

# **Chapter 1:**

## **How Professional News is Created**

- The Job of the Journalist
- Types of News Sites
- Types of News Stories
- Professional News Procedures
- The Complexity of Doing Journalism Well

# Gestation of a News Story

- Idea for story
- Pitch idea to editors and staff
- Story assigned
- Preliminary research
- Scheduling and conducting interviews
- Fact checking and follow-up
- Writing first draft
- Edits and rewriting
- Publication/airing
- Social media posts (possibly before this)

# Types of News Web Sites

- Newspaper
- Broadcast news outlet
- Web-only news outlet
- Blog
- Aggregator

# Types of News Web Sites

- **Newspaper**

- Professional
- Oldest form of news outlet
- Stories on website usually contain text and photos from paper; some Web-only content
- “Shovelware”

- **Broadcast news outlet**

- Professional; Radio or TV
- Story packages – mix of video from TV and written stories
- Sometimes live feeds of broadcasts

# Types of News Web Sites

- **Web-only news outlet**
  - Professional (mostly)
  - HuffPost, BuzzFeed, Mashable, Gizmodo, etc.
  - No way to exist offline
  - Content can vary; usually a mix of text, audio, video
  - Often subject-specific
- **Blog/Discussion site**
  - Usually not professional; often not news
  - Reddit, Hive, Quora, etc. (4chan?)
  - Can contain all kinds of content
  - Often personal, subject-specific

# Types of News Web Sites

- **News aggregator**
  - Corporate (mostly)
  - Google News, Apple News, Flipboard, NewsNow, SmartNews, etc.
  - Use algorithms to gather news stories from existing sites
  - Most create no content, hire no reporters or editors
  - Some now testing AI to create and write new stories from pieces of existing ones

## **Types of news stories**

- Breaking news
- Hard news
- Features
- Opinion pieces
- Enterprise stories

# Types of News Stories

- **Breaking News**

- Happening right now or very recently
- Who, what, when, where
- Important enough to pause other coverage
- Not time to research in usual depth
- Details often filled in later

- **Hard news**

- Events of real importance to audience
- Often politics, crime, disasters, economy
- Urgent or consequential information
- May or may not be breaking



# Types of News Stories

- **Features**

- Less urgent or consequential than hard news
- Frequently “happy” stories
- Often profiles, entertainment, pop culture
- Engaging and popular with audiences

- **Opinion pieces**

- Author gives own point of view on subject
- Traditionally set aside from news
- Supports an argument with chosen facts
- Digital age → controversies when opinion makes its way into news coverage

# Types of News Stories

- **Enterprise stories**
  - Generated by reporters themselves
  - Often investigative in nature
  - Usually take significant time to develop
  - Not just who, what, when, where → why, how
  - Often done in teams
  - Can be one long story or series of articles
  - Often serves audience/community
  - Most common type of story to win awards

# Professional News Procedures

- Generating story ideas
- Gathering information
- Fact checking
- Context and completeness
- Price of making mistakes

# Complexity of doing journalism well

- Journalists' level of effort often unrecognized
- Audiences don't distinguish between reported news and gossip or uninformed online chatter
- Journalism serves many communities
- Every mistake is amplified
- Easier to criticize than do the job
- Chapter 1 – journalists comment on this