

Can You Trust The Daily Show to Give You the News?



How informative is the Daily Show?

Does it Alert, Divert or Connect?

Last week we talked about the battle to control information.

That battle is waged daily as information peddlers of all kinds try to get your attention, push a point of view, sell something, promote their self interest, or sell ads around media that entertains you.

It's common for them to try to disguise it as news..

We will begin today to fill out the grid that helps you distinguish different types of information, and establish the first habit of smart news consumers: Always know what information neighborhood you are in.



ASK:

Is Jon Stewart a journalist?

-What is journalism?

-What makes someone a journalist?

(This is just meant to stimulate discussion and set the table for the lecture.)

Here's a Daily Show story about a small political movement to make Long a separate state from New York.

LECTURER: CLICK NOW TO LAUNCH DAILY SHOW SAMANTHA BEE STORY ABOUT LONG ISLAND SECESSION MOVEMENT (2:16)

lisecede.wmv

VIDEO NAMED ABOVE IS IN RESOURCES FOLDER . LINK HERE.

AFTER VIDEO RUNS...

ASK: So...**Is it Journalism or Not?**

What's the evidence for your answer?

Today we begin narrowing our focus.

We started with an overall history of information revolutions.

We studied the battle to control information.

We debated the role of the free press in our democracy.

Today, we begin to ask How do you sort out what is actionable and what is not? What is journalism and what is hype, spin, junk and propaganda?

Today, you'll start using a new set of critical thinking skills that will help you decide for yourself in a logical way. We'll give you vocabulary to articulate your findings.

A word I want you to memorize and learn today: Taxonomy...An arrangement of objects or ideas into a hierarchy or systematic set of classifications.

A taxonomy works like this: Park Slope is a subset of Brooklyn and Brooklyn is a subset of New York City.

Using your Taxonomy of Information Neighborhoods, we will characterize information in a systematic way that highlights the distinguishing characteristics of news, promotion, propaganda, and raw information, all of which are subsets of Information in the same way Park Slope is to Brooklyn is to New York City.

As we practice these skills today, we'll continually return to these questions:

- How is news different from other information?**
- How can we tell the difference?**
- Why does it matter?**

Can You Trust ABC's station in Los Angeles
To Give You the News?

KABC Allergies VNR.wmv

You're on a business trip to Los Angeles, watching the evening news in your hotel room when this report on allergies airs.

You or someone in your family has been more allergic than usual this year, so it gets your attention.

LECTURER: CLICK NOW TO LAUNCH VIDEO

ASK: What makes this different from The Daily Show?

What makes it trustworthy?

Would you seek out this test?

(It's a two minute news segment on a blood test that can help diagnose allergies in children. What the station didn't tell its viewers was that the entire story was built from a video news release (VNR) funded by Quest Diagnostics. Don't spill this, lecturer. We'll come back to it)



Here is the point of this whole week's work: Know your neighborhood.

Write that in big letters in your notes.

It's easy to get lost with so much information out there. Worse, there are people whose job it is to mislead you, for political gain or for business reasons.

Last week we talked about the idea that knowledge is power and ignorance is weakness. This is a corollary to that. If you don't know what kind of information neighborhood you're in, you could get ripped off or join a dangerous mob or embarrassing parade.



IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY. TAKE OUT YOUR TAXONOMY CHART.

One mark of an educated mind, in any field, is a muscular kind of critical thinking...the ability to sort similar ideas or objects into subgroups according to important distinctions.

Every specialty uses a Taxonomy, which is a system of classification. Think of the categories in the library. You'd be lost without those last few Dewey Decimal points.

You cannot succeed as an engineer, doctor, lawyer, banker, businesswoman or biologist unless you are able to see and describe distinctions.

To help you educate your mind in this way, we have built this grid. Once you can fill in this grid with precision, you will have taken the first major step toward becoming News Literate.



(ASK for suggestions of the primary goals, which you can write on the board, the Power Point, using the Symposium Pen, or just let student ideas hang in the air.

(Next Click brings up the Grid with Primary Goals in place)

How Is News Different?

