

HANDBOOK FOR

BROADCAST

JOURNALISTS

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INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We as journalists have one of the most important and exciting jobs in the world and we *do* have the ability to change peoples' lives. In my role as a journalism trainer I try to impart this idea and to encourage journalists to do the best they possibly can under what are often difficult circumstances.

This handbook came about as a result of my working with journalists and journalism students in Rwanda. Despite trying conditions, many of these journalists strive to tell "real" stories and to do "real" journalism. Indeed, many of these journalists have had little, if any, formal journalism training and they have no reference material to guide them. I have put together this handbook in an attempt to fill at least a part of that void.

I would like to thank all of the journalists at TVR and Radio Rwanda that I worked with – you have inspired me greatly. The students at the National University of Rwanda that I taught exhibited the most incredible patience under what were often frustrating conditions. The faculty and staff at the School of Journalism and Communication helped me maintain my sanity and gave me their assistance whenever I asked for it; I would not have been able to accomplish anywhere near as much without them.

In my years as a journalist and a journalism educator, my brief four months in Rwanda were without a doubt the most inspiring, challenging and fulfilling. For this, I thank the International Center for Journalists and the Knight International Press Fellowship Program in Washington, DC for giving me this incredible opportunity.

I hope you will find this volume useful.

Happy reporting!

Michelle Betz
Butare
June 2003

NEWSGATHERING

What is News?

News is many different things to different people; however, there are some traditional news values that should be kept in mind when deciding what to cover and how. These news values include:

- knowing who your audience is and whether the story is relevant to your audience
- proximity – how close is the story to your community, psychologically as well as physically?
- timeliness
- impact (will it affect people, how many people and how much will it affect them?)
- unusualness
- prominence – are there any prominent people, countries, institutions involved?
- conflict – is there conflict in the story?

When researching your story, don't forget the 5 Ws:

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?

And:

- How? What really happened?

Additional questions for news value consideration are:

- Why is it important?
- What does it mean to me?
- What can I do about it?
- What's going to happen next?
- What is the point?

Always ask the money question (Where did the money come from? What is the money being spent on?) and always look for irony.

When covering a story there are several steps you'll have to go through before the story finally makes it to air:

Researching means all the preparation work that precedes going into the field to record or shoot material for broadcast.

Fact checking is making sure everything to be reported on the air is correct.

Accuracy is getting it right.

Balance is making sure that the other side/s gets its/their say.

Storytelling

One of our primary jobs as journalists is to be superb storytellers, for if we don't tell compelling stories we don't give our audience any reason to tune in or to stay tuned. We do have the ability to change peoples' lives, but in order to do so we must tell good stories. How do we do that? Let's start with the elements that every story should, ideally, have:

- **Character** (a person or personalization)
- **Plotline** (build viewer interest and then hit them with the story)
- **Surprise** (hold back, hold back and then reveal)
- **Conflict and Resolution** (emotion and drama)

Then you put all of these elements together with a beginning, middle and end.

Clearly, not all stories can be (nor should they be) told in the same way. It is up to you as the journalist to decide how each particular story should be told. Should the story be told in a simple 30 second script story, or is the story so compelling it should be produced into a full package? Below are some possible formats in which we can tell stories. For more tips on writing for broadcast see page 25.

Types of Broadcast News Stories

Television Stories

Reader/script: story read by the anchor with no sound or pictures

Voiceover or VO: copy that the anchor reads live while video or some other visual element is shown

Sound Bite, Clip, Sound-on-tape or SOT: the edited part of the raw or uncut interview that you select for the viewer or listener. The average sound bit runs between 8 and 15 seconds – in other words keep it short, crisp and to the point. It may be the most important or interesting part of the interview or it may simply add color to the story.

Vox Pops or Streeters: short for the Latin term *vox populi*, meaning the “voice of the people.” In broadcast journalism it's the term we use for a collection of very short interviews with a number of people, usually random members of the public. They are an easy way of putting the views of ordinary people into a broadcast story.

Voiceover sound on tape VO/SOT: the anchor reads live while video or some other visual element is shown, then pauses as we hear a soundbite before the anchor continues to voice-over the visual element.

Reporter package or PKG: visuals, natural sound and sound bites connected together in a report that has a beginning, middle and end. The reporter's voice-over narration track is pre-recorded to connect and organize the visuals and sound.

Radio Stories

Reader/script: story read by the presenter

Script and clip: presenter reads copy but there is also a clip usually in the middle of the story.

Sound Bite, Clip, Sound-on-tape or SOT: the edited part of the raw or uncut interview that you select for the listener. The average sound bit runs between 8 and 15 seconds – in other words keep it short, crisp and to the point. It may be the most important or interesting part of the interview or it may simply add color to the story.

Vox Pops or Streeters: see Types of Television News stories.

Reporter package or PKG: narration (voiceover), natural sound and sound bites connected together in a report that has a beginning, middle and end.

Wrap: presenter reads an intro, followed by the reporter package which is then concluded with the presenter again.

Focus

Focus is, in essence, the angle of a story. Most journalists when pitching stories suggest something which when really thought about is unwieldy. For example, a reporter pitches a story on street kids. But what precisely is the story? What is the angle? What is the **focus**? Let's take a look at the process of coming up with a focus.

Clearly, any production, like any news report, begins with an IDEA. In the example above, the idea is "street kids".

The idea: For an idea to become a news report or feature it should satisfy certain criteria:

The first and most important question: **Will anyone care?** We can find out by asking ourselves:

Is it relevant to people's health/income, their family or friends, their quality of life, their neighborhood, their country? That's a descending order on purpose.

The second question: Will it hurt or help them? Make them happy or mad? Touch them or leave them cold. The selfish side wins most of the time.

But when the story is not so obvious, what do you do? You must have a reason to do the story and it must mean something to somebody. Let's come up with a process:

Research: Fast **proving research** helps you establish the credentials of a story. If after this initial research you can't find a good reason to do the story – again, it should mean something to a good number of people – then you must decide whether to go ahead with it at all. If that proving research tells you the IDEA has a chance, then you can move to the next stage: FOCUS.

Focus: So what is focus and why should you care? It is your most valuable journalistic tool – in print, radio, or TV, a short news item or a documentary. A focus statement is a simple sentence that contains three elements: who, what and why. Or simply: someone is doing something because.

Focus is crucial for journalists as it helps you to clearly define what your story is and what elements you'll need in order to do the story. A focus also helps keep you on track as you do your story, it reminds you what the story is about and where you're going. Without a clear focus, your story will be all over the place, will have too many elements and will likely be confusing for the audience.

Focus statements have the following common elements:

- each is a simple declarative statement
- each contains cause and effect
- each is based on research
- each contains a reference to people
- each has an emotional as well as factual side to it
- each defines what should be put IN and what left OUT
- each has a subject, verb and object

Let's go back to the street kids story. Your PROVING RESEARCH will quickly tell you this is an interesting topic about which many might care – but it's an enormous topic, which must be narrowed down or focused. Without a FOCUS you could be researching for months. How do you narrow it down? **Your proving research will offer several choices.** For instance:

- Authorities are concerned because the number of street children is rising.
- Street children are living on the streets because of abuse at home.
- Tourists feel unsafe because the street kids harass them.

Now along with FOCUS there are two other elements: POINT-OF-VIEW (POV) and TONE. This does not mean advocacy but simply the point of view, in other words,

through which main character/s will you tell the story? In focus #1 we are telling the story from the POV of the authorities as they are likely to dominate the story. However, this does not mean that we will not hear from other characters. Indeed, we must also speak to street children as they are crucial to the story.

