THE MEDIA OF MASS COMMUNICATION

11th Edition

John Vivian

PowerPoint™ Prepared by Amy M. Carwile
Texas A&M University at Texarkana

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Chapter 8: News

Thematic Chapter
Overview
– Media Technology
– Media Economics
– Media & Democracy
– Media Effects
– Elitism & Populism
– Media Future
Concept of News

- News as change
  - News: a report on change
  - Newsworthiness: a ranking of news that helps decide what makes it into news packages
• How are the concepts of news as change and the concept of newsworthiness inextricably linked?

• Compare the leading stories in competing newspapers, newscasts or online sites and explain the role that judgment makes in deciding what makes the news.
Bennett News Model

Bennett Model Components

• Compelling Events
• Deadline Driven
  – Lightning news
• Objectivity
• Veiling the reporter
  – Bylines were rare
• Sourcing

Problems in Bennett Model

• Superficiality
• Deadline haste
• Dullness
• Missed trends
• Questions unasked
• Manipulation
Case Study: The McCarthy Lessons

• Senator Joseph McCarthy
  – Fueled anti-communism hysteria
  – He reveled in the news coverage
  – Edward R. Murrow ferreted out the truth and exposed him on CBS
    • 4 years later
• What would James Gordon Bennett say about news practices today?
• How did economics factor into the dominance of the Bennett Model for so long in U.S. journalism?
• How can a mindless pursuit of the objective tone lead to journalistic failure?
Hutchins News Model

• Hutchins Commission
• Mixed Reception
• Changing News Dynamics
  – Television
  – Internet
  – Media Literacy
• What are the distinctions between interpretive reporting and editorializing and how can audiences determine one from the other?

• What helped overcome the initial kneejerk negativism to the Hutchins recommendations?
Rethinking News Models

• Transforming News Environments
  – Abundant Newspaper Dailies
  – One-paper towns
  – Audience Fragmentation

• Hybrid News Models
• How does traditional U.S. news reporting that stops short of perspective and context affect audience interest?

• What has been the most influential factor in broadening the concept of news in the United States?

• Should people be wary of hybrid news models like that being used by the New York Times?
Personal Values in News

• Role of the Journalist
  – Objectivity
    • Penny Press
    • Associated Press
    • Newspaper Economics

• Journalists’ Personal Values
  – Ethnocentrism
  – Democracy and Capitalism
  – Tempered Individualism
  – Social Order
  – Watchdog Function
• How did so many people come to the vexatious opinion that news should be objective?

• How would you propose the licensing or certifying of journalists be accomplished?

• Find examples of journalistic ethnocentricity in current news, or partiality to U.S.-style democracy and capitalism, or lionizing of individualism, or reporters serving a watchdog function. What do all of these reports have in common?
Variables Affecting News

• News Hole
• News Flow
• News Staffing
• Perceptions about Audience
• Competition
  – Consensible nature of news
• Why does the news hole variable affect media platforms differently?
• How is news coverage affected by the number of reporters available to cover a story and their varying expertise levels on all issues?
• How is audience a factor in determining news coverage?
• What evidence of herd journalism can you spot in current coverage? How can it be avoided? Should it?
Quality of News

• News as nonfiction
• Gatekeeping as creative
• Aggregation sites
• Custom news portals
• Hoaxes still plague the media, but today it’s the media that are conned. Identify a recent hoax widely reported by the media as non-fiction news.

• What are the hazards in the gatekeeping process in news?

• What impact does aggregating have on delivery of the news?

• How might the aggregation of news via new alerts impact the way a story is evaluated by the reader?
Journalism Trends

• Newsrooms in Transition
  – Less comprehensive coverage
  – Less enterprise
  – Less outlying and international news
  – Fewer beats
  – Less independent reporting
Journalism Trends (continued)

- Nonstop coverage
- Live News
  - Diminished gatekeeping
  - Lost time for audience
  - News gathering unveiled
- Unedited Blogs
- Exploratory Reporting
- Soft News
• How are tighter finances at media companies affecting news?
• Nonstop news coverage is well established. What impact does it have on the way people interpret the facts and truth of news stories?
• All reporting results from inquiry. What sets investigative reporting apart?
• POINT
  – In difficult times, blogs are important alternative sources of essential information.
  – At Blog del Narco, the webmaster is a college student who collects information in his bedroom for posting.
  – For his own protection he posts anonymously and shields the identity of his sources.

• COUNTERPOINT
  – Anonymous blogging is a weak substitute for traditional journalism.
  – Anonymity undermines the accountability that makes journalism credible.
  – Who is the publisher?
  – Who are the reporters?
  – Anybody can submit unsigned information and photos.
  – Anonymous blogging can’t substitute for journalistic courage.