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International Press Corps

Background Information

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Introduction

The International Press Corps (IPC) is an opportunity for students to assume the role of a journalist. In this role, students will learn about various forms of journalism and the writing styles that correspond to each form. Students will learn about journalism as a business and ethics as they applies to journalism internationally. More specifically, students will learn to report hard news, investigative news, human interest stories, and more in a setting of their peers. Students will take assignments and write articles under deadlines throughout the conference. The articles published in different newspapers circulate to the every committee. The students' work will aim to affect committee, report occurrences within committee, and inform the conference on real world news.

This brief intends to educate students on the importance of news writing and the institution of journalism. In order to realize the influence journalists wield in the global landscape, students must learn how journalism evolved, where it is poised to go, and how it affects the world in which they live today. Once we understand these larger concepts, each student can responsibly represent different media interests. Apply the knowledge gained from this brief on journalism to the introductions to each representative media based interest in the second brief.

What is the Role of a Journalist?

A publication company or a broadcast television or radio station employs journalists. Yet those publications and stations are also owned by another power: corporations. Corporations like General Electric (GE), Disney, Viacom, and Time Warner are bound by law prioritize the profits of their investors before all else.¹ This interest in maximizing profits for the corporation, conflicts with responsible practice in journalism. These corporations put tremendous amounts of money into their interests, e.g. NBC, ABC, CBS, and Fox. The networks then have to cater to the corporation's needs.

¹ "Issue One: Corporate Ownership" http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=7&issue_area_id=6, "accessed March

This chain of influence is why mainstream media is often called “corporate-owned mainstream media.”

A journalist’s role in a global communications market dominated by corporate giants is to report the news as objectively and truthfully as possible. Networks will air what they choose to air, but a journalist’s role is to report free of corporate influence and personal bias. With the advent of internet blogging, many think that there is finally one area without the corporate influence. Yet as more and more corporations scramble to buy interests in internet sites, the blogging industry also invests in the large conglomerates’ interests. A journalist must record events as they happen and work to inform the public at all costs, rather than cater to business interests.

Journalism: Form, Style, and Ethics

Forms of Journalism

There are three main journalistic *forms*, which mean that distributors release news to the public in three separate formats, each with its own distinct style of writing and appearance. The three main forms of journalism are print, broadcast, and online journalism. Print journalism is the oldest form of the three, while broadcast journalism and online journalism have gained popularity with the advancement of technology. In recent times, print journalism in the West has suffered a decrease in readership and sales, due to the rising public interest in internet news and television broadcasts, however, in other parts of the world where computers and television are not so easily accessible, print journalism remains the most prevalent form of news.²

Print journalism is distributed in paper publications such as newspapers, newsmagazines, newsletters, and journals, and comes out periodically: daily, weekly, biweekly, monthly, and so on. The most common form of periodical printing, the

20th, 2007)

² Randy Dottinga, “Amid Newsroom Layoffs, Hard Questions Arise About Future of Print Journalism”
<http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1109/p02s02-ussc.html> (accessed March 19, 2007)

newspaper, appears daily in many cases, in order to release the most up-to-date news reporting.³ Newspapers aim for a larger circulation of readers, as opposed to magazines, which aim for selected demographics of readership, in order to reach a more varied audience than other forms of print journalism.⁴

Investigative journalism and straight journalism, most commonly known as news journalism, are the styles of reporting usually used with print journalism. Straight news aims to report on events reactively, responding to events that have already occurred. A related style is hard news. Investigative journalism, however, involves actively seeking out possible news and reporting on the facts uncovered during the research process.⁵ Print media most often employs these two styles because the readership is looking for information of daily events that have affected or will affect their lives. There is an inherently humanistic approach to reporting styles in print journalism.

Broadcast journalism employs newscasts that are either in radio or television form. The style of reporting within these mediums differs greatly from print journalism, because the writing that supported the on-air reporting caters to a different audience. In print media, the writing style can incorporate lengthier sentences and the content available within the article is more expansive. If a reader does not comprehend the piece, they need only to reread it. Yet in broadcast journalism, sentences must be concise and vocabulary must be at a sixth-grade or below level, so that the reporter on television or speaking on the radio can deliver the news in a clear, easily understandable fashion.⁶

The style of writing that journalists usually use in newscasts is conversational. Conversational style is, according to broadcast news veteran Mervin Block, writing the way that a person talks. The style of writing, then, should not be convoluted, and need not follow strict grammatical rules. In broadcast journalism, the writing should be clear and

³ Kipphan 6

⁴ Richard Rudin, *An Introduction to Journalism: Essential Techniques and Background Knowledge*, (Focal Press 2002), 45.