As for tone, this particular story will likely be official and serious in tone with comments from the authorities, but it will also include comments from street children.

FOCUS: Tourists feel unsafe because the street children harass them.

The focus is now from the POV of tourists – that means you’ll be **researching** mostly for tourists. Again, this does not mean you’ll lose objectivity! Obviously the claims of tourists will be balanced with those of the street children and perhaps also local officials. The **tone** will be different, more emotional than story #1 as ordinary people will play a larger part.

You can come up with a number of different focus statements for this story with each one suggesting what makes it **in** to the story and what is left **out**. You will also consider how the **research** can be narrowed, how the characters and their **POV** might vary and how the **tone** will change depending on the focus.

After you’ve done your proving research, established your focus, tone and point of view, then you need to do your full **research** for facts. It is important to bear in mind, however, that if your full research shows that your focus is wrong or not precise, you’ll have to change it according to the facts of the story.

So, to tell an effective story you can follow this process:

- Gather all the essential and interesting **facts** – then pare them down to what is needed to tell the story well and honestly...the story of your FOCUS; stay on your chosen route, don’t wander all over the map.
- Seek out, build in, and never waste your **natural sound**.
- Add **context** – by your context shall the great among you be distinguished from the lesser. Use context to show your understanding of the story’s essence and also how it fits into the larger picture.
- The **human drama** to make the story live and breathe and kick up its heels – without dramatic tension your story will be lifeless. (Not hype or faked drama.)
- The **people** with whose story the listener/viewer can identify. Most good reporting has people in it -- just real people like those around you – not the homogenous institutional officials and experts with which most stories unfortunately abound, but real people whose lives might touch you as you shed light on theirs. Real people aren’t afraid of emotion and passion.
- Finally, build the story to a **climax**, or some kind of resolution.

Enterprising

In many cases there are obvious stories that we need to cover: breaking news, news conferences, policy-oriented stories and the like. However, we often get into the habit of relying on the news releases that arrive by fax or phone calls from government ministries announcing some event or another.

What we often forget, however, is that there are endless stories in our community that often go unnoticed, but which are indeed newsworthy. Too often we spend our time in the newsroom often complaining that there's no news or that it's a slow news day, when in fact we couldn't be further from the truth. There is always news happening, it's just not happening in our newsrooms! We should be outside, in our communities, walking or driving through different neighborhoods, talking to different people and looking around us – that's where the best stories are!

Here are some tips in developing story ideas, to help you move away from covering officialdom and towards covering your community.

- listen – what are people talking about on the streets, in the buses, in the shops?
- always be on the hunt for a story
- be curious and ask questions
- look around you
- talk to your photographers, peers and friends
- if you cover a beat find appropriate discussion groups on-line
- change the focus of a story – often that will give you a new angle
- start with your own experiences
- read everything you can get your hands on
- go wandering (do a “walkabout”)
- listen for a different point of view
- measure change – look at who's affected by the statistics; look beyond the numbers
- don't just cover an event – look at the issue that's behind that event
- compare and contrast – provide context
- localize – look for the local connection of a national or international story
- look towards the future
- follow up; assume every story has a follow up
- always ask (and answer) the question why
- brainstorm
- create new contacts
- go to where the pack isn't
- when out in the field, look in the opposite direction
- arrive early for meetings
- when covering meetings make sure to look at the entire agenda – you may spot something you weren't aware of

- pay attention to advertisements
- drive (or walk) around your beat or community as often as possible. Visit your beat at night.
- vary your commute every now and then
- switch your focus
- turn a story on its head. If the macro view has been done, do the micro view and vice versa
- check in with sources periodically
- always end interviews by asking if there is “anything else going on?”

Interviewing for Broadcast

Interviewing is perhaps the most important skill in the pursuit of journalism, but the one we take the most for-granted and prepare for the least. Below are some tips to keep in mind as you set out to do interviews. These tips are useful regardless of whether you are doing a live television interview or a taped interview in the field.

There are however, some differences to keep in mind if you work in television. You must bear in mind that a television viewer processes information differently than a radio listener or a newspaper reader. Thus, you will have to do the interview slightly differently. You must make sure your questions are on target so you get precisely what you need and/or want; you need to be conscious of getting a suitable soundbite – this is much more crucial in TV than in radio where one can simply edit two segments of a clip together. In TV we need to make sure we get the bite we need, but in all cases it is imperative that we shoot cutaways so that if we do have to edit two clips together we can do so seamlessly on the visual side.

Regardless of whether you work in radio or television, your goal is the same: to get a good clip. In order to do this you need to know what makes a good clip and then you have to ask the questions that will lead to your source giving you good clip.

The most important thing to do during an interview is to listen! Listen to the answer instead of thinking of the next question. If you follow this simple rule your interviews will improve greatly.

Interviewing Tips

- Dress appropriately.
- Arrive a little early. Set up always takes some time. And if you’re late, you may have missed your opportunity to interview this person.
- Break the ice and make a good first impression. Make your interviewee feel relaxed.

- Be prepared. Make sure you've researched the topic, prepared your questions and know about the person you're interviewing.
- Know what you want to get from the interview. What's your plan? What's your focus?
- Your interviewee should know what the topic of the interview is, but you should never give your questions in advance unless there is some extraordinary circumstance.
- You are the one in control – never give up your microphone or control of the interview.
- Listen, listen, listen. Don't be a slave to your questions. Listening will lead to follow up questions.
- Mic the questions.
- Always have extra batteries, tapes, mini-disks etc.
- Know how your equipment works. It is embarrassing (and unprofessional) if you don't know how it works.
- Get the spelling and pronunciation of your interviewee's name. This is a good way to begin an interview and to make sure your gear is working. You can also check audio levels this way.
- Be persistent but courteous. Ask, ask and ask again (rule of 3's).
- Ask for clarification. Ask for examples.
- Don't be intimidated.
- Watch your interviewee's body language.
- Take notes during the interview. Note details of the location, what the person is wearing, anything that will add color to your story. Remember, one of your roles is that of observer.
- At the end of the interview, ask if the interviewee has anything to add, if s/he recommends other people you should speak to and whether you may call back later with questions.
- If your source makes requests to speak confidentially or "off-the-record", be prepared to respond in an appropriate way.
- Practice, practice, practice. Interviewing is the toughest skill in journalism, but perhaps the most important. Keep practicing, but also get someone to interview you so you know what it's like to be in the interviewee's shoes.

What questions to ask?

- Always ask the questions that your audience wants answered.
- Avoid closed-ended questions.
- Avoid double-barreled questions. Ask one question at a time.
- Keep questions short and to the point.
- Do not make assumptions.
- Do not argue.
- Never try to cover too much. Remember, focus.
- Have a final question that wraps up your interview.
- Always ask your interviewee if they have anything else they'd like to add.

The 10 Deadly Sins (or how NOT to conduct an interview)

- The non-question (make sure you actually ask a question)
- Double-barreled question (ask one question at a time)
- Overloaded questions (avoid questions with too many parts or too many elements)
- Leading questions
- Comments (don't insert comments into your question)
- Big presuppositions (don't make assumptions)
- Trigger words (people will react to the word rather than the question)
- Hyperbole (less is more so don't exaggerate)
- Complexity (keep it simple)
- Closed-ended questions

(Source: VJ Handbook)

Three Key Properties (and avoid the 10 deadly sins)

- Keep questions open-ended
- Keep questions neutral
- Keep questions simple

(Source: VJ Handbook)

Off-the-shelf questions

- What happened?
- What do you mean?
- Why is that?
- What are/were the options?
- How would you characterize that?
- What was the turning point?
- What did he/she/they say?
- What is/was it like?
- What went through your mind at the time?