A TAXONOMY OF INFORMATION NEIGHBORHOODS

	Journalism	Entertainment	Advertising	Publicity	Propaganda	Raw Information
GOAL	To Inform	To Amuse or otherwise engage people during their leisure.	To Sell	To Promote	To Build <u>Political</u> Support.	To Bypass filters
METHODS						
PLAUSIBLE						
DEFINITION						

Clarity about differences among similar things

(LECTURER: NOW THE GOALS ARE FILLED IN)

Here's a head start on your homework. For the purposes of this course, here are the Primary goals of the different types of information...

Journalism: To Inform

Entertainment: To Amuse or otherwise engage people during their leisure.

Advertising: To Sell

Publicity: To Promote

Propaganda: To Build Political Support.

Raw Information: To Bypass filters

(AVOID: Long conversations about the other categories. This is News Literacy, not Media Literacy. For the purposes of this course, there is news and then there's everything else. The point of this lecture is to teach students to default to VIA to figure out what neighborhood they are in.)



Let's start with definitions.

(On slide)

Characteristics of the Advertising neighborhood:

- Opportunity to buy.
- The Price
- The features of the product.
- An advertiser pays to deliver their information to you exactly as they want it.



ANIMATION: FIRST CLICK=FOOTBALL PLAYER CELEBRATING A TOUCH-DOWN. WITH APPLAUSE AUDIO SECOND CLICK=CAPTAIN MORGAN AND CAPTAIN MORGAN BOTTLE. WITH CASH REGISTER AUDIO.

Similar to Advertising is Publicity.

But this is where a taxonomy helps you demonstrate your ability to note subtle differences between similar ideas.

Publicity or "PR" (Public Relations) is the process of attracting attention in a positive way.

There's no overt "Buy My Stuff, On Sale Today Only" message. Instead, classic PR tools include sponsorships, staged events, product placement, press releases, carefully worded public statements and other efforts to make goods, services and personalities more appealing.

CLICK 1

In 2009, Philadelphia Eagles Tight End Brent Celek celebrated a touchdown with this odd pose in the end zone, which...it turned out, was part of a publicity campaign by the makers of Captain Morgan rum.

CLICK 2

For every time a player was caught on camera striking the "Captain Morgan" during a regular season game, \$10,000 would be donated to Gridiron Greats. For each instance in the playoffs, the donation would elevate to \$25,000. And for instances in the Super Bowl, the bounty was slated to hit \$100,000 per pose. Even when the NFL put an end to Captain Morgan-ing, the publicity stunt succeeded, by making people talk about the rum. It's not directed at a sale. It's more strategic: Make Sure People Know Your Name



Here's another example...after Election Day, when you are invited to ride on Air Force One, the President's Jet, you settle into your seat for a snack.

What candy is served up with a special White House seal on it? M&Ms.

No catch-phrase. No special price offers. Just the boost that comes from ultimate product placement.

Publicity, as we said, is less in-your face. Word gets around about those special boxes of M&Ms.

ASK: Which is more effective...Ads or Publicity?

Why?

Propaganda



Information, ideas or rumors deliberately spread widely to help or harm a person, group, movement, institution or nation. It is often biased or misleading, in order to promote an ideology or political point of view.

ANIMATION: CLICK 1=POSTER. CLICK 2= DEFINITION

ASK: What is Propaganda?

Click 1

Here's an anti-communist poster from the Cold War era. What's the key association being made? (Hellfire & Damnation)

So you know, Propaganda isn't the tool of just one ideology. In fact, it wasn't always considered a negative. The word was coined by the Roman Catholic Church to describe its efforts to make religion appealing.

Click 2: For the purposes of this course, here's our shared definition of propaganda.

ASK: How does it differ from Advertising and Publicity?

<http://www.designer-daily.com/examples-of-american-cold-war-propaganda-2918>



ANIMATION: CLICK = DEFINITION OF ENTERTAINMENT

Next neighborhood. Next category on your Taxonomy chart.