⁵ Hugo de Burgh, *Investigative Journalism: Context and Practice*, (Routledge UK 2000), 156.

⁶ R.K Ravindran, *Handbook of Radio, TV, and Broadcast Journalism*, (Anmol Publications, LTD) 1.

succinct, with a rhythm and flow that journalists achieve by using contractions, slang, and outside quotes sparingly.⁷ For the purposes of drama, broadcast media uses this technique to grab the audience from the beginning.

Broadcast media also demands certain skills from its reporters. Since investigative journalism is the style of reporting so often employed by broadcast media, journalists need a clear, authoritative speaking voice. Journalists practice breathing exercises, such as speaking from the diaphragm, to help bolster their volume and breath control.⁸ There are other ways to cultivate a perfect broadcast voice, such as keeping an even pitch, emphasizing certain words to drive the story home, and keeping a safe distance away from the microphone.

Journalists also need a skill for networking. A list of sources is the most important tool a journalist can have, so that when a particular news item catches their eye, the journalist can go to the source and record the sound bite needed to complete their story. Journalists should carry a notebook and a voice recorder for sound bites. Journalists should also know which types of questions to ask, and from whom to ask these questions. It is helpful to keep a contact book for sources that prove to be reliable.⁹

The third form of journalism is online journalism, which gained popularity among the public as internet accessibility grows. *The Daily Telegraph* in the United Kingdom was the first newspaper to put its pages online for access in 1994.¹⁰ Since this time, the elevated usage of personal computers has made up to the minute news-pages a possibility for the public to read. Newspapers put their publications online to provide easy access for readership that wants to read past articles. Online journalism also provides an outlet for journalists to spread their articles on a medium that reaches a wider swath of population in a shorter amount of time. Online articles or broadcasts are accessible all day, every day, whenever a citizen wishes to pull it up. The sheer volume and availability of internet

⁷ Claudette Guzan Artwick, *Reporting and Producing for Digital Media*, (Blackwell Publishing 2004), 86.

⁸ Andrew Boyd, *Broadcast Journalism*, (Oxford: Focal Press, 2001), 30.

⁹ Boyd 183.

news makes it such an integral form of journalism.¹¹

Online journalism includes a vast array of reporting styles. Since many news outlets post articles from paper publications onto the internet, the traditional hard news reporting style is present on official newspaper websites or in archives of past articles stored online. The influx of *bloggers*, however, introduces a highly personalized style to the mainstream. Blogs are updated posts on web pages, usually in a serialized, diary-like form.¹² Since 2001, the rise of political bloggers has contributed to an increase of public interest in analysis, critical commentary, and unfiltered news. Without the influence of large media organizations, independent bloggers posted their own forms of alternative publications.

The Drudge Report, a website run by a citizen named Matt Drudge, became one of the most popular bloggers on the internet, with an estimated ten million page views each day.¹³ *The Drudge Report* is just one of many political blogs on the internet today, with everyone from print journalists to ordinary citizens keeping websites updated with opinions and news.¹⁴ With such a diverse arrangement of people keeping blogs, reporting styles tend to vary. Some online journalists refuse to recognize the more casual style of blogs as real journalism, saying that blogs only serve to point people in the direction of more trusted sources, especially those backed by large media corporations such as MSNBC and ABC News.¹⁵ In any case, there is no one rule concerning style when it comes to online journalism.

Technology and the Evolution of Journalism

The boom of online journalism is evidence of the role of advanced technology in

¹⁰ Rudin 94.

¹¹ Rudin 95.

¹² Jody Raynsford, "Blogging: the New Journalism?" <http://www.journalism.co.uk/features/story604.html>, (accessed March 18th, 2007)

¹³ Ana Marie Cox, "Matt Drudge," <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1186874,00.html> (accessed March 19, 2007)

¹⁴ Raynsford

¹⁵ Raynsford

the different forms of journalism. In the 19th Century, it was the widespread use of massive printing presses that revolutionized the newspaper. With the printing presses churning out thousands of copies of a newspaper every hour, publications were able to experiment with new types of reporting and writing. The *New York Herald* was one of the earliest examples of the modern concept of a newspaper: a free press without government or party control, a capitalistic institution.¹⁶ Within fifteen months, the paper topped forty thousand readers. The *Herald* was also the first American paper to form a foreign correspondent staff, sending six men to Europe. As the printing press improved, so did the appearance and innovation of print journalism.

