



Certified Online Journalist Sample Material

V-Skills Certifications

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V-Skills



1. JOURNALISM

1.1. Journalism Introduction

Journalism is gathering, processing, and dissemination of news and information related to the news to an audience. The word applies to both the method of inquiring for news and the literary style which is used to disseminate it.

The media through which journalism is conducted vary diversely to include content published via newspapers and magazines (print), television and radio (broadcast), and their digital versions published through digital media – news websites and applications.

In modern society, the news media is the chief purveyor of information and opinion about public affairs. Journalism, however, is not always confined to the news media or to news itself, as journalistic communication may find its way into broader forms of expression, including literature and cinema. In some nations, the news media is still controlled by government intervention, and is not fully an independent body.

In a democratic society, however, access to free information plays a central role in creating a system of checks and balance, and in distributing power equally amongst governments, businesses, individuals, and other social entities. Access to verifiable information gathered by independent media sources, which adhere to journalistic standards, can also be of service to ordinary citizens, by empowering them with the tools they need in order to participate in the political process.

The role and status of journalism, along with that of the mass media, has undergone profound changes over the last two decades with the advent of digital technology and publication of news on the Internet. This has created a shift in the consumption of print media channels, as people increasingly consume news through e-readers, smartphones, and other electronic devices, challenging news organizations to fully monetize their digital wing, as well as improvise on the context in which they publish news in print. Notably, in the American media landscape, newsrooms have reduced their staff and coverage as traditional media channels, such as television, grapple with declining audiences. For instance, between 2007 and 2012, CNN edited its story packages into nearly half of their original time length.

This compactness in coverage has been linked to broad audience attrition, as a large majority of respondents in recent studies show changing preferences in news consumption. The digital era has also ushered in a new kind of journalism in which ordinary citizens play a greater role in the process of newsmaking, with the rise of citizen journalism being possible through the Internet. Using video camera equipped smartphones, active citizens are now enabled to record footage of news events and upload them onto channels like YouTube, which is often discovered and used by mainstream news media outlets. Meanwhile, easy access to news from a variety of online sources, like blogs and other social media, has resulted in readers being able to pick from a wider choice of official and unofficial sources, instead of only from traditional media organizations.

1.2. History of Journalism

Before the advent of the newspaper, there were two major kinds of periodical news publications: the handwritten news sheet, and single item news publications. These existed simultaneously.

The Roman Empire published Acta Diurna ("Daily Acts"), or government announcement bulletins, around 59 BC, as ordered by Julius Caesar. They were carved in metal or stone and posted in public places.

In China, early government-produced news sheets, called tipao, were commonly used among court officials during the late Han dynasty (2nd and 3rd centuries AD).

In 1556, the government of Venice first published the monthly Notizie scritte ("Written notices") which cost one gazetta, a Venetian coin of the time, the name of which eventually came to mean "newspaper". These avvisi were handwritten newsletters and used to convey political, military, and economic news quickly and efficiently throughout Europe, more specifically Italy, during the early modern era (1500-1800) – sharing some characteristics of newspapers though usually not considered true newspapers.

However, none of these publications fully met the classical criteria for proper newspapers, as they were typically not intended for the general public and restricted to a certain range of topics.

Early publications played into the development of what would today be recognized as the newspaper, which came about around 1601. Around the 15th and 16th centuries, in England and France, long news accounts called "relations" were published; in Spain they were called "relaciones".

Single event news publications were printed in the broadsheet format, which was often posted. These publications also appeared as pamphlets and small booklets (for longer narratives, often written in a letter format), often containing woodcut illustrations. Literacy rates were low in comparison to today, and these news publications were often read aloud (literacy and oral culture were, in a sense, existing side by side in this scenario).

By 1400, businessmen in Italian and German cities were compiling hand written chronicles of important news events, and circulating them to their business connections. The idea of using a printing press for this material first appeared in Germany around 1600. The first gazettes appeared in German cities, notably the weekly Relation aller Fuernemmen und gedenckwürdigen Historien ("Collection of all distinguished and memorable news") in Strasbourg starting in 1605. The Avis Relation oder Zeitung was published in Wolfenbüttel from 1609, and gazettes soon were established in Frankfurt (1615), Berlin (1617) and Hamburg (1618). By 1650, 30 German cities had active gazettes. A semi-yearly news chronicle, in Latin, the Mercurius Gallobelgicus, was published at Cologne between 1594 and 1635, but it was not the model for other publications.

In the following decades, the national governments in Paris and London began printing official newsletters. In 1622 the first English-language weekly magazine, "A current of General News" was published and distributed in England in an 8- to 24-page quarto format.

