

# HOW

to

# READ

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THE

# NEWS

# How To Read The News

## Journalism 105 2019 Issue

**MISSION STATEMENT:** Our mission is to create a publication that informs and educates the reader on how to differentiate fake news from credible news — giving the reader confidence and reasoning in the comfort of their own reading space.

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Thinking of news as information, not guidance or authority. **PAGE 9B**



UNTRUE  
FABRICATED  
COUNTERFEIT

#### What Is Fake News?

Fake news is deliberately misleading. Learn healthy methods to question what you see, without resorting to Selective Exposure. — Page 10A

### LEARN MORE



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VISUAL DESIGN WITH GRATITUDE TO THE JOURNALISM 105 CLASS, BY KMAX RX.



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# FOREWORD

A word on the media...

**OUT** of fairly casual discussions and fairly casual surveys from our students at PPCC, we've concluded that much of our student body is weary of journalism. Many distrust information. Many have given up on the news.

But we still believe!

We know there's good journalism out there. And we know how to find it.

Here's a guide to help you find it too.

— Sarah McMahan

# INTERVIEWS

## ABOUT THE NEWS

# All truth is relative and objectivity is impossible?

Dr. Sharon Bjorkman's a professor of Sociology at PPCC.

**Q: With your sociological background, what is your interpretation of the current state of media?**

**SB:** From a sociological perspective, all truth is socially constructed, including facts in the media. For example, the idea of DNA was not accepted for a long period of time, until several prominent scientists agreed that the idea had potential. So, the concept of DNA went from a hair-brained idea to a scientific fact, based solely on the opinion of a few scientists.

THE CURRENT MEDIA embodies this struggle over facts. We often treat facts as free-floating truth, that just has to be discovered, when in reality facts are shaped by ideologies. We are not acknowledging that in the media today. Instead of saying, "From a Liberal view, we see these as the worthy issues and appropriate responses." Instead we say, "These are the facts." And the same thing happens with conservatives. We are not acknowledging the social construction of reality, and instead outlets are claiming they have the true, and the other opinions are fake news.

**Q: How have you personally seen media change within your lifetime? Do you believe these changes have been beneficial?**

**SB:** Liberals have claimed that knowledge is shaped by the "ruling apparatus" or those in power, for a long time. Just recently, however, conservatives have gotten on a similar bandwagon and are asserting that media is controlled by Liberals and to combat that, they have developed their own media outlets compensate, such as Fox News or by buy up newspapers and requiring them to publish different material or with a different slant.

THIS TREND WILL ONLY become beneficial if we admit, to the public, that objectivity is not possible. Then we have a chance to move beyond the fake news verses false facts fight that we are currently in.

This will not require an overhaul of the existing news media. However, it will require transparency of who owns the media, which will be a shocker for most Americans. It will also require a public information campaign to educate the public on nature of social media, and how is it used to propagandize the unsuspecting.

# INTERVIEWS Continued

## How The News Has Changed From Before The TV Era

Mike Newsom, 68 and self-employed, on changing media

**Q: How has the news changed over the past few decades?**

**MN:** It's a lot more out there, more reporting and more coverage, you hear what you've never heard before unless you were in that area. You never heard what happened in the rest of the country, just what made national news. Now you hear everything. The WEATHER COVERAGE has gotten better.

**Q: How often do you check the news?**

**MN:** Two or three times a day. Once in the morning, usually midday, sometimes five o'clock. And then ten thirty.

**Q: Do you think the news is credible?**

**MN:** That's why you watch two or three channels. There's no truth in any one channel; there seems to be bias no matter. That's why you have to watch a few to get the truth, or at least close to the truth.

J.B. Black on the right to vote and 87 years of news – before and AFTER television.

WHEN INTERVIEWING MY GRANDPA about the news and his experience with it he told me a lot of interesting things such as how he had to get his news when television wasn't around and about hearing about the infamous Bonnie and Clyde on the radio. What really caught my attention though was when he started telling me about how he got into politics and listening to the news at the age of 15. In this generation getting into politics at such an age seems crazy, but once he told me what caught his interest I was captivated.

My grandpa was born in Louisiana in 1932 and, **“Times back then weren't easy or even fair for people of color”** my grandpa explained. He didn't know why he couldn't vote and he wanted to gain a better understanding. When he realized that it was just because of the color of his skin he started to feel strongly towards the way things were being ran. **“I wanted to see a change in the government,”** my grandpa said.