Technology again influenced a major change in the forms of journalism in the early 20th Century. Broadcast journalism first began when the radio started to gain popularity in 1920, offering sensational headlines over the airwaves and updates by the hour as opposed to daily or weekly. American President Franklin Delano Roosevelt recognized the importance of broadcast media, and used his “fireside chats” to address the nation.¹⁷ The radio enabled American and English citizens to keep abreast of the Second World War, through the reporting of journalists like Edward R. Murrow. Newspapers also enjoyed a surge of revenue during the Second World War, due to the increase in dialogue of political policies and war propaganda.¹⁸

Increasing innovation in technology caused circulation to drop. In 1950, television networks started to emerge, and powerful news shows broadcasted on NBC and CBS began to take readers away from traditional newspapers.¹⁹ In 1980, the launch of Ted Turner’s CNN, a television network that specialized in twenty-four-hour rolling news, proved further detrimental to print media’s success.²⁰ By 2004, less than thirty

¹⁶ Wally Hastings, “History of Journalism” <http://www.northern.edu/hastingw/journhist.html> (accessed March 19, 2007)

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Straubhaar 12

¹⁹ Hastings

²⁰ de Burgh, 39

cities in the United States boasted more than one daily newspaper.²¹

In the age of technology, where online journalism gains more popularity each day, print journalists and publications struggle for work. Even with sophisticated printing presses, there is no way a newspaper or newsmagazine can compete with other forms of journalism when it comes to reporting the most current news.²² The readership of print newspapers in 2006 fell 2.8 *per cent* from 2005.²³ Elevated combined figures of readership from online versions of print publications and the print publications themselves show that newspapers are not obsolete, however. Though broadcast and online journalism tends to *scoop* print publications, or break news first, newspapers reach a wider audience that does not have the technological means to turn on a television to watch the news.²⁴

Even broadcast journalism is not as recent as other forms of journalism. John Pavik, an observer of internet journalism practices, postulated in 1997 that there were three stages of internet journalism: stage one, in which news in print and broadcast form was repurposed for online web pages. Then there was stage two, where original material was prepared on original pages, independent from news organizations. Stage three posits that information is prepared specially for the web and invokes a new style of journalism altogether.²⁵ Pavik's theory lends itself to be believed, since internet features differ greatly from one another in purpose and style. Some pages write informally while others are exact copies of what a reader would find in print media.

Though Pavik did not elaborate on which types of styles would emerge, it is not difficult to see that there is a distinct style in many internet-exclusive news sites, characterized by a casual writing style and an investigative, *citizen journalism* style of report. *Citizen journalism* is "the act of ordinary citizens playing an active role in the

²¹ Straubhaar 13

²² Jan R. Hakemulder, *Print Media Communicated*, (Anmol Publications 1998) 43.

²³ "Annual Report on the Media 2007"

http://www.stateofthedia.org/2007/narrative_newspapers_intro.asp?cat=1&media=3(accessed March 22, 2007)

²⁴ Hakemulder 43

process of collecting, reporting, analyzing, and disseminating news and information.”²⁶ *Citizen journalism* is a form of journalism that is a result of increased dependence on the internet for news. Digital cameras and mobile phone cameras offer average citizens the ability to record events as they are happening and utilize the upload element of the internet to have news online and in the mainstream much quicker than a journalist who must go through editorial powers.²⁷

The growing number of forums and sites dedicated to citizen involvement in the news has also contributed to the decrease in average news consumption of print form. Media executive Rupert Murdoch even quoted a statistic stating that only fifty *per cent* of American citizens read the newspaper daily, as opposed to eighty *per cent* just forty years ago.²⁸ America is a country in which the media has always thrived, and in terms of online journalism especially, other countries seem poised to follow its lead in discarding the newspaper towards cyber endeavors.