(Source: VJ Handbook)

Working with Sources

There are many constants when we practice journalism and one of these is that we deal with sources on a daily basis. Because of this it is important that we learn how to cultivate sources and how to work with them. Perhaps the first question we should ask is: who is or who can be a source? Anyone and everyone, as long as they are providing us with information that is reliable and accurate. Develop contacts with a wide variety of people who may have useful information. In other words, don't simply rely on government ministers or experts and other officials as your sources – speak to the people

living the story or who are affected by the story – they are sources too. In fact, they are the sources that your audience will most be able to identify with and remember.

It is important to cultivate sources from a variety of places but too often when we work under deadline pressure we resort to the same sources time and time again. Try to create a mindset where you are constantly looking for new sources who may have a different point of view, who lend diversity to your story, or who may even give you new story ideas. Develop a source list or rolodex with contact information and notes about the source (availability, expertise, etc.).

But also remember that no matter where or who your information comes from you must find another sources to confirm this information. It is normally not acceptable to rely on just one source.

Finally, you'll often encounter sources who are reluctant to speak to you or are especially reluctant to speak on camera. Don't allow your source to speak "off the record" or anonymously unless that is clearly the only way to get the information. But keep in mind that if you agree to this, not only are you ethically bound to respect any agreement you've made but then you also are in the position of finding another source to confirm this information and to do so on tape or on camera.

Remember, it is part of your job to get these people to speak, to coax them and to encourage them to share their story. Explain to them how important their story is and how many other people will benefit from hearing their story. If they still refuse then ask them if they know someone else that will speak to you. Unfortunately, the reality is that in many countries there is still a culture of fear when it comes to dealing with the media. And unfortunately, it is up to us to try to break through this culture of fear and convince people to speak to us.

See also: Attribution and Use of Soundbites on page 27.

Working with Translations, News Releases and Wire Copy

Much of the information you will use is often not in your working language or is in the form of a press release or wire copy. Each of these situations presents certain challenges, but many of these challenges are similar. First, in each of these cases you have to take ownership of the story. To do this you must first decide whether the information is in fact newsworthy. Second, you should try to develop the story, looking for a second source.

Finally, you'll have to write the story or "rewrite" it for broadcast. To do this you need to read the story, understand the story and then put it away and begin writing *your* version. If you become tied to the original copy you won't be able to write it in broadcast form or in your own words. You need to speak as you write, and write as you speak. Remember that broadcast writing is a different language than writing for print but it's a language you already know – the one you speak every day.

Perhaps one of the simplest methods to do “rewrites” is the following. First, read the story or news release. Second, answer your 5 Ws and H questions and then come up with your focus statement. Then put the original source away and simply begin writing based on your focus and your 5 Ws, referring to the original copy only when you need to check facts for accuracy.

Press releases present their own challenges. Remember that there is usually an agenda behind the release: an organization, institution or government official is likely looking for some publicity for the latest project. It is your role as reporter or editor to assess whether the story is in fact newsworthy. To make this assessment consider the following:

- Check the release for accuracy and for “the other side of the story.” The facts may be accurate but not complete.
- Often what is at the beginning of the release is not the news; read the entire release and then edit.
- Look for ways to be interesting. A story with a human angle will get a lot more attention than one that sounds like an interoffice memo
- Look for the story behind the event.
- Look for additional sources rather than simply speaking to the author of the release.

Finally, when relying on wire copy for information remember that the people writing the copy are reporters just like you and they too make mistakes. Always confirm any information you use from the wires.

Covering Events

One of the most common things we cover is events, whether they are meetings, conferences, hearings and the like. One of the most common things we do every time we cover a meeting is to cover it exactly as we did the last time. Unfortunately, most reporters, after covering countless meetings, get into a rut and simply go to the meeting to cover the meeting, instead of looking for the story behind the meeting and speaking to the people who will, or are, ultimately affected by what’s discussed at the meeting.

For example, if you are told to cover a conference on HIV/AIDS, don’t simply go to the conference, find other locations, such as a clinic, where you might find people living the story.

Here are some tips to help you break out of the meeting “rut”:

- get the agenda early, don’t just cover the meeting, look for a particular aspect of the meeting that your audience would be interested in
- arrive for the meeting early and interview sources before the meeting gets started

- when shooting the meeting, shoot from different angles and points of view. Too often we shoot every meeting in exactly the same way and after a while they all look the same.
- don't simply cover the meeting -- look for the story behind the meeting
- find the people that are affected by the meeting and speak to them
- even if you're in a situation where you are expected to cover a meeting merely because a government official is in attendance, you can still bring back a clip from the official but you can also bring back a real story with real people by looking beyond the event and asking yourself (and then sources) what the story behind the event is.

Clearly, the overriding message we get from these tips is that there is usually an official reason for such meetings, but it is your job to find the real story and the real people behind the meeting. Indeed, often these people will actually be in attendance but they won't be the ones on the stage or in your face. You'll have to seek them out

Use of Natural Sound

Natural or ambient sound is sound that occurs in the environment. Some call it background sound. It is the sound that, when we stop and listen, we hear all around us. It is the birds singing, the traffic roaring, horns blaring, people talking, fluorescent lights humming, kids playing. Natural sound is a crucial aspect of broadcast news stories and helps to not only tell the story, but to illustrate it, to create a visual image in our audience's mind. This is particularly important in radio when we don't have visuals.

Examples of natural sound (or nats, for short):

- a story on traffic congestion would include nats of traffic and perhaps of traffic police blowing their whistles and people honking their horns
- a story on the working conditions of port employees would include nats of the workers at work, general sound at the port, ships' whistles blastsing

There are also two types of natural sound: foreground sound and background sound. You can think of the foreground sound as the close-up shot we use in television and the background shot as the wide-shot or long shot. Foreground sound gets close to the source of the sound, while the background sound is broader, encompassing different sounds from a greater area.

In our first example, the background sound would be the sound of the traffic in general. Our foreground sound could be captured by getting close to the traffic police and recording the sound of them yelling or blowing their whistles. In many cases sound in broadcast is used similarly to the way we use punctuation in writing perhaps as an exclamation mark, or is used to set the scene, to bring the audience closer to the story.

Remember, telling a broadcast story involves the weaving together of several elements: visuals (if television), natural sound, narration track and clips. Effectively weaving these elements together will not only tell a story people aren't likely to forget but will also tell the *whole* story.

Collecting natural sound does take practice and some sounds (water, for example) are much more difficult to record than others. Keep practicing and experimenting and use different microphones if you have them available. Ultimately, your stories will be that much richer for the use of natural sound.

Visual Storytelling

"If your lens doesn't need cleaning at the end of a shoot, you didn't get close enough."
- Rich Murphy, photojournalist

Television is not simply radio with pictures. Indeed, pictures are the most important part of our television news stories simply because people will remember what they see before they remember what they hear, so "show, don't tell". Aim to have pictures that are memorable for the pictures are your visual proof.