## More INTERVIEWS

# If Everyone's A Media Star, Who Are The Experts?

Deidre Schoolcraft is a professor of Journalism at PPCC

**Q: With your journalism background, what is your interpretation of the current state of media?**

**DS:** Boy, that's a loaded question. "The current state of media" is so broad, but despite what you hear, I think it is an exciting time to be involved with media. There are problems, of course, just because of the speed with which content is delivered now, and everyone can be a film maker, a film star or a director; anyone can be a journalist. Of course, that's also what makes "media" exciting—we can all have agency in developing the content the world sees. Yet, if everyone is a media star, who are the experts? Whom do we trust for our information? It's kind of a lovely tension.

LAST WEEK when the Mueller Report dropped, one of the first things analysts discovered was that the better news organizations had been reporting information accurately all along—no one was very surprised by the content of the report because of the good journalism. That gave me a lift—real journalists and content experts are still valuable in our streaming world.

**Q: How have you personally seen media change within your life time? Do you believe these changes have been beneficial?**

**DS:** Yes, media has changed quickly in my lifetime. Back in the Eighties, when I was editor of my high school newspaper, we had to typeset each column of every paper, film each column, cut out each column, then wax it down on great plates that were then fed into the printing press. Now, layout is digital and way easier. Internet didn't hit the mainstream until the early Nineties. There was no social media. Around the time of the L.A. Riots kicked off by Rodney King's beating by cops, media began to change for real. Suddenly every one could film events from tiny handheld cameras and upload them to the internet; suddenly, every one was blogging, posting, tweeting. I love that there are so many media outlets now: old timers can still read their papers, but we also have digital news organizations, social media feeds, and streaming video capability.

WHILE I DO think there have been problems, in the main I think the changes have been beneficial. We live in a global society now, and that can only make us better as humans. Media that everyone can access creates true democracy and makes those who don't live in democracy long for it.

# INTERVIEWS

## Emily, 15 Years Old, Shares Her Thoughts On News Media

**Q: How do you determine if your selected news source is credible?**

**EM:** I view multiple sources before coming to a conclusion. I like to research into all the sides of the news, and cross check the information being reported. I'll decide if it's credible depending on how similar the information is to everything else, I have seen.

**Q: What would you say is the current state of the media? Good or bad?**

**EM:** It's pretty bad, there are too many unreliable sources that spit out fake or twisted versions of the story. It's hard to navigate through it all to find a credible source that isn't twisted or manipulated.

**Q: How often do you watch the news if at all?**

**EM:** I don't really watch the news too often because it is usually too political and negative for my liking. That being said, though, I do stay current with it from other sources.

# “...An Information Overload...”

## Valuable Insight with Katie Wheeler, professor of communication at PPCC

**Q: As far as newspapers, what is your perception of *journalists* and *journalism*?**

**KW:** In terms of the news and my heightened consumption of the news, I feel there has been a shift. The more that we have access to social media and the ability to shut off anything we disagree with and only get the messages that we agree with, we start see journalists who disagree with us even more of a negative way. I go to

multiple sites to see the same story. It's the journalist who reports the facts. Who is leading opinion aside but providing additional pathways.

**Q: What is your definition of *judicial* versus *judicious*?**

**KW:** When you are *judicious*, you are deciding what is relevant or not. And *judicial* is where I am going with a legal framework. I think we have the struggles with the view of news. We have a lot of information overload. If you don't know to go after different perspectives, how do you know how to fully engage with a story?

# HISTORY



## OF NEWS MEDIA

### A Timeline of Media From Newspaper to the Twitter-Verse



#### Newspaper

In 1690, the first newspaper came to light. Due to publishing controversy in its first issue the paper was banned. The first continuous paper was published in 1704. By the 1820s, newspapers were pricey for the public, which led to the invention of the Penny Papers. They were papers that were sold through subscription as well as sold on the streets to consumers daily. During the late 19th century, news began to become fabricated and dramatic, as well as controversial and scandalous.