One of the primary differences in online journalism from the other two forms is a lack of policing in terms of content. Whereas in newspapers and broadcast media there is a public measure of culpability for the journalist should his or her reporting be inaccurate, online journalism makes it easy to make an error in judgment, because the internet is so vast that it is more difficult to challenge a piece of information reported as fact.²⁹ Space is shared between the amateur journalist who deems it fit to keep a blog and label it news, and the seasoned journalist who checks his sources and writes intelligent articles but is ridiculed because his article is too subjective.

Ethics in Journalism

Codes of ethics in journalism are regarded as mission statements, with a preamble

²⁵ Jan Servaes, *The European Information Society: Reality Check*, (Intellect Books 2003), 219.

²⁶ “We Media” <http://www.hypergene.net/wemedia/weblog.php> (accessed March 19, 2007)

²⁷ Jemima Kiss, “Citizen Journalism: Dealing with Dinosaurs,” <http://www.journalism.co.uk/news/story1458.shtml> (accessed February 19, 2007)

²⁸ Jemima Kiss, “Digital Alarm Wakes Up Media Mogul” <http://www.journalism.co.uk/news/story1348.shtml> (accessed March 19th, 2007)

and subsections that outline each responsibility and trait a journalist is bound by his profession to uphold. The codes help journalists self-monitor, enabling them to work through ethical dilemmas in order to write the best article possible. Codes also differ by region. Elements such as government censorship and cultural norms keep codes from being exactly alike. Journalist communities that include reporters who are based worldwide, however, like the International Journalists' Network (IJN), the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), recognize the importance of adhering to a universal, similar standard of ethics.³⁰

Asia and the Pacific have principles of journalism that are different from those of Sub-Saharan Africa or Latin America. The Middle East and Eastern European code of journalisms differ from one another, as do the American codes. As differently as each region has written their ethical mandates for journalism, however, the core theories are accepted internationally. Some basic tenets of global journalism ethics are public trust, truth, objectivity, integrity and accountability.³¹

The Radio-Television News Director Association (RTNDA), an organization dedicated to electronic news, has a code of ethics that overlaps significantly with ethic codes for print journalists. In the RTNDA code, public trust is highlighted by the subheading of "Professional electronic journalists should recognize that their first obligation is to the public."³² This heading implies that the public trust in journalists comes from a journalist's duty to report the news that is pertinent to the public. As the code further explains, a journalist's role is to fully disclose any information that can enable the public to make decisions. Journalists look to public trust when it is necessary to be reminded that the responsibility of a journalist is not to the government or a particular organization, but to society as a whole.

²⁹ Rudin 95.

³⁰ "Journalism Organization: Code of Ethics" <http://www.worldpressinstitute.org/ethicslinks.htm#jcodes> (accessed March 22, 2007)

³² "Radio Television and News Director Association" <http://www.rtna.org> (accessed February 21, 2007)

Truth is a more abstract section of a globally recognized journalistic code of ethics. The responsibility of a journalist to report the truth is almost secondary to the personal motivation of a journalist to do so. Journalism, in many ways, is the search for truth that is actually obstructed by forces outside the media system that try to promote an influenced “truth.” According to the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), “to seek truth and report it” is an important principle within their code of ethics. Doing this entails making sure no misrepresentation of subjects or events occur within the article. “Never plagiarize” is a requirement to seek truth, as is testing the accuracy of the news a reporter receives.³³

Accuracy is tied closely in with truth, as truth can only occur if accuracy is achieved. The difference between these two principles within the code of ethics is that accuracy is not only speaking the facts, but also providing unwavering proof for the truth. This means sources. Sources are the most important element of journalism, as without sources, there is no proof behind what a journalist reports aside from the journalist’s own word. Credibility comes from sources and the accurate representation of such sources. According to the IFJ, one principle of journalism codes of ethics is the secrecy of a source.³⁴ By protecting the source, the journalist is ensuring that the source is free of fear of reprisal for his statements. In journalism, obtaining the truth is the most important goal, and because of that, a journalist must be willing to protect the source’s identity; the journalist must be willing to even brave punishment for not naming his source.³⁵

Truth in the more roundabout form is also important; the truth of conviction is outlined in the section of the SJP that says, “Tell the story of diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even if it is unpopular to do so.”³⁶ Reporting what is actually happening rather than what sounds good or looks good is monumental in

³³ “Society of Professional Journalists” <http://www.spj.org> (accessed February 21, 2007)

³⁴ “International Federation of Journalists” <http://ifj.org/default.asp?Issue=ETHICS&Language=EN>, (accessed February 21, 2007)

³⁵ “International Federation of Journalists.”

