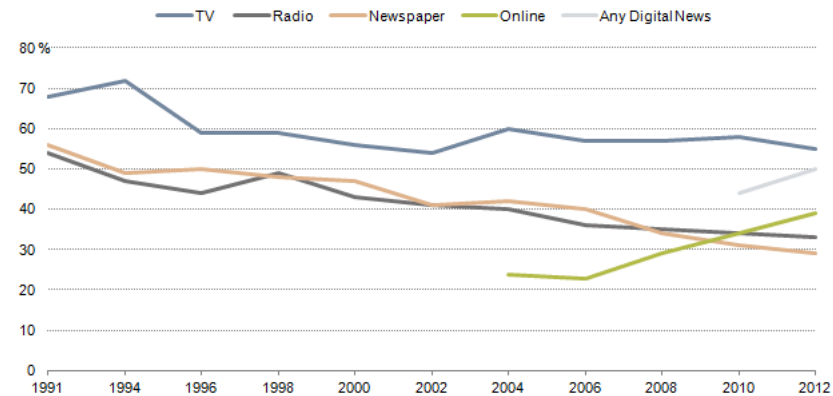


Being a reporter is as much a diagnosis as a job description.
 -Anna Quindlen

STATE OF THE NEWS MEDIA - 2013

Digital Grows Again as a Source for News

Percentage of Respondents Who Got News "Yesterday" From Each Platform



Source: Pew Research Center
 PEW RESEARCH CENTER
 2013 STATE OF THE NEWS MEDIA

<http://stateofthemediamedia.org/2013>

STATE OF THE NEWS MEDIA - 2013

For Many, Mobile Means More News

News users who said that since getting their tablet they...



Spend more
time with news

31%



Turn to new sources
for news

31



Are adding to the
news they
consume

43

Based on weekly tablet news (N=810) users. Icons from the Noun Project.

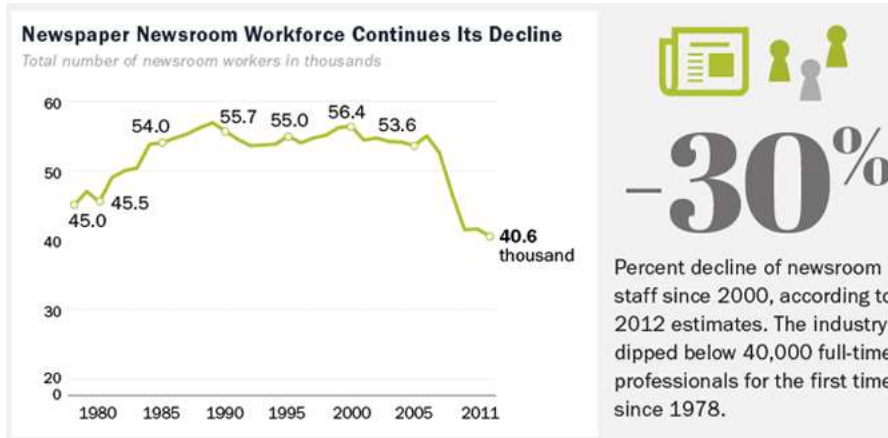
Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism in collaboration
with The Economist Group

<http://stateofthemedias.org/2013>

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ROCKY Mtn.
NEWS-NEA



STATE OF THE NEWS MEDIA - 2013



<http://stateofthedia.org/2013/overview-5/overview-infographic/>

STATE OF THE NEWS MEDIA - 2013

“For news organizations, distinguishing between high-quality information of public value and agenda-driven news has become an increasingly complicated task, made no easier in an era of economic churn.”

<http://stateofthedia.org/2013/overview-5>

JOURNALISM 101

*Put it to them briefly, so they will read it;
clearly, so they will appreciate it;
picturesquely, so they will remember it; and,
above all, accurately, so they will be guided
by its light.*

-Joseph Pulitzer

JOE Q. JOURNALIST

- BS in Journalism, Communications, English
- General assignment
- Cover more than 1 story/day



A DAY IN THE LIFE *

- 8 am: Editorial Meeting, Get assignment
- 9 am: Story research, interview set-up
- 11 am: Interviews (video/sound)
- 1 pm: Stop to cover nearby apartment fire
- 2 pm: Review interviews (video),
write story (edit script for TV or radio)
- 3 pm: Script review by editor/producer
- 4 pm: Rewrite and submit story (or begin editing
session if on TV or radio)
- 5 pm: Live shot to introduce piece
- 6 pm: Rewrite for 11 pm news



*With thanks to Helen Chickering, NBC

WHAT MAKES A GOOD NEWS STORY?