Visual storytelling is really an art, but it is an art that we can learn and practice. But before you begin to shoot you need to know what your objective is, what is the focus of your story? What is the editorial focus and what is the visual focus. By determining this you can then decide what pictures you'll need to capture even before going out into the field. Also, while it may seem obvious, you need to know what equipment is available, how to use it, and feel comfortable with it or you won't be able to use it effectively or with confidence. This is not something you can learn in the field!

Remember that television is a collaborative effort and in order for that team to work effectively you need to communicate with your team, be it your photographer, reporter or producer so that everybody knows what the story is. You need to discuss what shots are needed and decide the best way to do the story in the available time

When you do go into the field to begin shooting, you should strive to do several things. First, remember your goal is to prove the focus of your story with sound and pictures. The pictures are the visual proof of the story you are telling. Ask yourself "what pictures will tell this story with a minimum of words?" and strive to capture mood and emotion.

Second, remember that we are storytellers and that stories have 3 basic elements: beginning, middle and end and your visuals also need to illustrate those elements. The opening shot, or beginning, of a story is usually illustrated with a wide shot. The middle of the story is made up of medium and tight shots and the story will usually end with another wide shot.

Third, some shots are better for telling stories than others. The shots that best tell stories include close-ups, faces, action and reaction and detail. Television is a close-up medium so shoot lots of close-ups. When you do shoot close-ups don't shoot from across the room – you need to get close to whatever you're shooting!

It may seem strange, but perhaps the most difficult aspect of shooting is to gather good, usable audio. What usually happens is that we become so consumed with getting all the right shots and sequences that we forget all about sound. Remember, television storytelling is composed of pictures, clips, narration or voiceover and natural sound so always monitor your audio. You need to listen for, and then capture, good, vivid natural sound.

In the field make sure that you discipline your shooting -- know what you're shooting and why. Once you have the technique down then you can enhance your visual storytelling by finding unique compositions and experimenting. If you have a tripod, use it.

While shooting is part of the production process, what you shoot will ultimately need to be edited and thus you need to shoot accordingly. There are a couple of things you should always make an effort at shooting. First, don't forget to shoot cutaways or you'll have a difficult time when it comes to editing. A cutaway is a brief shot used to establish visual continuity between two shots. They are most commonly used when editing together two clips from the same interview.

Second, make an effort at shooting sequences everywhere you go. A sequence is a series of shots that, when edited, gives the impression of continuous action. In essence, a sequence tells a mini-story in compressed time and helps explain a key story idea in a more effective fashion than could be done using random shots.

Sequences are easy, they just take practice. The basic three shot sequence is composed of an opening wide shot followed by a medium shot and then finishing with a close up.

Finally, understand that there is a corresponding reaction to every shot you make and always ask yourself what is the corresponding reaction to the shot you're making now? You need to think ahead and anticipate where the action is going next and position yourself to make the shot.

A few more photography tips:

- shoot what is going away first (because it's not coming back!)
- shoot and move
- remember, the eye does not zoom so be judicious in your use of zooms
- interviews can be visual too; try to shoot your sources in their natural environment
- shoot at the subject's level, so if you're shooting a child get down to your knees and shoot on their level

Computer-Assisted Reporting

One of the most useful tools in journalism today is the internet. But, just because it's online doesn't mean it's true. Indeed, there's a lot of bad, biased and simply incorrect information on the net. In order to use the internet effectively you need to know where to look and to be familiar with what's available and where to find it.

According to the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation "Wired Journalist" guide, there are several things you should consider when evaluation information found online. First, look for the source and make sure it's legitimate and there is a clearly identifiable person or organization behind the site. Second, look carefully at the website address; if there's a tilde (~) the site is likely to be a personal web page. Third, as with any source used in journalism, make sure whatever you use is attributable. Finally, beware of pages that have incorrect spelling or grammar.

Once you've found a site that you consider reliable and will likely use frequently, you should "bookmark" it or add it to your "favorites". This will make it easy to access these sites in the future.

To access the web, we use a program called a browser, the two most common are Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator. Both can be downloaded for free. Every webpage can then be accessed by typing in its URL (uniform resource locator) which begins with <http://>. Because this is common to all web addresses, it is usually omitted.

Interactivity on the web is achieved through "hyperlinks" or "links" as they are more commonly known. Links are usually identifiable on a webpage by the use of blue type and underlining.

Searching the web is one of the most common uses of the internet, but also one of the most difficult tasks to do efficiently. In order to do an effective search, you must be precise in the use of keywords you use, but not so precise that you get no results at all. Some of the most common search engines are: www.google.com, www.altavista.com, www.lycos.com and www.yahoo.com.

For more information on computer-assisted reporting check out the National Institute of Computer-Assisted Reporting at: www.nicar.org. There is also the Online News Association which you might find useful. Their website is: www.onlinenewsassociation.org

Also, keep in mind that more and more journalists are using email to gather information from sources who may be on the other side of the world. Of course, this presents challenges for the broadcast journalist who usually requires a soundbite for their story, but as a means for gathering background information it can be very useful.

See page 36 for a list of websites that you might find useful.

Political Reporting

Political reporting is covering government at both the local and national levels, but it is also covering political candidates and politicians. In any case, remember that the first premise in reporting is: fairness, accuracy, balance. This is especially important to keep in mind when doing political coverage. Covering politics, however, does not mean simply using politicians as sources. Often political coverage that is more effective is coverage that includes real people, people that are affected by political decisions. The president or government ministers are not our only sources for political stories.

Government engages in many essential activities:

- authorization of public improvements, such as streets, new buildings, bridges
- adoption of various codes, such as building, sanitation, zoning
- issuance of regulations affecting public health, welfare and safety
- consideration of appeals from planning and zoning
- appointment and removal of city officials
- authorization of land buys and sales
- awarding of franchises
- adoption of expense and capital budgets.

Group participants in local government process as follows:

- political party leaders - they have a strong hand in nominating process. These people have a political agenda
- elected and appointed officials - have key roles in implementing policy. Elected usually member of political parties with political agenda
- Interest or pressure groups. Every aspect of government is affected by these. Business interested in government spending, rules and regulations. In Mauritius, concerned about tourism taxes and levies. Banks scrutinize debt policies. Contractors urge public improvements. Even private citizens have a stake in government though often not as organized. Religious groups and educational organizations keep track of school policies. Medical and health professionals examine the activities of the health dept.

In all this mix is the media, often referred to as the government watchdog and like it or not, the media often play a direct part in the political process. The media highlight personalities, are fond of exposes, and will do stories about public works projects that appear too ambitious or expensive. The media often do stories about government as simply a succession of events. Instead, journalists should tell people about how government works, how it affects them, and how they can influence it. This goes back to the “informing” role the media play.

There are a variety of different stories that measure the well-being of a community, just don't forget to come up with a focus and to find people that are “living” the story, that are affected by the story. Some of these stories might include:

- employment and unemployment rates
- health data

- social conditions - diversity and harmony
- literacy rates
- education statistics
- housing starts, telephone and utility connections, automobile sales
- hotel and motel occupancy rates
- sales tax revenues

When covering political campaigns - there should be at least four elements to your coverage:

Candidate: do a profile, interview friends and associates of the candidate

Money: always ask the money questions. Examine political fundraisers, campaign funding disclosure reports, advertising programs. Who is giving money to the candidate? How much are they spending? What are the candidates spending their money on?