³⁶ “Society of Professional Journalists”

journalism. Often, the news is controversial and inciting, yet it is a journalist's responsibility to report only the truth, no matter how inflaming or upsetting to certain groups it may be.

Objectivity is also closely tied in with truth. The objectivity of a journalist affects the truth that comes across in a journalist's article. Objective reality, according to the IJN, is when facts are reported in an accurate, undistorted manner and in proper context, in order to serve the public with true and authentic information without losing creative capacity.³⁷ Distinction between opinion and fact must be disclosed, and journalists must avoid conflicts of interests at all cost. Media bias occurs when a journalist loses objectivity. The SPJ underlines objectivity in their "Act Independently" subheading, encouraging journalists to avoid advertising within their pieces and to shun employment by those who would present conflict of interests.³⁸ The journalist, according to codes of ethics, has a responsibility to no one but the public, and as such, the journalist's own interests cannot invade the piece. Special interests, such as non-profit organizations, are also considered conflicts of interest, as they encouraged biased writing to promote their own causes.

Accountability is inextricably tied in with truth, because a journalist is the first person held accountable for the news they write as truth. If the story turns out to be a fabrication or is plagiarized, the journalist must own up to his faults and apologize. The journalist also has accountability over the credibility of their sources, so if the source turns out to be incorrect, it is the journalist's responsibility to correct that wrong. In addition, according to the RTNDA, a journalist's responsibility is to respond to public concerns and investigate accordingly.³⁹ Accountability in the RTNDA suggests that the "journalist should recognize that they are accountable for their actions to the public, the profession, and themselves."

³⁷ "International Journalists Network" <http://www.ijnet.org/Director.aspx?P=Ethics&ID=8320&LID=1>, (accessed February 21, 2007)

³⁸ "Society of Professional Journalists"

With the main concepts outlined in various codes of ethics in journalism, journalists should have a firm idea of how to conduct themselves in the field. By following the principles outlined in these codes, there is an international standard for journalists to follow when out in the field, whether or not they are in their own region or not.

Case Study in Ethics: Stephen Glass and Jayson Blair

In May 1998, Stephen Glass, reporter for United States newsmagazine *The New Republic (TNR)*, wrote a piece called “Hack Heaven.”⁴⁰ The article details the exploits of a teenage hacker who had duped a software company called Jukt Mikronics by hacking into their databases. Glass rose through the ranks of American journalism, contributing pieces to such magazines as *Harper’s Bazaar* and *Rolling Stone*. His “too-good-to-be-true” piece for *TNR*, however, drew skepticism from one of his peers at then-fledgling news media website, *Forbes.com*. Staff writer Adam Penenberg eventually uncovered the facts surrounding Glass’s story; Penenberg discovered that the hacker and the software company did not exist, and that Glass had set up false voicemail boxes and webshells to fool *TNR* fact-checkers.⁴¹ *TNR* and then eventually Glass admitted that twenty-seven of Glass’s forty-one pieces for the magazine had been fabricated somehow, including “Hack Heaven.” Glass was fired from *TNR* and many in the media community viewed him as an exception to the rule of journalistic integrity.

Five years later, however, *New York Times* reporter Jayson Blair admitted to plagiarizing an article about the family of an American soldier in Iraq, and resigned, disgraced in the eyes of his peers. Blair was also an up-and-coming reporter within American media, reporting on such high-profile events as the Washington, D.C sniper attacks and the Iraq war. His tenure at the *Times*, however, was marked by inaccuracies

³⁹ “Radio Television and News Director Association”

⁴⁰ “New York Times Scandal recalls Glass Episode”

http://www.forbes.com/2003/05/20/cx_mn_0520glasslander.html, (accessed March 4th, 2007)