The first newspaper in France, the Gazette de France, was established in 1632 by the king's physician Theophrastus Renaudot (1586-1653), with the patronage of Louis XIII. All newspapers were subject to prepublication censorship, and served as instruments of propaganda for the monarchy. Jean Loret is considered to be one of France's first journalists. He disseminated the weekly news of music, dance and Parisian society from 1650 until 1665 in verse, in what he called a gazette burlesque, assembled in three volumes of La Muse historique (1650, 1660, 1665).

On May 30, 1826 Udant Martand (The Rising Sun), the first Hindi-language newspaper published in India, started from Calcutta (now Kolkata), published every Tuesday by Pt. Jugal Kishore Shukla. Maulawi Muhammad Baqir in 1836 founded the first Urdu-language newspaper the Delhi Urdu Akhbar. India's press in the 1840s was a motley collection of small-circulation daily or weekly sheets printed on rickety presses. Few extended beyond their small communities and seldom tried to unite the many castes, tribes, and regional subcultures of India. The Anglo-Indian papers promoted purely British interests. Englishman Robert Knight (1825-1890) founded two important English-language newspapers that reached a broad Indian audience, The Times of India and the Statesman. They promoted nationalism in India, as Knight introduced the people to the power of the press and made them familiar with political issues and the political process

1.3. Types of Journalism

There are several different forms of journalism, all with diverse audiences. In modern society, "prestige" journalism is said to serve the role of a "fourth estate", acting as a watchdog on the workings of the government. Other forms of journalism feature in different formats and cater to different audiences.

Some forms include:

- ✓ Advocacy journalism - writing to advocate particular viewpoints or influence the opinions of the audience.
- ✓ Broadcast journalism - written or spoken journalism for radio or television.
- ✓ Drone journalism - use of drones to capture journalistic footage.
- ✓ Gonzo journalism - first championed by Hunter S. Thompson, gonzo journalism is a "highly personal style of reporting".
- ✓ Investigative journalism: the use of investigation on a subject matter while uncovering news events.
- ✓ Photojournalism: the telling of a story through its images.
- ✓ Tabloid journalism - writing that is light-hearted and entertaining.
- ✓ Yellow journalism (or sensationalism) - writing which emphasises exaggerated claims or rumours.
- ✓ Shrimp journalism (or shrimping) - to encourage unsubstantiated sports rumours through social media.

The recent rise of social media has resulted in arguments to reconsider journalism as a process rather than attributing it to particular news products. From this perspective, journalism is participatory, a process distributed among multiple authors and involving journalists as well as the socially mediating public.

1.4. Journalism Ethics and Standards

Journalism ethics and standards comprise principles of ethics and of good practice as applicable to the specific challenges faced by journalists. Historically and currently, this subset of media ethics is widely known to journalists as their professional "code of ethics" or the "canons of journalism". The basic codes and canons commonly appear in statements drafted by both professional journalism associations and individual print, broadcast, and online news organizations.

While various existing codes have some differences, most share common elements including the principles of—truthfulness, accuracy, objectivity, impartiality, fairness and public accountability—as these apply to the acquisition of newsworthy information and its subsequent dissemination to the public.

Like many broader ethical systems, journalism ethics include the principle of "limitation of harm." This often involves the withholding of certain details from reports such as the names of minor children, crime victims' names or information not materially related to particular news reports release of which might, for example, harm someone's reputation.

Some journalistic Codes of Ethics, notably the European ones, also include a concern with discriminatory references in news based on race, religion, sexual orientation, and physical or mental disabilities. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe approved in 1993 Resolution 1003 on the Ethics of Journalism which recommends journalists to respect the presumption of innocence, in particular in cases that are still sub judice.

1.5. Legal status

Governments have widely varying policies and practices towards journalists, which control what they can research and write, and what press organizations can publish. Some governments guarantee the freedom of the press; while other nations severely restrict what journalists can research or publish.

Journalists in many nations have some privileges that members of the general public do not, including better access to public events, crime scenes and press conferences, and to extended interviews with public officials, celebrities and others in the public eye.

Journalists who elect to cover conflicts, whether wars between nations or insurgencies within nations, often give up any expectation of protection by government, if not giving up their rights to protection by government. Journalists who are captured or detained during a conflict are expected to be treated as civilians and to be released to their national government. Many governments around the world target journalists for intimidation, harassment, and violence because of the nature of their work.

Right to protect confidentiality of sources

Journalists' interaction with sources sometimes involves confidentiality, an extension of freedom of the press giving journalists a legal protection to keep the identity of a confidential informant private even when demanded by police or prosecutors; withholding sources can land journalists in contempt of court, or in jail.