Issues: more important than the politics. candidates platforms, public's input. Remember, candidates go where the votes are. Watch where your candidates are going, how often, who they are appealing to. Just by looking at a candidate's weekly schedule you can detect much of his strategy. For example, reporters are concerned with accountability. If they see a campaign is skirting relevant issues or only addressing them with generalities, it's the reporter's job to press the questions that will force out the issues. The public is entitled to know the candidate's stance on taxes, welfare, education and health care. This is more substantive reporting that "horse-race reporting" - which merely tells who's up and who's down in a political race. Most political reporters know what the public considers important and so press the candidates on these issues. Don't just accept slogans and generalities: what do they mean? For example a campaign uses as a slogan: Your congressman is there when you need him. What does that mean? Political reporters should see through these substitutes for the specific, calculated devices by which the candidate or official avoids taking a position.

Organization: key figures, campaign plans. Remember: no campaign is not planned. Assume that every decision is made for a reason. A reporter's job is to cull from the campaign rhetoric those few words, incidents and impressions that convey the flavor, the mood and the significance of what occurred.

Election Reporting Tips

(From an article by Thomas Winship, chairman of the International Center for Journalists and former editor of The Boston Globe. Written for Editor & Publisher, Oct. 3, 1992)

- **Stick to the issues.** Watch out for candidates who employ clever public relations tactics that have nothing to do with real election issues. Some candidates find they can call more attention to themselves by launching a hate campaign against their opponents (personal family values is a favorite topic) rather than addressing important issues like the economy and jobs.
- **Beware of exaggerating controversy.** Too often on a day when a story doesn't hit us in the face, some reporters and editors create and then exaggerate a potential conflict. Better to let that day pass without a 20-second sound bite or a byline.
- **Equal time for all.** Keep a meticulous running score on space and play (front page, inside) given to each candidate. Uneven reporting is the most certain way to lose credibility and readers.
- **Don't forget the voter.** Reporters should keep up with what the voters are thinking, not only through polls and man-in-the-street quick quotes, but by meaningful probing of how families are surviving. Remember to cover the regions and not just key areas of the country.
- **Beware of "poll-itis."** Polls can be useful, but they can be overused and manipulated. A reader will be better served by more old-time regional reports with interviews and predictions from voters and field experts.
- **Don't over analyze.** Much of the energy and time devoted to analyzing the candidates' every move would be better utilized telling readers what voters think rather than what a desk-bound dreamer, with a license to sway, wishes would happen.
- **Beware of "creeping legitimacy."** Creeping legitimacy occurs when one news organization (usually a not-so-reliable one) publishes a story based on a rumor or one source and other media houses follow suit out of fear of missing the story. News organizations should apply the same reporting standards of their own investigative efforts (double-check every fact) to any political campaign rumors and scandals. The reporter must never serve as a mere conduit for unchecked personal information on a candidate, especially from a questionable source. Stick by your own standard of fact-checking before pulling the trigger.

Covering Budgets

This requires knowledge of how money is raised and how it is spent. Money fuels the system and the relationship between money and the workings of the government can be seen in the budget process.

The budget is a forecast or estimate of expenditures that a government will make during the year. Revenues are needed to meet those expenses and the budget is the final resolution of the conflicting claims of individuals and groups to public money.

All sorts of pressures come to bear on the budget makers. Good reporters check to see if politicians seek to reward constituencies and fulfill campaign promises.

Here is a checklist of budget stories:

- amount to be spent new or increased taxes, higher license and permit fees and other income that will be necessary to meet expenditures cuts, if any, to be made in such taxes, fees or fines. (Comparison with preceding years) Justification for increases sought, cuts made
- Rate of current spending, under or over budget of previous year
- Patterns behind submission and subsequent adjustments, such as political motives, pressure groups, history
- Consequences of budget for agencies, departments, businesses, public
- Per-person comparison of costs for specific services with other areas or schools
- Check of one or more departments to see how funds are used, whether all funds were necessary.

There are five major interest groups that seek to influence budget making and constitute a reporter's sources:

1. government - executives who submit the budgets, officials, party leaders outside government often helpful
2. Money-providing constituencies - local real estate associations, property owners associations, chambers of commerce, taxpayer organizations, merchants and business groups, banks
3. service-demanding groups - education, health, welfare and other services
4. organized bureaucracies – public employees, municipal unions
5. independent groups

NEWS PROCESSING

Broadcast Writing

Writing for broadcast differs from print because our brains process the information differently when it comes from radio or television. Most importantly, we must remember that our audience has only one chance to understand the story, whereas in print the reader can linger over a story or go back and re-read if something is not clear. We do not have that luxury in broadcasting. Our audience has one chance, and only one chance, to understand.

But, while this does pose some challenges, we have to remember that when writing for broadcast we're using a language we already know – the spoken language. This is true no matter what language you work in. We often get so tied to our scripts, ie. the *written* portion of our stories, that we forget that these scripts are going to be read *aloud*. Herein lies the difficulty, but also the simplicity, of broadcast writing. Indeed, we are writing, but we are writing for the ear, writing simply, the way we speak. Thus, perhaps the most important thing to remember is to write conversationally, to write the way we speak and to speak while we write! But beware of using slang or colloquialisms.

Once we've ascertained the focus of our story (see page 8), we need to decide on the story's structure. A simple 4-step process, called a grid, can be useful: hook, context, development and wrap.

The hook is the beginning of the story where we use good pictures and natural sound to grab our audience and compel them to stay tuned; it's where we establish the story's theme and tone. The context is the information-heavy part of a story and in television it is often not very visually exciting. The context calls for great writing and for you to get into the next section, the development, as quickly as possible. It is now that we develop our characters, write less, build tension, explain motivation and provide analysis. While we develop the story we rely heavily on the story's characters. Finally, we need to wrap the story. Here we look to the future, tie up any loose ends and return to our original mood. It's important not to linger too long here and not to moralize, simply wrap the story.

If we are to use the street kids story our grid would look something like the following.

	VISUALS	SCRIPT
HOOK	c/u of street kid sifting through a pile of garbage or begging from someone	Story intro
CONTEXT	Shots of street kids; maybe file footage of genocide; shots of local authorities dealing with the street kids	Explain why so many street kids; clips from local authorities

DEVELOPMENT	More shots of kids	Clips from street kids telling their stories – why living on street etc.
WRAP	More shots of the child in his/her environment	Back to our first main character and try to bring the story to the future

Following this simple process helps us decide what elements we need to gather in the field. Remember, you're the one that knows everything about the story while the audience knows nothing. It is your job to keep the story as simple and logical as possible while providing whatever information your audience needs to understand the story in its entirety.

General rules:

- don't try to tell the whole story
- be specific and use concrete terms
- focus on one thing at a time
- write conversationally
- write factually and accurately
- write in the active voice
- write a beginning, a middle and an end
- start strong
- simplify
- attribution comes first

Do's

- Tell stories in a LOGICAL order.
- Write as you talk and talk as you write. (Keep sentences short. If you have a long sentence, follow it up with a short one)
- One thought per sentence. Just one!
- Use the PRESENT tense.
- Use the ACTIVE voice.
- Paint pictures with your words. (Let the viewer make the conclusion – you tell/describe what's going on.)
- Describe people, don't label them. (Tell exactly what they do as opposed to using their official title.)
- Use verbs as adjectives. (eg. If you say "he struts or saunters" you're giving a picture without using an adjective.)
- Treasure small words.
- Use numbers carefully and as little as possible. Make numbers mean something.
- Put attribution at the beginning of the sentence.

