

# SCIE3001 – JOURNALISM MODULE

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# How to be a TV journalist

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtGSXMuWMR4>

# The media landscape is changing

- Audiences are increasingly getting their news and information online
- Major media companies are slashing full-time journalism staff numbers
- Established broadsheet newspapers are turning into the smaller tabloid format
- Reporters are now not only expected to write quickly and accurately, but to also take publishable photos and be able to record and download voice and video (converged media)
- Mainstream reporters are faced with a 24/7 news cycle, websites must be up-to-date to compete ... so who has time to ask questions?
- Blogging and social media are rapidly becoming integral to news and information consumption

**WHEW** ... and scientist is expected to get their message out in this clatter?

# THE SCIENCE NEWS CYCLE

JORGE CHAM © 2009

Start Here



**Your Research**  
Conclusion: **A is correlated with B** ( $p=0.56$ ), given C, assuming D and under E conditions.



...is translated by...

**UNIVERSITY PR OFFICE**  
(YES, YOU HAVE ONE)  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
SCIENTISTS FIND POTENTIAL LINK BETWEEN A AND B (UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS).



...which is then picked up by...

**NEWS WIRE ORGANIZATIONS**  
A CAUSES B, SAY SCIENTISTS.



...who are read by ...

**THE INTERNETS**

Scientists out to kill us again.  
POSTED BY RANDOM DUDE  
Comments (377)  
OMG! i kneew it!!  
WTH???????

...then noticed by...



We saw it on a Blog!  
**A causes B all the time**  
What will this mean for Obama?  
BREAKING NEWS BREAKING NEWS BREA



...and caught on ...

**CNC Cable NEWS**

**4 LOCAL EYEWITLESS NEWS**

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT "A"... CAN KILL YOU! MORE AT 11...  
**A-KILLER AMONG US??**  
LOCAL EYEWITLESS NEWS

...eventually making it to...



We spoke yesterday about what exactly a  
journalist **DOES**

And how they need to identify and engage with their  
**AUDIENCE**

- But there are different types of journalist a scientist **might** have to communicate with.
- For example there are also Visual Journalists (photo and film/video), Feature Writers, Radio Journalists ... and of course Converged Journalists (sounds painful and actually is, working for an online news site like your personal communication toolkit for this course)

*Journalists inform society about itself and make public that which would otherwise be private – Tony Harcup*

*Journalism largely consists in saying “Lord Jones Dead” to people who never knew that Lord Jones was alive – GK Chesterton*

# And we spoke a bit about structure... more on that later

- To understand how to make your story appealing, or how you can better communicate with journalists, we also need to consider **WHY** a story is chosen to be written/recorded in the first place.
- And the answer is inevitably ...

# Because they are “newsworthy”

- There are lots of lists and “takes” on what makes something “newsworthy”
- Masterton cites: **consequence, proximity, conflict, human interest, novelty and prominence.**
- Harcup cites:



## News values

Research suggests that potential items must generally fall into one or more of these categories to be selected as news stories (Harcup and O'Neill, 2001: 279):

- **The power elite**  
Stories concerning powerful individuals, organisations or institutions.
- **Celebrity**  
Stories concerning people who are already famous.
- **Entertainment**  
Stories concerning sex, showbusiness, human interest, animals, an unfolding drama, or offering opportunities for humorous treatment, entertaining photographs or witty headlines.
- **Surprise**  
Stories with an element of surprise and/or contrast.
- **Bad news**  
Stories with negative overtones such as conflict or tragedy.
- **Good news**  
Stories with positive overtones such as rescues and cures.
- **Magnitude**  
Stories perceived as sufficiently significant either in the numbers of people involved or in potential impact.
- **Relevance**  
Stories about issues, groups and nations perceived to be relevant to the audience.
- **Follow-ups**  
Stories about subjects already in the news.
- **Media agenda**  
Stories that set or fit the news organisation's own agenda.

# Question

- Thinking of your chosen scientific paper, and thinking of how you could communicate its fundamentals to a mainstream audience, are any these news values appropriate?
- Because if you can tailor your message (without compromising the science) to these general categories, you will immediately have the interest of a journalist.

## Quick diversion ... ingredients of a news story

- WHO
- WHAT
- WHEN
- WHERE
- WHY
- HOW

**KNOWN AS 5WH ... a basic checklist**

# Rule 1: Journalism is about **COMMUNICATION**

It is **NOT** about trying to prove how literate you are, or how many adjectives you can cram into a short space.

It is **NOT** about trying to prove how clever you are.

It **IS** about **communicating** either facts (reporting), opinions or knowledge (usually of an expert or source) in a **clear and concise** fashion and in such a way that **as many people as possible** understand what points you are making, and can follow your logic.

And that rule remains valid even if the publication (print or online) in which the information is appearing is for a highly specialised

**AUDIENCE.**

## Rule 2: Journalists only get one chance to make a good first impression

Whether it is the first few frames or 30 seconds of a video or audio, or the first few sentences of a story, the **INTRODUCTION** must be either interesting or compelling.

When you are writing an academic article for a journal, or a research paper, the devil is in the detail; the format, style and the presentation are rigidly enforced.

You might examine and critique literature, be involved in scientific research ... whatever ... but the reader/viewer will in many ways be a **CAPTIVE AUDIENCE** and will keep going to the end because they kind of **HAVE** to ...

If a journalist does not engage the reader/viewer right from the start they will quickly stop reading, disengage, click away ... in which case the story will have been a waste of time.

Rule 3: If you don't **KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE**, you won't have one for long

So to start, you need to work out exactly **WHO** your **AUDIENCE** is and tailor all your communications and material to maximise the chance of audience engagement.

# Journalists get information by interviewing experts as sources

- Well credentialed people and experts are the best sources for most stories.
- If you have proven expertise in an area of science or technology or are involved in a research project you are a valuable source.

# An experiment to test these theories

- <http://www.smh.com.au/technology/sci-tech/soylent-pioneer-thinks-outside-the-lunch-box-20130810-2ror7.html>



Questions?