ASK:

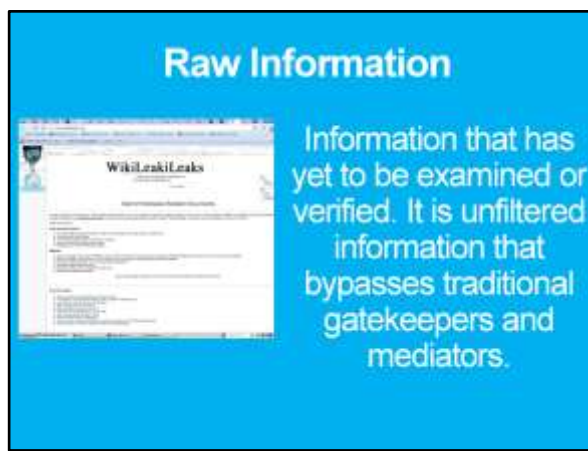
What kind of information do you gather when you are watching a movie or playing a video game? Is any of it actionable?

Are you better-informed about cyber warfare as a result of watching "Skyfall"?

Do you collect actionable

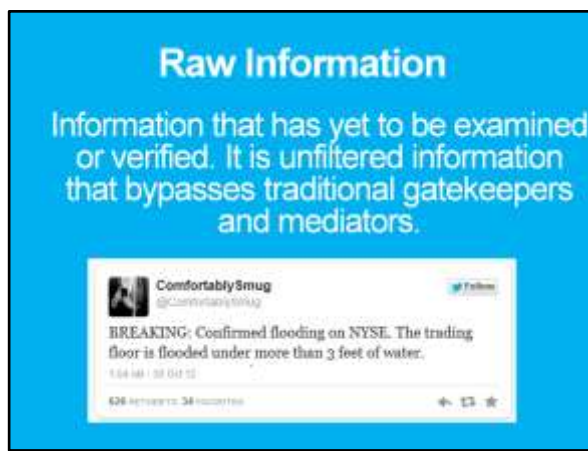
For the purposes of this course, here's what we mean by Entertainment: something affording pleasure, diversion, or amusement, often a performance of some kind.

(As opposed to recreation, an activity in which you participate, this is media you consume.)



Raw Information: Information that has yet to be examined or verified. It is unfiltered information that bypasses traditional gatekeepers and mediators.

Information from the Wikileaks documents might be turned into Propaganda, it has been the subject of journalism, but in its original form, it is what we, for the purposes of this course, call raw information. Largely unedited and unverified and placed there by persons with unknown allegiances, it is raw information.



Raw Information: Information that has yet to be examined or verified. It is unfiltered information that bypasses traditional gatekeepers and mediators.

Tweets or Facebook Posts are a good example.

A false claim makes headlines during Hurricane Sandy.



(Animates automatically. No click needed)

Before we move along, it's time to talk about the ways these lines blur from time to time. Take historical films. They are a great way to get people interested in historic events.

In "Lincoln", two lawmakers representing the state of Connecticut in 1865 are seen voting against the constitutional amendment to end slavery. But that never happened

Screenwriter Tony Kushner conceded the discrepancy but defended the film. "None of the key moments of that story -- the overarching story our film tells -- are altered," he said in a statement Thursday. He explained that the alterations were made to serve the narrative that the outcome of the vote was in doubt until the very end. "I'm sorry if anyone in Connecticut felt insulted by these 15 seconds of the movie," Kushner said, but "this is a dramatic film."

Kushner's being somewhat of a standup guy...after the fact. But films like Gangster Squad, Zero Dark Thirty and Argo are marketed as "Based on a True Story"

ASK: What is the danger to you if you accept their re-creation of historic events?

(BTW: the runway chase scene in Argo never happened and Zero Dark Thirty suggests – despite much debate to the contrary – that torture worked.

Blurred Lines

News vs. Entertainment

'Based on Fact'
'Inspired By a True Story'

“What is the Danger” in films embellishing the truth?

The danger is that people forget drama and journalism have vastly different purposes, even when tackling the same issue or even set of historic events.

New York Times columnist Roger Cohen says a film like Zero Dark Thirty is a work of art and can't be judged on journalistic merits.

“While reality is the raw material journalism attempts to render with accuracy and fairness, (reality) is the raw material that art must transform,” he wrote, about Sero Dark Thirty.