Don'ts

- No freight trains. (Don't pile up adjectives)
- No acronyms.
- Stop at danger words like "who" and "which".
- Don't say what you don't need. Be direct.
- No cliches.
- No jargon.
- Avoid vague language. Be specific.
- Avoid synonyms or elegant variations.
- Avoid numbers in your script if possible. If you have to use them, make them mean something. Be sure to write them out in your script and round them off.

Attribution and Use of Soundbites

There are several different ways we can use information in our stories: attribution, clips or soundbites, and our own observation. The information has to come from somewhere, and when it is not directly observed or heard by a journalist, it must be "sourced" or attributed. In other words we need to tell our audience where the information came from. This is necessary for a couple of different reasons. First, attributing the information enables the audience to assess its authority or accuracy. Second, it makes it clear that the particular news organization is not responsible for the information. Third, it assigns responsibility for the information to the source.

Beware, however, that attribution does not relieve the journalist of responsibility. Simply because you correctly attribute information or quote someone does not mean that what they say is true or responsible.

Here are some examples of attribution:

- *According to police*, ten people were injured in the explosion.
- *The President says* elections will take place soon.

Keep in mind that in broadcast writing the attribution goes at the beginning of the sentence.

If we use soundbites or clips (or sots: sound-on-tape) we need to bear a few things in mind. First, for regular news stories soundbites should not be longer than 15 seconds maximum. Second, you need to write into your bites – you need a "clip intro" that introduces the person we are about to hear from without stealing that person's thunder or repeating what they are about to say. Your clip intro needs to be a full sentence which can be as simple as "John Abdullah is the minister of transport." The clip intro is then followed by the soundbite. Finally, when translating a clip, let the clip run at full sound for the first

couple of seconds before bringing the sound down and bringing up the voiceover translation.

Reporters often find it difficult to find the ten best seconds of an interview but you need to ask yourself which is the absolute best part of the interview and best illustrates the story.

Soundbites can be most often placed into one of two categories: informational and emotional. Informational soundbites are usually those we get from officials or experts while emotional sots come from people who are living the story or are affected by the story. It is up to you to decide what kind of bites will best tell your story and then how you need to go about gathering those bites.

Finally, bear in mind that often we will want to use two segments of the same interview. In radio these are easy to edit together, but in television if we edit them straight together we'll get a jump cut. As a result, we need to always shoot cutaways anytime we shoot in the field. A cutaway is a brief shot that will create visual continuity between the two clip segments. Cutaways of interviews could include the following shots: the interviewee's hands or an over the shoulder shot of the reporter listening, anything that will establish a sense of continuity. Also make sure you shoot cutaways that are at least 15 seconds in length or the editor will have a tough time when it comes to editing.

Video Editing

Whenever compelling images, natural sounds and narration are edited into a single story, relationships are established, realities created, questions answered and emotions stimulated. That is the power of editing. When done well, news video editing is invisible to the viewer.

More precisely, editing means to select certain parts of an event or events and put them into a proper sequence. In essence, we're condensing time and space. Of course the specific nature of editing will depend on what exactly you're trying to edit. Are you editing a 20-minute television documentary or a one-minute news package? While this section deals with editing for television, many of the concepts discussed here can be applied equally well to editing for radio (without the visual element, of course).

The basic editing functions are to *combine* various shots, to *condense* the footage, to *correct* production mistakes and to *build* a show or story from various shots.

Editing Tips

- Think about the story in advance and how and what you'll need to edit
- Communicate with your crew
- Think about what the story is and shoot accordingly. Don't overshoot or it will be a nightmare to edit (and will take up valuable time that you don't usually have)
- You need sequences and these cannot be built in the edit room, so make sure they're shot in the field
- Images must be edited so that the main subject is always moving in the same direction throughout a sequence. The only things that might change are camera angle, composition and distance to the subject
- Movement that changes abruptly confuses viewers. Make sure you've got the cutaways you need.
- When using camera movement such as a zoom or a pan, make sure you complete the movement in editing – don't cut a zoom or pan in mid-motion; let it finish.
- Like everything else in broadcast journalism, editing should be motivated by action, dialogue, sound or narration. Each shot should run only as long as it takes the viewer to absorb the information presented. Pacing is crucial.
- Have a shot list to work from and know where you're going.
- Be organized: have your tapes, shot list, notes and script.
- If you're working with the editor (rather than editing yourself) share the focus of the story so you're both working from the same page.
- Be prepared to change the words: words are more flexible than the pictures.
- Let it breathe. Pauses can be very powerful.
- Natural sound – use it!!

Performance

As broadcasters most of us rely on our voices for our livelihood. What many of us don't realize is that we can change our voice – but it takes time and practice. This section will give you practical advice on what you need to work on in order to change your voice. It will also give you tips on how to improve standups and going live.

Delivery

The first step in working on your delivery is to make sure you're relaxed. This may seem like a contradiction for many of us automatically tense up before we perform and to some extent need that rush of adrenaline in order to perform effectively. However, we need to release the tension in our face and neck and shoulders where most of us carry this tension in order to unlock our voices. That means roll your shoulders and your neck, stretch, move, whatever it takes to relax. You must do this before attempting any type of performance whatsoever.

We also need to learn to breathe properly which will also help us to relax. Most of us are shallow breathers, using only the top third of our lungs, leaving the bottom two-thirds to stagnate. We need to learn to fill not only our lungs with oxygen, but also our diaphragm for ultimately it is from the diaphragm that we will speak – our vocal chords only help to produce the sound...using our diaphragm will lend a richness and resonance to our voice and will also help protect our vocal chords.

How can we find our diaphragm? Well, for many of us that could prove to be a challenge because most of us don't use our diaphragm on a daily basis. Try this: stand tall, feet shoulder-width apart and breathe in deeply through your nose. Feel the oxygen fill your belly and allow your belly to distend. What is actually distending is your diaphragm! Do some of this belly breathing daily and you'll begin to get a feel for where your diaphragm is and ultimately how to use it.

You should also be standing anytime you perform. Clearly, this isn't possible if you're a television presenter, but you should stand whenever possible. You should also hold your copy up or have it in front of you so that you're not looking down. Our goal here is to have the entire pathway, from the diaphragm up through your lungs and windpipe until it's expelled, as clear and straight as possible. If you're looking down, your windpipe will be crunched up, hindering the clear escape of the sound.

You should also stay as hydrated as possible, that means lots of water and cut back on the coffee or sodas as caffeine is a diuretic meaning it simply dehydrates you – the opposite of what we're trying to achieve. The simple act of clearing your throat should also be avoided as it simply will irritate your vocal chords.

You also need to learn to use a microphone effectively. Most of us hold the mic too close to our mouths thus picking up unwanted hissing (sybillance) and popping and often leading to distorted sound pick up.

Finally, always appear confident even if you're not and practice, practice, practice for that is the only way your performance will improve.