#### Television

CNN was created in 1980 and skyrocketed the theme of televised news to become a norm for American society. News corporations were popping up both locally and nationally around America, giving differentiating outlooks on coverage and breaking news. The easy access to news was found to be convenient in comparison to the slow-moving printed news. This was the opening of many conversations in America around bias, opinions, and the spread of information being influenced by other forms of media.



#### Internet & Social Media

As soon as technology became one of the biggest pieces of society, many news corporations flocked to the internet. From the 1980s until today, more news sites have appeared locally and nationally. What once was only available on paper and for a small fee, was now free and available forever on the online world. Social media has also given everyone a voice to speak out on what is happening in the world. Twitter gives immediate access to the know-all of what's happening right now for almost everyone across the globe.

# JUDICIAL



# or JUDICIOUS?

“The function of reporting and the press is the best obtainable version of the truth. We're not out there to bring down governments. We're not out there to be prosecutors. We're out there to be *JUDICIOUS*, not *JUDICIAL*.”

—Carl Bernstein, Watergate Journalist, Page One: Inside the New York Times (2010)

**ANYTHING RELATING TO A JUDGE** carrying out an order or appointing to a court of law has always been known as judicial whereas a judicious person is characterized as having, showing, or doing an act with a good sense of judgement. Good journalists will have a sense of levelheadedness and embody rationality and fairness to what is true, as opposed to stirring up conflict for views and /or a hidden agenda. Journalists aren't deciding of what is right and wrong and their words should be taken with a grain of salt, they report on what is current with the information they are given at that certain time so that the public can be informed.

**A JOURNALIST'S JOB** is to provide the fundamental coverage of an event, with a sense of impartiality, allowing the public to make its own decisions. In this way, journalists are judicious so that public can be judicial. Ever since the “fake news” phenomenon that sprung up in late 2016, journalists are commonly discredited due to bias. It is important to know everyone is biased, and even in journalism bias is alive and well.

**DISCREDITING SOMEONE** on their views alone and refusing to see another perspective is

dangerous and is what led to the negative view of the word ‘bias.’ Selective exposure is defined as limiting oneself to personal wants and desires relating to the media. According to Warren Epstein, Executive Director of Marketing and Communication at Pikes Peak Community College, “We are getting the news we want.” Selective exposure promotes the idea of fake news and stokes the fire of negative views on bias as well as marking journalists as bad people.

**TODAY'S MEDIA INFLUENCED WORLD** is unfortunately plagued by the those who do not understand the difference between being judicial and judicious. A firm understanding of the terms *judicious*, *judicial*, *journalist*, *bias* and *selective exposure* enables the public to have a basic premise of how to sift through the media seen today.

## “BEST VERSION OF THE TRUTH.”

### DEFINITION

— JUDICIOUS

### ADJECTIVE

1. HAVING, EXERCISING, OR CHARACTERIZED BY GOOD OR DISCRIMINATING JUDGMENT; WISE, SENSIBLE, OR WELL-ADVISED: “A *JUDICIOUS* SELECTION OF DOCUMENTS.”

# BECOMING



## a BETTER MEDIA CONSUMER

### Defending Your Mind Against Spin, Bias, and Slant: “SBS”

#### 1. On Breaking News

Breaking news in today’s day and age can be described as instantaneous and widespread. With the use of cellphones and social media, millions can be alerted to an event either catastrophic or monumental through immediate notifications. Many unfortunately jump to conclusions based off of the little info they are given at first glance. Breaking news merely means an important event has happened or is currently happening and that journalists and reporters are informing the viewer with what little information they have at the time and should not be considered the full story. Here is what you, as the viewer, can do in the event of a breaking news situation to prevent the spread of false information:

- Remember, this is breaking news and that more information will arrive, just give it time.
- Take the information as it is without generating any assumptions that pass on as truth.
- Wait. More information will eventually arrive as soon as the event starts to subside, just remember, journalists and reporters go off the information they are given at that moment, their words and Info could possibly change once more information is gathered.
- Keep up with the story as long as possible. More revelations will come to fruition and could shift the tone of what was originally reported.
- Remember it is difficult to not jump to conclusions on a developing story, but, controlling what you say or post on the internet or say to a friend could prevent the spread of false information.

#### 2. On Understanding BIAS

Rather than disregard information based on bias alone, learn to read for it. Pay attention to the verbs and adjectives used. Pay attention to the editorials. And then check out some other publications that are following the same story.