We offer some simple ways to clarify the reliability of Hollywood history.

If it has actors in it and the word drama in its description it is entertainment, not news.

Watch for the disclaimers, i.e. “based on facts” or “docu-drama” Pay attention to the use of recreations of the action and scene, etc. If those techniques are used, can that version of the events be verified? Is the film-maker independent (neutral) and who is accountable for the truth of the “report.”

If it is produced by the entertainment division of that television network or cable company or film studio, it is not journalism. The success is measured by ticket sales or ad revenues or audience, not accuracy.

Again, we can debate the fine points of this, but the point of today's lecture is that when you're looking for actionable information, basically there is journalism and then there's everything else. That's not to say journalists are saints. Just that journalism the way we define it (Verification, Independence, Accountability) is more reliable.

What is News?

Timely information of some public interest that is shared and subject to a journalistic process of verification, and for which an independent individual or organization is directly accountable.



Maybe it will help settle those murky descriptions if we get around to the final definition: What is News?

For the purposes of this course, here's our definition.

“Timely information of some public interest that is shared and subject to a journalistic process of verification... and for which an independent individual or organization is directly accountable.”

A mouthful.

But like any good definition, it helps you distinguish news from things that merely look or sound like news.

When you work on the taxonomy, remember it is only news when you have all three: V.I.A.



Let's think another way...You're not in Chinatown unless you are in New York City, AND in Manhattan AND downtown (somewhere between Grand and Worth, Allen and Lafayette.)

You know about Venn Diagrams? They're another way to think about this if you don't like the neighborhood idea.

The reliable information we're teaching you to seek has not just one or two of these characteristics. It has all three.

These are three terms students are expected to begin using to characterize information in class and in homework assignments, starting today.

--**Verification:**

--**Independence**

--**Accountability**

A lot of things try to look trustworthy by looking like journalism.

But only at the intersection of all those characteristics lies the sweet spot where you'll find actionable, reliable information.

That's the standard journalism claims to hold itself to: Verification, Independence AND Accountability.



The principal value of the Taxonomy is that it helps you to decide for yourself what is journalism. Regardless of what label is adopted by the person who is delivering the information, you keep an eye on the three traits that distinguish journalism:

Verification, Independence, Accountability.

Wikileaks founder **Julian Paul Assange** says Wikileaks has released more classified documents than the rest of the world press combined: “Verifies the material he broadcasts? Independent of affiliations? Accountable? Is he a journalist?”

Bill O’Reilly, for many years a TV reporter, now has a Fox TV talk show host with killer ratings. Fans call him a defender of the Constitution and defender of traditional conservative values. Critics say he is a one-sided ranter playing politics while wrapping himself in the neutral mantle of journalism. How would you decide? Verifies the material he broadcasts? Independent of affiliations? Accountable to whom?

Is he a journalist? Why does it matter?

Gayle King, co-anchor of CBS This Morning, was a reporter before being hired in 1981 as anchor at WFSB in Hartford, Connecticut, where she worked for 18 years. Now she is co-anchoring the morning news on CBS with Charlie Rose. But when you watch her discuss her battle with breast cancer, and interview actors flogging new movies, or authors making diet meals...do you see independence, verification, accountability? Is she a journalist? Why does it matter?

Soledad O'Brien, AlJazeera America’s newest special correspondent has produced special reports and documentaries on race for CNN, hosted a number of news shows and covered major stories from the presidential race to the Columbine high school shooting.? Verifies material before broadcast? Independent of affiliations?

Accountable to whom? Is she a journalist?

Jon Stewart hosts an evening show that features interviews with key political and cultural figures, “Correspondent” reports on current events and issues, and commentaries by Stewart and other figures on the show. Lots of videotape of political events is used. .? Verifies material before broadcast? Independent of affiliations?

Accountable to whom? Is Jon Stewart a journalist?