RICE:

Relaxed

Interested in what you're saying

Connected beyond the mic/lens to your audience

Energized because what you give you get back

Reads:

- know what you're reading, understand it and visualize it
- make it make sense
- visualize – you may be in a small booth or studio, but you need to put yourself into the place where your story is happening
- keep it conversational; don't sound like you're reading, but rather like you're telling a story

- talk to the audience
- use expression in your performance – yes, that means facial expression. I especially like to see presenters use their eyebrows!
- pauses can help tell the story and can give you a much needed moment to collect yourself
- maintain momentum through every sentence, through every paragraph until the very last word
- watch your audio levels to make sure you're getting what you want
- when giving an audio level test or check, make sure you are reading what and how you will be on air. Do not simply blow into the microphone or count as that will not give an accurate check.
- make sure you articulate and enunciate clearly; many of us have problems with certain words and sounds and it's up to you to ascertain what your problem areas might be and then to work on them
- focus on what you're saying; there are always distractions in any environment and it's your job to ignore them and focus on the job at hand

Script:

- mark your script – that means any pauses, unfamiliar pronunciations, intonation, expression – anything that will help you do a better read. Do NOT assume you'll remember when you go to mic it, you won't!
- know pronunciations
- always rehearse your script and read aloud using your face and eyes for expression BUT don't over rehearse
- remember, a lot of bad performance stems from a bad script so make sure you can read your script, that it's written for broadcast and that *you* can read it!

Tone:

- look out for unintentional traps that may make you appear insensitive. ie. A sunny live weather report after a murder story. You need to mentally shift from story to story
- speak with both authority and accessibility
- beware of becoming overly emotional when reading, your tone and emotional expression should match the tone of the story you are reading

Fear of performance or “mic fright” is usually due to:

- lack of experience or preparation
- fear of failure
- lack of self-esteem
- lack of mental preparation
- dislike of one's own voice

Once you know where your fear stems from you can work to overcome it!

Exercises for diaphragm, breathing, open throat:

- preparing the speech muscles: move the lips in all sorts of ways – push them forward, stretch them back, pucker them, blow through them
- stretch the tongue in and out of your mouth, down over your chin
- work the soft palette (the soft fleshy area above the back of your throat) by saying the phonetic sounds k, g, ng
- repeat these sounds: bah, bah, bah; duh, duh, duh; lah, lah, lah; gah, gah, gah
- the, the, the; ra, ra, ra; mah, mah, mah; yah, yah, yah
- exaggerate vowel sounds before coming back to speaking them normally: OH, OU, OI
- deep diaphragmatic breathing

Going Live

Regardless of whether you're a television or radio reporter, no doubt you'll be going live at some point during your career and likely quite often.

Preparation:

- Organize key themes and ideas first, then insert key supporting ideas.
- Outline the beginning, middle and end.
- Remember: a live should NOT replicate a pre-produced package
- Avoid relaying too much information and too many details.
- Include information not used in later packages or to explore other angles.
- Write ONLY key words/facts on your notepad
- Check appearance/equipment/the scene one last time.
- BREATHE fully from the diaphragm.

Performance:

- vary body language/facial expression
- vary eye contact; look down at notes and survey the scene
- physically interpret the information
- work the scene, if possible
- don't read word for word from notes
- keep copy and delivery conversational
- keep sentences short
- avoid a run-on delivery
- pause when you stumble or to highlight key information
- utilize vocal variety

Standups

A standup is a short (no more than 15 seconds) taped appearance of the reporter on camera. When edited it becomes a part of the reporter package.

A standup can accomplish certain things in a news story:

- Can bridge from place to place or from thought to thought when it occurs in the middle of a story
- Can summarize and tag a story when it's placed at the end.
- Can be invaluable in making a story less complicated and confusing.
- A standup proves, beyond any doubt, that you were truly on the scene, as an eyewitness, giving you and your newscast vital credibility.

Here are some considerations for a standup:

- Will a standup enhance the telling of the story?
- Will my pictures completely carry the story?
- Will we talk about facts that cannot be visualized?
- Is my video so uninteresting that I'm just using it so I won't put up color bars?

Reasons not to use a standup:

- Because we want to see the reporter
- Because a consultant says research indicates we should
- Because you don't have another way to begin or end your story

Performance tips for standups:

- Explain, as opposed to "report" or "read"
- Make clear how the story touches and affects people.
- Relax
- Speak in phrases, in thoughts. Tell your story in natural conversational language.
- Remember that the audience is rarely hanging on your every word. So you must make your story and especially your standup sufficiently clear so as not to confuse people.
- Try to make maximum use of your surroundings for your standups.
- Try to keep your standups interactive.
- Remember standups are not long. Usually a few thoughts or sentences will do the job more effectively than a paragraph. A standup can range from 7 to 15 seconds.

Appearance

Because television is a visual medium appearance does matter, as much as we may want to resist that fact. As such here are some tips to help you with your on-camera appearance.

- Avoid white and black clothing
- Clothing should have a slim silhouette and not be too bulky

- Avoid clothing with thin stripes or plaid or that is too busy or colors that are too contrasting
- Colors should coordinate with, not blend into, the set you are working on
- Women should avoid wearing big jewelry such as earrings or necklaces. Keep it simple and uncluttered.
- Makeup should be smooth and subtle and not theatrical. When applying makeup be sure to apply it in similar lighting conditions as those to which you'll be performing.
- Hair should be neat and not hanging in your face
- Use appropriate facial expression

LAW, ETHICS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Journalistic Values and Standards

In our efforts to be responsible journalists, there are a number of journalistic values that, while not law, may help us in making sound decisions and producing solid news coverage.

- **Accuracy** – get the facts right and get the right facts. The information you gather is not misleading or false. Completeness of information is also crucial – don't be inaccurate by omitting information. Do not assume that information you were given is true. You must verify.
- **Integrity** – The information is truthful and not distorted to justify a conclusion or to present a personal bias.
- **Balance/Fairness** – Reflect the wholeness of communities and report equitably the relevant facts and significant points of view. Deal fairly and ethically with persons, institutions, issues and events.
- **Impartiality** – There are often more than two sides to any issue and impartiality may not be achieved simply by mathematical balance in which each view is complemented by an opposing one. It is also important to keep your opinions separate from those of your sources. In news, your opinions are not part of the story.
- **Accessibility** – Be the eyes and ears of the community – go where the public cannot go. Help citizens connect with each other.
- **Credibility** – depends not only on accuracy and fairness in reporting and presentation, but also on avoidance by both the organization and its journalists of contacts which could give rise to perceptions of partiality. Be accountable. You may at times be required to explain why you do what you do. For example, why a suspect was named in a news story.
- **Privacy** – Journalists should respect the privacy of individuals, recognizing that intrusions have to be justified by serving a greater good. Journalists should not report the private legal behavior of public figures unless broader public issues are raised either by the behavior itself or by the consequences of its becoming widely known.

Codes of Ethics

Please see the Codes of ethics of RTNDA: www.rtnda.org/ethics
and SPJ: http://www.spj.org/ethics_code.asp

Making Ethical Decisions

Ethical decisions are not made in a vacuum. Indeed, making ethical decisions involves both the individual and the organization; there is both personal responsibility on the part of the journalist, and organizational responsibility on the part of the news organization. Bearing this in mind, here are some guidelines we can use to help us make sound ethical decisions.

- Consult your colleagues and editors
- Define the ethical problem
- Check codes of ethics and other guides
- Decide what your journalistic objective is
- Identify the people involved in the story (the stakeholders) and how they might be affected by your decision
- Ask yourself what your alternatives might be
- Having a discussion is not enough: you have to make a decision
- Make sure that you can explain your decision and explain the decision if necessary

Finally, when making decisions, you may consider the following checklist from the book *Doing Ethics in Journalism: A Handbook with Case Studies* by Jay Black, Bob Steele and Ralph Barney.