⁴¹ “Forbes Smokes Out Fake Republic Story on Hackers” <http://www.forbes.com/1998/05/11/otw.html>, (accessed

and in one article, a quoted source from the piece claimed “about 60 *per cent* of the article was inaccurate.”⁴² The *Times* investigated Blair’s record and found at least three-dozen plagiarized or fabricated stories on file during his run at the paper. Supervisors at the *Times* asked a committee to be formed in order to look at how Blair’s mistakes could go unnoticed for so long. The committee found that Executive Editor Howell Raines and Managing Editor Gerald Boyd’s managing styles encouraged Blair’s actions in an environment where increasingly quantity is recognized over quality. The committee released its findings and the media community at large today called the state of ethics in journalism into question.⁴³

Journalism is a profession that must maintain standards of practice. The maintenance of such standards is important because it instills in journalists a sense of responsibility for both their work and their duty to report only the truth to society. If the piece a journalist has written contains factual errors or fabrications, the credibility of the journalist, the publication, and the institution of journalism as a whole are at stake.⁴⁴ The possibility of destroying the credibility of their work and institution is why journalists adhere to codes of ethics, codes which neither Stephen Glass nor Jayson Blair abided by.

Technical Aspects of Journalism

Reporting Styles

All forms of news, whether print or not, are based in writing. Though broadcast journalists do not write traditional newspaper articles, they do use the basic structure of news writing to construct scripts. Online news is a spectrum of styles, from “typical” newspaper articles uploaded to the internet to a looser, more conversational blog-like

March 4th, 2007)

⁴²“Times Reporter Who Resigns Leaves Long Trail of Deception”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/11/national/11PAPE.html?ex=1367985600&en=d6f511319c259463&ei=5007&partner=USERLAND>, (accessed March 4th, 2007)

⁴³ “Jayson Blair: A Case Study” http://www.pbs.org/newshour/media/media_ethics/casestudy_blair.php, (accessed 4 March 2007)

⁴⁴ “NPR Code of Ethics” <http://www.npr.org/about/ethics/> (accessed 4 March 2007)

style. As such, it is important that *all* journalists understand the structure and purpose of journalistic writing. Journalists aim to report news that will most affect the public, whether it is a hard news item or a human interest item. There are certain styles of writing that convey the news in a way that corresponds directly with the situation journalists cover. The International Press Corps will use a few specific types of reporting styles: investigative, advocacy, human interest and hard news.

Investigative journalism is the style of journalism that requires active searching through facts and sources in order to find information that might be hidden or kept from the public eye. Advocacy journalism is the style of journalism where the reporter takes a specific side to a controversial issue and develops a viewpoint, or a slant. Human interest news is similar to advocacy in that the journalist advocates a certain side of an issue. Human-interest stories, however, use anecdotal examples and appeals to the emotions of the reader. Hard news journalism is usually straight facts on a current event, mainly the first news that is reported in the publication or broadcast.⁴⁵

Investigative journalism is usually used in newspapers, magazines, and television. The writing is straightforward and driven by fact, and the subject matter is usually based on crime and politics.⁴⁶ Investigative journalism began as a result of Nellie Bly's quest for social change in the late 1880s. As a young reporter for a Pittsburgh paper, her news articles on ordinary people and the social problems they dealt with were well received by the public. Bly began the practice of going undercover to discover the real stories that officials tried to hide, and as a result, Joseph Pulitzer, owner of the New York World, recruited her.⁴⁷ Investigative journalism as a movement picked up popularity in the early 1900s when exposés such as *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair, and *How the Other Half Lives* by Jacob A. Riis, were published. The critique of the working-class conditions in

⁴⁵ "Glossary of Terms" <http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/journal20/gloss.html> (accessed 4 March 2007)

⁴⁶ "How to become a Journalist" <http://www.howtodothings.com/careers/a2730-how-to-become-a-journalist.html> (accessed 4 March 2007)

⁴⁷ "Investigative Journalism" <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/Jinvestigative.htm> (accessed February 21st,

America was recognized as a legitimate form of journalism, and often was used to incite political change. President Theodore Roosevelt even passed The Pure Food and Drug Act because of investigative journalism.

There are certain things to remember when conducting and writing an investigative report. One is that there is always an express need for specialists when a reporter is writing an article. Without specialists, it is impossible for a reporter to understand the intricacies of an issue well enough to conduct an investigative report on it.⁴⁸ In addition, the social skill of networking is perhaps the most important skill a journalist can have. Investigative reporters are known among journalists as being the most ruthless. If a reporter's friend or family is involved with a story, the story will still run and the reporter will simply ask their contact for information.⁴⁹ Journalists in the investigative field learn to utilize everyone they know as sources, and to keep contacts as well as they can because a journalist never knows when he will need information. Journalists must not, however, burn bridges in their article writing. One week's scapegoat is another week's source. In the International Press Corps, (IPC) especially, it is important to factor in any sources that can prove especially relevant to the topic being written about. Investigative reports will be written within the IPC when there are issues being skirted by delegations, or there are deeper concerns regarding the topics at hand.