WHAT MAKES A GOOD NEWS STORY?

**“It's all storytelling, you know.
That's what journalism is all about.”**

-Tom Brokaw



WHERE DO JOURNALISTS GET THEIR INFORMATION?

- ✓ Interviews
- ✓ Observation
- ✓ Background Research
 - Press Releases
 - Other News Outlets
 - Google
 - Documents



WHY IS A REPORTER CALLING YOU?

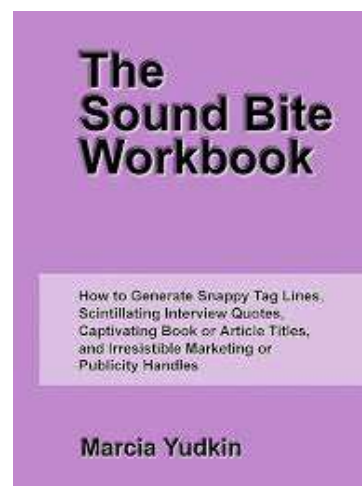
- Response to an event
- Response to a complainer about a site, permit, process
- Looking for an independent response
- Response to public's response to your work



KEEP IN MIND

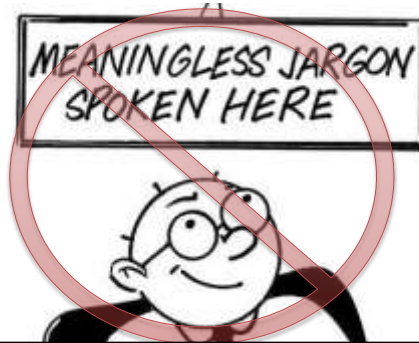
They are looking for:

- Quote or sound bite
- Concise comment
- Comment making it clear which side you're on



BECOMING A TRUSTED SOURCE

- Clear language, free of jargon
- Prioritized, easy to understand messages (repeated to be sure they're understood)
- Responsiveness, Professionalism



WHEN A REPORTER CALLS...

Remember!

- The reporter isn't an expert
- You are on the record
- This is not an informal conversation
- Write it down
- You can ask questions



TIPS FROM A (REALLY GOOD) ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALIST

- A disaster is no time to make friends
- Know your B's (Bias vs. Balance)
- Be available
- Embrace the reporter's deadline
- Be patient
- Complain
- Persevere



COMMUNICATING RISK

- Develop clear messages
- Use analogies, but don't trivialize
- Use ranges (safe to risky)
- Put measurements/data in perspective (compare with regulatory std)
- Explain differences in magnitude

Why should people care?

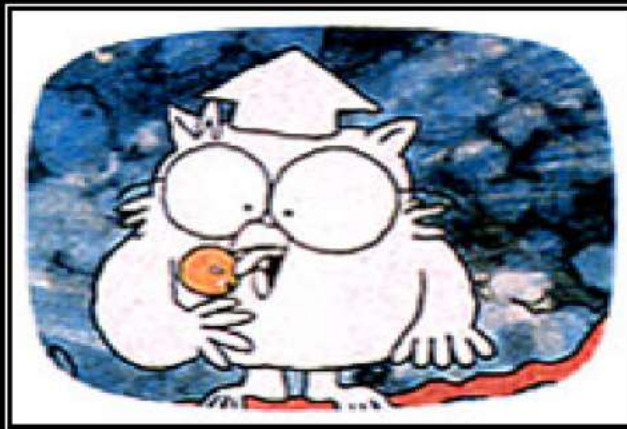
Modified from "Risk Communication" by Regina Lundgren & Andrea McMakin

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Uncertainty

Face it kid, Not even Mr. Owl knows how many licks it takes.



JOURNALISM 101



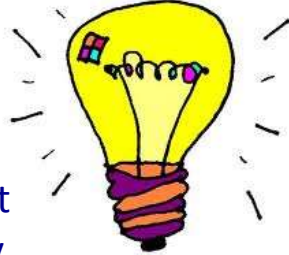
- Driven by events (news values)
- Focus on outliers (catastrophe)
 - Total control over content
- Condensed, personalized representation
 - Balance of views

It is a newspaper's duty to print the news and raise hell.

-Chicago Times

COMMUNICATING UNCERTAINTY

- Know thy audience
- Simplify language, not content
- Discuss sources of uncertainty
- Frame uncertainty within context (esp. wrt risk assessment)
- Stress areas of consensus



From "Risk Communication" by Regina Lundgren & Andrea McMakin