1. What do I know? What do I need to know?
2. What is my journalistic purpose?
3. What are my ethical concerns?
4. What organizational policies and professional guidelines should I consider?
5. How can I include other people, with different perspectives and diverse ideas, in the decision-making process?
6. Who are the stakeholders – those affected by my decision? What are their motivations? Which are legitimate?
7. What if the roles were reversed? How would I feel if I were in the shoes of one of the stakeholders?
8. What are the possible consequences of my actions? Short term? Long term?
9. What are my alternatives to maximize my truth telling responsibility and minimize harm?
10. Can I clearly and fully justify my thinking and my decision? To my colleagues? To the stakeholders? To the public?

GLOSSARY OF BROADCAST NEWS TERMS

Reader: story read by the anchor with no sound or pictures

OTS: “over the shoulder” graphic, often a box over the anchor’s shoulder, used to emphasize subject of the story

Voice-over or VO: copy that the anchor reads live while video or some other visual element is shown

Natural Sound or NATS: ambient sound collected on the scene that enhances the viewer’s “feel” for the story or helps them better understand what happened

Sound Bite, Clip, Sound-on-tape or SOT: the edited part of the raw or uncut interview that you select for the viewer or listener. The average sound bite runs between 8 and 15 seconds. It may be the most important or interesting part of the interview or it may simply add color to the story.

Nat-VO or NVO: the anchor reads a sentence or two on camera, and then pauses. The tape is rolled and we hear natural sound before the anchor continues to voice-over the visual element.

Package or PKG: visuals, natural sound and sound bites connected together in a report that has a beginning, middle and end. The reporter’s voice-over narration track is pre-recorded to connect and organize the visuals and sound.

Anchor Intro or Lead-in: an anchor’s on-camera introduction to a reporter package

Live Intro: a reporter’s live-in-the-field or in the newsroom introduction to their package

Anchor Tag: an anchor’s on-camera remarks immediately following a reporter package

Live Tag: a reporter’s live in the field remarks immediately following their package

Live Wrap Around: anchor intro, live intro, package, live tag, anchor tag

Headlines and Teases: short voiceovers designed to “hook” the viewer, thus bringing them to a newscast or preventing them from changing the channel

Close-up (CU): shot of an object at close range and tightly framed

Medium shot (MS): shot of an object at medium range; covers any framing between a close-up and a long shot

Long shot (LS): shot of an object from far away and very loosely framed

Pan: horizontal turning of the camera

Jump cut: an image that jumps slightly from one screen position to another during a cut

WEBSITES

General Sites

Assignment Editor

<http://www.assignmenteditor.com>

A page of useful links for journalists.

Associated Press

<http://www.ap.org/apjobs/>

California Chicano News Media Organization

<http://www.ccnma.org>

A useful site with lots of jobs and not just for Californians or Chicanos

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

<http://www.cbc.ca>

Check out the radio side and take a listen.

College Media Advisers

<http://www.collegemedia.org/>

Useful info about their convention, awards and more

Electronic Media

<http://emonline.com/>

Lots of info and jobs

First TV Job

www.1stTVJob.com

Jobs

Intercollegiate Broadcasting System (IBS)

<http://www.ibsradio.org/>

Internet Resources for Journalism Jobs

<http://www.newslab.org/joblinks-1.htm>

Links to sites that list jobs in journalism.

I Want Media

www.iwantmedia.com

Tons of links to everything including jobs.

Journalism Jobs

<http://www.journalismjobs.com>

Journalism.net

<http://www.journalismnet.com>

A full service site with dozens of useful links, developed by a Canadian reporter.

Journalists Toolbox

<http://www.journaliststoolbox.com>

Features more than 13,000 Web sites helpful to the media and anyone else doing research

Lost Remote

<http://www.lostremote.com>

Great info for this age of convergence

Media Bistro

<http://www.mediabistro.com>

Lots of jobs

MediaLine

<http://www.medialine.com>

Story examples and news about television news. Also jobs. Subscription service.

Media Jobz

<http://www.mediajobz.com>

Like monster.com but for media jobs

Media Recruiter

<http://www.mediarecruiter.com>

Jobs in media sales, promotion, traffic, engineering and promotion.

National Press Photographers Association (NPPA)

<http://www.nppa.org>

The National Press Photographers website.

National Public Radio

www.npr.org

Next Generation Radio (NPR Training Project)

<http://www.npr.org/about/nextgen/>

Great training opportunities for budding journalists (and paid for!)

NewsLab

<http://www.newsLab.org>

Lots of useful info.

Newsblues

<http://www.newsblues.com>

Lots of info about TV news, but most is by subscription.

Newshound

<http://www.newshound.com>

TV news info and jobs

Newslink

<http://newslink.org/joblink/>

The world's largest, best-read active listing of journalistic jobs, online or in print

Planet Media

<http://www.planetmedia.net/>

Tons of jobs!

Production Hub

<http://www.productionhub.com>

Production info and jobs

Project for Excellence in Journalism

<http://www.journalism.org>

An initiative by journalists from all media to clarify and raise the standards of American journalism.

Promax

<http://www.promax.tv>

The site for promotions and marketing professionals in electronic media

Qwestdex

<http://www.qwestdex.com>

find phone listings for residential and business listings.

Radio College

www.radiocollege.org

A useful site for radio resources.

Reporter.org

<http://www.reporter.org>

Resources for journalists, including specific beat-related links.

Roger Simmons

<http://www.rogersimmons.com>

Orlando media news and info

RTNDA

<http://www.rtna.org/>

Reporter's toolbox from the Radio and Television News Directors Association.

The Rundown

<http://www.tvrundown.com>

Resources for television newsrooms, including story ideas and links.

Shoptalk

<http://www.tvspy.com/shoptalk.htm>

Essential daily reading for all television journalists.

Showbizjobs.com

<http://www.showbizjobs.com>

Jobs in a variety of entertainment fields.

Society of Professional Journalists

<http://www.spj.org>

Their code of ethics is available in seven languages.

TV Cameramen

<http://www.tvcameramen.com/>

Site for news photogs with lots of tips on shooting

TV Jobs

<http://www.tvjobs.com>

An easy-to-search reference listing of stations and contacts, plus links and job listings.

TV Newz

<http://www.tvnewz.com/>

A "webzine" for people interested in television news, includes job listings.

The Working Reporter

<http://workingreporter.com/>

A resource for journalists, with news, media criticism, and quick links to information sources.

World Association of Community Broadcasters

<http://www.amarc.org>

Press Freedom**Article XIX**

<http://www.article19.org>

An international human rights organization which promotes freedom of expression.

Committee to Protect Journalists

<http://www.cpj.org>

Updates and information about press freedom around the world.

Index on Censorship

<http://www.oneworld.org>

A bi-monthly magazine for free speech with the goal to protect free expression.

International Freedom of Expression Exchange

<http://www.ifex.org>

Searchable database of "action alerts" from around the world.

Network for the Defence of Independent Media in Africa (NDIMA)

<http://www.oneworld.org/ndima>

Founded in response to increasing assault on the independent media in Africa.

Reporters sans Frontieres

<http://www.rsf.fr>

Searchable database on censorship and free press issues worldwide.

News Photography

National Press Photographers Association (NPPA)

<http://www.nppa.org>

The National Press Photographers website.

TV Cameramen

<http://www.tvcameramen.com/>

Site for news photogs with lots of tips on shooting

SOURCES

BBC Producer's Guidelines. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/info/editorial/prodgl/contents.htm>

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Winship, Thomas. Election Reporting Tips from Editor & Publisher, Oct. 3, 1992.

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