Glenn Greenwald was a constitutional and civil rights lawyer who became a political commentator, blogger and author. He was a columnist for Salon.com and then a contributor to The Guardian, as well as [The New York Times](#),^{[7][8][9]} the [Los Angeles Times](#),^[10] [The American Conservative](#),^[11] [The National Interest](#),^[12] and [In These Times](#).^{[13][14]}

So Who is a Journalist?

- Primary Mission is to **Inform the Public**
- Employs Journalistic **Methods and Values**

The Bedrock commitment of a journalist is to Seek Truth and Report it. Their primary mission is to inform by collecting and presenting information according to standards that define journalism.

You will see many examples this semester of people who wish to wear the mantle of journalism, but refuse to submit to the collar that restricts journalists from some parts of life everyone else takes for granted, like political activism, public expressions of opinions, etc.

So Who is a Journalist?

- Subjects work to verification
- Makes a conscious effort to maintain independence
- Accountable: Stands behind work

Here are the key components of the code of ethics that binds journalists across the country to a common set of standards:

Journalism is a discipline of verification, not the mere recording of one point of view or another.”

“Journalists seek the truth and should be honest, fair and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information. “)

▪ *“Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public’s right to know.*

▪ *Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and each other.*



ANIMATION: EACH CLICK BRINGS UP A WORD

These three characteristics are as essential to the Taxonomy of Information as color, shape and size are to chart that helps you organize pictures of animals according to Mammals, Amphibians, Birds, Fish, Insects and Reptiles



Let's think another way...You're not in Chinatown unless you are in New York City, AND in Manhattan AND downtown (somewhere between Grand and Worth, Allen and Lafayette.)

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ANIMATION: EACH CLICK BRINGS UP A WORD

For the purposes of this course, here is what we mean by these familiar words:

--**Verification:** The process that establishes or confirms the accuracy or truth of something.

--**Independence:** freedom from the control, influence, or support of interested parties.

--**Accountability:** Responsible or answerable for your work.



ANIMATION: CLICK BRING UP DEFINITION
Let's look at some examples that help
define these terms.

-- Verification: A process of collecting
evidence that establishes or confirms the
accuracy or truth of something.

(This is a good place to plant seeds about
evidence and inferences, which are often
unsound. Introduce the phrase:
“Correlation does not equal causation” as
an example of inferences that may not be
sound.



Verification means not just taking one person's word for it.

In this December 2009 story about polluted water systems , The New York Times compiled and analyzed millions of records from water systems and regulators around the nation. The documents showed Safe Drinking Water Act violations have occurred in every state.

In Ramsey, N.J., for instance, water tests since 2004 have detected illegal concentrations of arsenic, a carcinogen, and the dry cleaning solvent tetrachloroethylene.

In New York state, 205 water systems have broken the law by delivering tap water that contained illegal amounts of bacteria since 2004.

What Makes News Different?

Independence

Freedom from the control, influence, or support of interested parties, coupled with a conscious effort to set aside any preexisting beliefs and a system of checks and balances.

ANIMATION: CLICK BRINGS UP DEFINITION

Independence: freedom (of the journalist and the journalism organization) from the control, influence, or support of interested parties.

As important, (since objectivity is a fictional state of mind) Independence is guarded by a journalist's conscious effort to set aside pre-existing beliefs and be intellectually independent AND by a system of checks and balances by peers with the same goal.

ASK: What Other Professions attempt independence?

**Independent?
Reliable?**

ANIMATION: ON CLICK, THE DISCLAIMER ACROSS THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE APPEARS

ANIMATION: ON CLICK, THE DISCLAIMER ACROSS THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE APPEARS

Here's a rave review for the Samsung Galaxy S4 phone. As C/Net points out, the review was written independently and objectively by CNET staff, which regularly prepares such performance reviews.

The author is not an employee or stockholder of Samsung.

ASK: Do you find this review independent? Is the information reliable?

CLICK:

What if Samsung was pleased with that four-plus-star review?

And What if C/Net permits companies to pay to have articles published again as a form of advertising?

ASK: Does the disclaimer, which explains why this "previously written" website item is being re-run, demonstrate independence or protect C/Net's independence?



Was this mayor, who submitted little news reports about his small city to the region's major newspaper, producing journalism?