The truth is that unbiased news is impossible to find. It doesn’t exist. It’s more about learning to listen to all sides and engage in civil discourse.

Mediabiastfactcheck.com & Allsides.com are great resources to research bias in publications and quickly learn of the larger conversation.

# Becoming A Better Media Consumer

## TMI? Dealing With Information

### 3. Check Yourself Before You Wreck Yourself

#### CHECK YOURSELF

- Understand that “breaking news” is news with limited details and no resolution.
- Realize which sources are credible and those that are not.
- Check the source on a bias-check website.
- Commentary from the general public is mostly opinionated and not factual.

#### WRECK YOURSELF

- False knowledge leads to distrust of reliable sources.
- This deepens the tension between the news source and the audience.
- Remember rumors are created from false knowledge.
- Distrust, rumors, and tension all lead to non-fulfillment and anxiety towards the “proposed truth.”

### 4. The Ethics Of Information

BEYOND VIRTUE, EVEN ETHICS, MORALITY COMPELS US: "Be good to one another." What if being good to each other means being good to our facts? What would that mean? Does being good mean being fair? But how can we be fair to the truth, without knowing what fair means?

TODAY PEOPLE TALK ABOUT OBJECTIVITY like it's proto-science, but we talk about compassion as our highest calling. But how can we be right about compassion, without using objectivity? Empathy is called our great human virtue, but how can one person share the feelings of another, without that judicious impulse?

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM tempts the mind with an easy thought: "There's no such thing as being fair." Wouldn't that be great for the apprentice who ushers in disaster, rather than being responsible for recklessly raining down a world of chaos, if instead there was just no such thing as order?

FOR INFORMATION, that would mean a minimal obligation to be objective, in a world with no such thing as truth. But in the face of that temptation, isn't the duty of judicious minds to recognize that while bias guarantees our preference, still credibility requires us to pursue fairness and generosity, even toward facts?

OUR CALLING MAYBE isn't to understand objectivity so much as to notice our motives while interpreting what is said, believed, and heard; to consider a greater good beyond immediate gratification: the virtue of honor. Translated from the Latin *honor*, it means, "glory, respect, esteem, dignity." *Honor* shares the same root as another word meaning, "virtuous, free from fraud" – the Latin word *honestatem*, pronounced *honnête* by the French, or in English, *honesty*. ■

# WHAT



# is FAKE NEWS?

Fake news is, well, fake news. The vast majority of news outlets are not producing fake news. Journalists and publications alike make mistakes sometimes, but that's not fake news. Journalists and publications alike may print articles slanted toward their bias. But that's not fake news. Moreover, journalists and publications alike may lack integrity. But that's not fake news.

## **FAKE NEWS IS DELIBERATELY CRAFTED AND COMPOSED TO BE FAKE.**

If you come across a story that gets your attention, ask yourself:

- Have I heard of this publication before? (A quick search may teach you more about the publication. Or even look for an ABOUT section.)
- Have I read the whole article? And does the story seem plausible?
- Who wrote this article? (A quick search may help you verify the credibility of the writer.)
- What does [insert trusted publication here] report on this incident?

If any of the answers raise a hair or two, you may be faced with a fake article. So, please don't share.

Who spreads the most fake news? Check out this NPR article to find out: <https://tinyurl.com/y5w78f4a>

Check out PPCC's own LibGuide (<https://libguides.ppcc.edu/fakenews>) for more information on sleuthing fake news.

## **LEARN MORE**

Here are some shows, podcasts, talks, and movies we recommend:

The Newsroom, 2012 (HBO)  
 Nobody Speak: Trials of the Free Press, 2017  
 Page One: Inside the New York Times, 2011  
 Spotlight, 2001  
 Anchorman, 2004  
 The Big Short, 2015  
 11th Hour, 2007 (Documentary)  
 The Fourth Estate, 2018 (Showtime)

Where to Invade Next, 2016  
 Ann Curry: How to Restore Trust in Journalism, 2013 (TED Talk)  
 Malcom Gladwell: Choice, Happiness, and Spaghetti Sauce, 2015 (TED Talk)  
 Atari: Game Over, 2014 (Documentary)  
 The Toys That Made Us, 2017 (Documentary)  
 The Paper, 1994