Advocacy journalism is usually employed in editorial articles or point-counterpoints. It is a style of journalism that is strongly tied with political publications, as the aim of advocacy journalism is to use facts to persuade the reader to the journalist's viewpoint. Often, this translates to a desire to entice the reader to a political party, and this is why advocacy journalism runs mostly in what is called "alternative publications," or weekly publications built to a specialization.⁵⁰ Bias is a well-accepted fact in advocacy

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⁴⁸ David Spark, *Investigative Reporting: A Study in Technique*, (Focal Press 1999) 20

⁴⁹ Spark 20

⁵⁰ "Journalism: Advocacy Journalism" <http://www.heartheissues.com/journalism-advocacyjournalism.html> (accessed February 21st, 2007)

journalism. In fact, bias is declared at the onset of any good advocacy article, as the goal of an advocacy journalist is to give the most time to his own point and spend only passing time acknowledging the other side of the issue.⁵¹ Objectivity is not the focus of advocacy journalism.

Sue Careless, a contributor to *The Interim* and a member of the Canadian Association of Journalists, is quick to affirm that advocacy journalists must adhere to the same rules as other journalists, despite the fact that objectivity does not play a focal role in advocacy reports. In order to present the most accurate article, journalists must thoroughly examine the opposite side of the argument they are presenting. Journalists, Careless says, must not make vast generalizations and treat complex subjects in a cavalier manner just to emphasize their own point.⁵² A well-written advocacy article will educate others regarding the journalist's viewpoint on the issue at hand, without straying from the facts. Advocacy journalism has a role in the IPC when there is a specific issue that necessitates a point-counterpoint approach, or when an issue is so polarized that the most dynamic article would advocate one viewpoint over the other.

Human interest news is similar to advocacy journalism in that the articles are not necessarily objective, hard-line news. Human-interest news focuses on the “*people perspective*,” where the story angles on a personal point of view.⁵³ Human interest news primarily focuses on the emotions of the readers and is often linked to investigative and advocacy journalism because it tends to reveal some greater injustice done to a person and express an opinion about what has occurred to that person.⁵⁴ Customarily, human-interest stories are written in a more informal manner and run no longer than three hundred words in length. When writing for the IPC, the human-interest style of journalism is useful when a journalist wishes to use an anecdote or when an article

⁵¹ Sue Careless, “Advocacy Journalism,” <http://theinterim.com/2000/may/10advocacy.html> (accessed March 4th, 2007)

⁵² Careless

⁵³ Homer L. Hall. *High School Journalism*, 70

⁵⁴ Hall, 140

focuses on a specific people or nation-state under duress.

Hard news journalism is the most recognizable style of journalism because it is the type of journalism the average person would find as the top news of the day, whether on the front page of a publication or as the first news item on a broadcast. Hard news stories deal with events that are happening currently and that affect the quality of life for those concerned. These qualifications mean that hard news tends to focus on particularly urgent and serious events, such as natural disasters, elevated crime, or imminent public danger.⁵⁵ Hard news is the category of news that people read to keep informed on current events and stay abreast of current topics. As such, journalists in the IPC will primarily write hard news articles concerning real world events and particularly noteworthy events occurring in committee, such as a controversial resolution passing or member states engaging in particularly heated debate.

There are other styles of reporting that members of the IPC may find helpful to reference: socially-affecting news, or news that will affect a wide array of people, like new legislation; topical news, that is, news that occurs on the very day the report comes out and will affect those in the region that read it; informative news, which informs the reader of something that is not widely known; local or national disgrace, such as drug scandals in political office; and unexpected, such as a national disaster occurring or the sudden death of an iconic figure.⁵⁶

When deciding what type of article to write, there are six important things to consider: Proximity; prominence; timeliness; oddity; progress and consequence. Proximity deals with the location of the story. People in Africa are more interested in hearing about African news, rather than South American news; it is important to write for the audience. Prominence is how famous the subject of the article is; in today's celebrity-obsessed culture, famous names make headlines. Timeliness has to do with how recent the news is; the more recent or imminent the item is, the more interested the public will

⁵⁵ "Newspaper Terminology" <http://post-journal.com/nie/glossary.htm>, (accessed March 4th, 2007)

be. If a country is developing a new technique to fight AIDS with a strange contraceptive, for example, that is news. Progress has to do with technological or scientific advances; a cure for cancer or the abovementioned contraceptive would qualify. Consequence is the most important facet; what is the effect of the news on the reader?⁵⁷ These are all styles of a news article to think about before writing.