Certainly he could verify, since as mayor he would know what the city was up to. But was he independent? What might be the primary goal of his reports?

And if he used a false identity, how could he be held accountable for the facts and balance of those reports?

Professional Journalists have developed guidelines to make Verification, Independence and Accountability concrete. The purpose is to reduce the impact that power, title or money can have on the integrity of information.

Here's what the SPJ Code of Ethics says:

“Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public’s right to know.”

(extra below)

- Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived.
- Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility.
- Refuse gifts, favors, fees, travel, and special treatment, and shun secondary employment, political involvement, political office and service in community organizations if they compromise journalistic integrity.
- Disclose unavoidable conflicts.
- Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable. Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence news coverage.
- Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; avoid bidding for news.

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705394131/West-Valley-City-mayor-admits-using-false-identity-to-write-news-stories.html>



Like individual journalists, the organizations that gather and deliver information are pulled on all sides by owners, customers, suppliers and competitors. An ethical organization is open and transparent about those forces and takes steps to prevent those forces from skewing information. Possible? Perhaps.



ANIMATION: CLICK BRINGS UP DEFINITION
Accountability: Responsible or answerable
for your work.

Journalists put their name on their work. In many cases, their email address or phone number is attached to each report. That way, if the report is factually wrong, a news consumer or subject of a news story can report the mistake.

ASK: What other professions or crafts do this?



Shortly after the 2011 Tucson shooting, NPR, CNN and NewYorkTimes.com reported Congresswoman Giffords had died of her head wounds. All three soon discovered their errors and published corrections and apologies. That's what we mean by accountability.

Here's the applicable section from SPI's industry-standard code of ethics:

“Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and each other. Journalists should:

- *Clarify and explain news coverage and invite dialogue with the public over journalistic conduct.*
- *Encourage the public to voice grievances against the media.*
- *Admit mistakes and correct them promptly.*
- *Expose unethical practices of journalists and the news media.*

Abide by the same high standards to which they hold others.” <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/01/10/media-outlets->

[apologize-a_n_806603.html](#)

<http://topics.npr.org/article/0eGMbGSbugbwy>



ANIMATION: CLICK TO BRING IN VNR CHARACTERISTICS AND AD FOR THE BLOODTEST PRODUCT

KABC-7 in Los Angeles aired that two-minute news segment on a blood test that can help diagnose allergies in children. What the station didn't tell its viewers was that the entire story was built from a video news release (VNR) funded by Quest Diagnostics, which runs thousands of lab centers across the United States where people go to have such tests done. They story mentions Quest and the Immunocaire test kit. In adapting the story, producers at KABC-7 edited the VNR slightly for length and rearranged the order of clips and soundbites. To help disguise the VNR as a product of their station, KABC-7 swapped the male voice-over of the MutliVu publicist, using an un-identified female, and replaced all text and graphic displays with network-branded substitutes.

Here are the tells:

No reporter identification or sign-off.

The report does not provide any details about the doctor's affiliation or even his hometown.

No last name or hometown given for the patient and her mother

No explanation why the source was not identified.

No sources, written or human, other than the doctor.

Story as written will benefit a single product and company.



We circle back now to the original question.

ASK:

Is Jon Stewart a journalist?

-What is journalism?

-What makes someone a journalist?

Here's what Jon Stewart himself says about it.



Moyers - Stewart.mov

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Here's what Jon Stewart himself says about it.

(at :30, he compares himself to a cartoonist)

A TAXONOMY OF INFORMATION NEIGHBORHOODS						
	ISSUES	DEFINITION	INTENT	PROJECT	PROGRAM	AN INFORMATION
GOAL						
METHOD						
PROVISIONS						
OUTCOME						

Taxonomy: a classification system

Between now and recitation, you are assigned to fill in the elements of this grid according to your understanding of the differences between these information neighborhoods.

Then in recitation, you'll turn it in ON PAPER and go through the chart with your classmates to cement these distinctions in your mind.

What Methods Make Journalism Different?

Verification

Independence

Accountability

(Mnemonic device: "Via")

What's the Mnemonic device that we use to distinguish journalism from other information?

Drill that into your skull. All three elements are the key to knowing whether information is reliable or not.



ANIMATION: ALL THE NEIGHBORHOOD SIGNS AUTOMATICALLY CLOG UP THE SCREEN

CLICK 1=THEY FADE AND THE LESSON COMES UP

Back to our central point this week: When searching for reliable information, or even when just surfing the web for fun, Know What Neighborhood you are in. Companies are spending a lot of money to promote their products, betting that you won't notice the difference between Publicity, Advertising and Journalism. And during an election season, candidates are making the same bets, spending millions of dollars to convince you to do what they want.

After this lecture, students will be able to:

1. Use a standard taxonomy to precisely distinguish between information neighborhoods.
2. Articulate how three traits define journalism as a source of reliable information.
3. Use specific events and examples to illustrate clear understanding of independence and accountability.
4. Make preliminary inquiries that reveal the reliability of a piece of information.

These skills relate to course outcomes 1, 2 & 4

This slide intended for instructors as a focusing tool, but can be shared with students to prime them. Each lecture will include a slide like this with specific lecture outcomes that refer to course outcomes.

Here is what the syllabus declares students will be able to do if they successfully complete the course:

1. Analyze key elements of news reports - weighing evidence, evaluating sources, noting context and transparency - to judge reliability.
2. Distinguish between journalism, opinion journalism and un-supported bloviation.
3. Identify and distinguish between news media bias and audience bias.
4. Blend personal scholarship and course materials to write forcefully about journalism standards and practices, fairness and bias, First Amendment issues and their individual Fourth Estate rights and responsibilities.
5. Use examples from each day's news to demonstrate critical thinking about civic engagement.
6. Place the impact of social media and digital technologies in their historical context.



hus endeth the Lesson...



Housekeeping, Announcements & Notes

Extra Credit Opportunity: An Evening With Watergate Reporter Carl Bernstein

October 15
SAC Auditorium
Doors Open 7:45 p.m.
Tickets, Free, at SAC Box
Office, are only available to
News Literacy students and
Journalism students.
No other students will be
admitted.



To receive extra credit, you'll watch "All The President's Men" in advance and answer a few simple questions about the film and Bernstein's talk.



Reminder slide, to revisit last week's lecture points and prompt conversation about Obscenity and National Security rulings.



ANIMATION ALERT: THE TEXT JIGGLES A LOT

To help you begin using that chart automatically and looking for V.I.A.

we've invented the all-new quiz show: "WHAT IS IT?"

First we'll show you an item.

You'll decide which neighborhood it belongs in.

You'll tell us HOW D'YA KNOW

And then, you'll explain either what makes it journalism or WHAT WOULD IT TAKE? to turn that information into actionable information you could use to make a good decision.

Ready?



Animation: Slide loads with Trip advisor logo, which says “Get the **Truth**. Then Go.” (emphasis added)

First click brings up headline for an online ad in which a writer offers to write a good review for \$5. Second click brings up ad text, and REVIEWS of this fake reviewer.

Ask: WHAT IS IT?

Ask: How many of you check the reviews of products on iTunes?

Amazon.com?

What other websites do you use that have customer ratings?

Do you yourself provide feedback on these sites?

How's the advice you get?

(After discussion, click up the information that undermines Trip Advisor's claims)

<http://fiverr.com/fringer/write-a-tripadvisor-review-for-your-hotel-or-restaurant>



So, when you check the reviews of products on Amazon.com before you buy, who is writing those reviews?

And now that you know about trip advisor...What IS IT?

What column does it fall under in our information taxonomy chart?

(Publicity...or maybe fraud)



Using the terms on the Taxonomy chart, give me a detailed account of why it fits in that category. (purpose, methods, etc)

Is it a signed review? Who is accountable?

How would you know if the person works for the place...or owns it...or was hired to write the review? Independence is compromised.

Here's an idea will start to explore in thinking about where we get information: Self-Interest...versus Independent.

Ask: Define those terms.

WHAT WOULD IT TAKE?

(TO MAKE IT JOURNALISM)

So if anonymity and self-interest makes those reviews unreliable, what would it take to make them reliable?