Writing Styles

The basic structure of news writing revolves around the five W's of journalism: Who, what, when, where, and why. How is often included as an "honorary W."⁵⁸ Journalists answer these six questions throughout their article, but especially a few in their *lede*. The *lede* of an article, or the lead paragraph, acts as the hook of the entire story. The hook draws the public into the news item and usually summarizes the story's *angle*, or point of interest. Sometimes the *lede* is anecdotal, especially with human-interest news.⁵⁹ The *lede* in hard news articles and investigative articles, however, is most oftentimes a summation of the story's point of interest, usually a sentence or two, which traditionally addresses at least two of the five W's.⁶⁰

There are three most commonly used writing styles when writing for news. In hard news items, journalists use the *inverted pyramid* which is a style of writing that places the most important fact of the news item at the very beginning, and orders the rest of the information accordingly. The *lede* usually details "who," "what," "when," and "where." Then the middle and end of the news item, which is less pertinent, details the "why," and "how." Journalists use this style so that at any time in their article, a person can cease

⁵⁶ Page 27

⁵⁷ "Georgia-NJ News: Building Better Journalists" [http://weblogs.hcrhs.k12.nj.us/georgia/stories/storyReader\\$10](http://weblogs.hcrhs.k12.nj.us/georgia/stories/storyReader$10), (accessed March 4th, 2007)

⁵⁸ Page 27

⁵⁹ Susan Ferguson, Lesson Plan,

http://www.highschooljournalism.org/teachers/lesson_plans/detail.cfm?lessonplanid=234, (accessed 4 March 2007)

⁶⁰ "Basic News Writing" http://www.ohlone.edu/people/bparks/basic_news_writing.html, (accessed March 20th, 2007)

reading, and the news will still come across.⁶¹

The *hourglass* style is slightly different from *inverted pyramid*, and journalists use this style when writing investigative features, human-interest news, and sometimes, hard news. The *hourglass* style consists of the summary *lede*, and three or four paragraphs outlining the main idea of the article. Then, the story takes what is called a *turn*, a signal that a narrative, most often chronological, is about to take place. Usually this is signaled by a quote of some kind. Following the *turn*, the latter half of the article has a beginning, middle, and end. In other words, a narrative takes the summary from the start of the article and turns it into a full-fledged story.⁶²

The third style is called *diamond* style. Journalists use this style when writing a human-interest or advocacy piece with an anecdotal *lede*. The news item begins with the anecdote, and eventually broadens to include the events that the journalist is reporting. The narrow part of the diamond is the anecdote, while the broad part of the diamond represents the details of the story. The other narrow end of the diamond is where the journalist ties in the story with the anecdotal *lede*. So the story begins with an anecdote, segues into the event the journalist is reporting, and then ends with the tie between the anecdote and the event.

⁶¹ “Inverted Pyramid Story Format,” <http://mtsu32.mtsu.edu:11178/171/pyramid.htm> (accessed March 18, 2007)

⁶² “The Hourglass: Serving the News, Serving the Reader” <http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=52&aid=38300> (accessed March 18, 2007)

Discussion Questions

- What are the current benefits of print journalism as journalism moves to the internet?
- With the rise of internet blogging, what classifies a website as journalism versus blog?
- Why is blogging so important for the average citizen? Does blogging interfere or enhance with how the public receives news?
- Where does bias most occur in writing, and is there a place in journalism for a certain degree of media bias?
- What makes an article truly objective? Provide an example of an objective article from your assigned media interest.
- What sources are reputable versus what sources are not? What sources can a journalist use and what sources should they double-check?
- In states that do not have free press, what can journalists do in order to report the truth?
- In an investigative article, would you use a diamond style or inverted pyramid?

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