(Independence, a named reviewer, etc)

Paid Commenters, beware...in New York

Give Yourself 5 Stars? Online, It Might Cost You

BY DAVID STREITFELD

September 23, 2013

"I celebrate myself, and sing myself," wrote Walt Whitman, America's great bard of self-promotion. As the world goes ever more digital, quite a few businesses are adopting that philosophy – hiring a veritable chorus of touts to sing their nonexistent praises and lure in customers.

New York regulators will announce on Monday the most comprehensive crackdown to date on deceptive reviews on the Internet. Agreements have been reached with 19 companies to cease their misleading practices and pay a total of \$350,000 in penalties.

Just as we were putting this lecture to bed, news broke that New York State will crack down on deceptive reviews.

WHAT IS IT?



VIDEO NAMED ABOVE IS IN RESOURCES FOLDER . LINK HERE

This was Steve Jobs in a big room, meeting with all the reporters who cover the personal computer industry for a living. This is the day he introduced the iPad. (After video runs, ask WHAT IS IT?)

HOW D'YA KNOW?



Ask: What is it?

How did you know?

(explain correct answer,
referring to the taxonomy
chart)



March 31, 2010

Looking at the iPad From Two Angles

By DAVID POGUE

In 10 years of reviewing tech products for The New York Times, I've never seen a product as polarizing as Apple's iPad, which arrives in stores on Saturday.

"This device is laughably absurd," goes a typical remark on a tech blog's comments board. "How can they expect anyone to get serious computer work done without a mouse?"

"This truly is a magical revolution," goes another. "I can't imagine why anyone will want to go back to using a mouse and keyboard once they've experienced Apple's visionary user interface!"

Those are some pretty confident critiques of the iPad — considering that their authors have never even tried it.

In any case, there's a pattern to these assessments.

The haters tend to be techies; the fans tend to be regular people.

Maybe it would help to look at another piece of information that came out about the same time.

Here's what a tech columnist, David Pogue, wrote about the new-fangled iPad when it came out.

(Read from it)

Now let's go back to that video of Steve Jobs and think about what it would take to make it journalism...

WHAT WOULD IT TAKE?

(TO MAKE IT JOURNALISM)

Ask: If it's not journalism,
what would it take to
make it reliable,
actionable information?



The Atlantic Monthly, founded by, ran this article about the Church of Scientology’s controversial leader, David Miscavige.

There was nothing on the website to explain what Atlantic readers later learned: that the Church of Scientology paid to have the article placed on the website. This is what some call “advertorial,” material controlled by a paying customer that is made to read, or at least look, like content produced by journalists.



WHAT IS IT?

So, What is it?

This is a new creature
called native advertising

Pivot Point

Every other row
Pivots to the row behind
To discuss in groups of four

We have done this informally in years past, but now provide a slide to prompt short in-class discussions among students.

At appropriate moments, the lecturer will pose a question to the room and then ask students to pivot into groups of 4, discuss the question and prepare to offer answers to the whole room.

This will be clumsy until students learn the drill, but the idea is to break up the lecture with small-group work, if only to give students a chance to shift positions.

On this pivot point, use the chart to methodically analyze this item about Scientology in The Atlantic...what neighborhood are you in? We'll call on you for some answers.

HOW D'YA KNOW?

V...Did anyone verify the claims in the text of the article, about Scientology's growth.

I...If it was written by the Church of Scientology's marketing staff, are they independent? Can they report unpleasant facts without fear of retribution?

A...To whom are those writers accountable, Atlantic's readers, or Scientology leaders?

UPDATE: The Atlantic [apologized for the episode](#), saying that it had "made a mistake, possibly several mistakes."

The piece was classified as "sponsor content," hardly a novel approach to generating online revenue. Natalie Raabe, a spokeswoman for the Atlantic, says that such "native ads" are making their way to TheAtlantic.com on a "regular basis," though figures weren't immediately available.

WHAT WOULD IT TAKE?

(TO MAKE IT JOURNALISM)

Ask and discuss.

If you hear students using terms like Verification, Independence, Accountability, call attention to them.