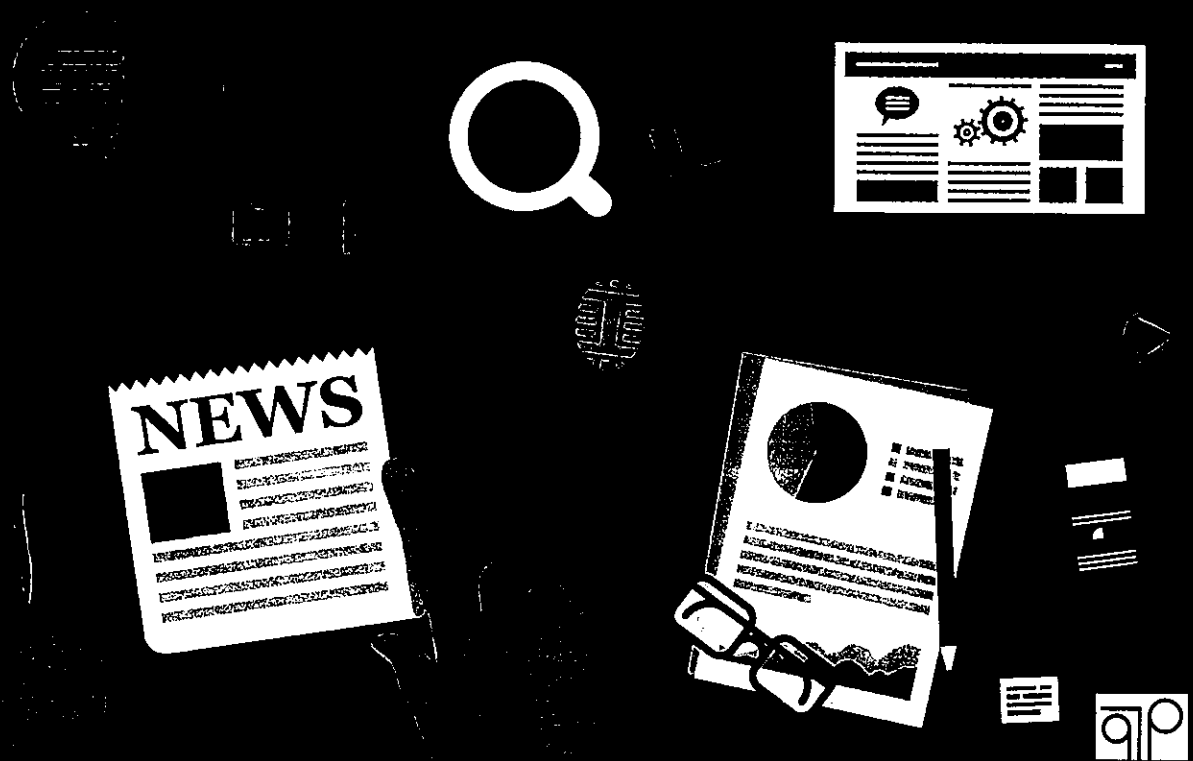


MOBILE AND SOCIAL MEDIA JOURNALISM



Forces at the Gate: An Active Audience



When NBC News correspondent Hallie Jackson covered the 2016 US presidential election, the frenetic pace of reporting on the race for the White House went far beyond producing stories for the network's newscasts.

Armed with a mobile device, Jackson brought her social media followers along for the ride as she spent the better part of a year reporting from the campaign trail.

Between live shots, writing packages, and chasing down politicians, she tweeted (@HallieJackson), created stories on Snapchat (hallienbc), and shared photos on Instagram (hallie_gram). Her social media posts provided the latest campaign news while also giving followers a behind-the-scenes look at her reporting process and some of the more lighthearted moments.

"Mobile and social media are ways to open the reporting process and bring more people into it. It's a natural part of how I report, because in this day in age I can't wait for my next live shot to get info out there," said Jackson.

"The interactions we have with the audience now are so different from when I began in the business in 2006. You're always continuing the conversation online."

At one point, Jackson's producer used a selfie stick, iPhone, duct tape, and a live-streaming app to produce one of her live reports—something that was unheard of just years prior. And yes, that moment was shared on Twitter and Snapchat.

Jackson even did many live shots from inside a moving car as she followed campaign busses from event to event. Those roving live reports that viewers saw on television were also made possible by simply using a mobile phone. No fancy equipment or traditional video cameras involved.

In this chapter you will

- Identify how mobile devices and social media are fundamentally different from past technologies such as television and the printing press.
- Discover how mobile devices and social media allow two-way conversations between the audience and journalists versus the old one-way model of mass communications.
- Learn how social media has led to the public's active role in the news production process and changed how audiences consume information.
- Understand that while journalists retain discretion on what makes the "news," an "active" audience plays an influential role.
- Explore the three areas in which mobile devices and social media are impacting journalists' work: newsgathering, distribution of news, and audience engagement.

@HallieJackson. Twitter post. May, 2010.



Frank Thorp V@
@thorpv

Follow

Selfie stick + tripod + tape + iPhone +
livestream app = @HallieJackson #MacGyver
liveshot



@FrankThorpV. Twitter Post. March 13, 2016.

With her mobile device in hand, NBC News correspondent Hallie Jackson is constantly connected to the audience while reporting in the field. While covering the 2016 US presidential race, her producer even used an iPhone and selfie stick for a live shot.

Welcome to journalism today. The tools of the trade are now in the palms of our hands. With a single mobile device, journalists produce and share content across different platforms—social media, mobile, websites, and TV.

But it's not simply about journalists "pushing out" content on multiple platforms.

Journalists are expected to interact with audiences—meet the public in spaces where they're now spending an increasing amount of time consuming *and* producing information. Audiences are actively engaged with news on social media platforms and mobile devices, whether by posting photos from the scene of breaking news, tweeting with reporters about their stories, or sharing a news outlet's story with their circle of social media followers.

These interactions, fueled by new technologies, are reshaping journalists' relationships with news consumers and how news is produced.

Flashback: What's the Internet, Anyway?

The year was 1994. NBC News *Today* show anchors Katie Couric, Bryant Gumbel, and Elizabeth Vargas discuss, with some confusion, this new "thing" called "the Internet."

Gumbel asks, "What's Internet anyway?" His coanchors chime in: It's "that massive computer network that is becoming really big now."

The anchors are also puzzled over the @ symbol in an e-mail address displayed on the screen. "I wasn't prepared to translate that ... that little mark with the *a* and then the ring around it," says Gumbel.

"At," says Vargas.

"See that's what I said," responds Gumbel. "Katie said she thought it was 'about.'"

Years after this entertaining exchange took place, it was posted online and, you guessed it, went viral. I show this video on the first day of class because the clip demonstrates how in a such a short time span the online medium has gone from uncharted territory for journalists to a space where we produce nearly all of our work. Of course, the Internet was the launching point for what came next: the birth of social media.

View the video: bitly.com/InternetFlashback

TECHNOLOGY AND JOURNALISM

Before diving into specific mobile and social media skills, strategies, and tools, it's critical to understand how journalism reached this crossroads. Reflecting on the past provides an important perspective on where the industry stands now and where it may be headed.

From the printing press to computers, technology has always shaped how journalists perform their craft and where the public turns for news. The printing press, which gave rise to newspapers, allowed for mass distribution of news in the written form. At first, the process of transmitting news from the field to print was slow and cumbersome. By the time news reached people, it was days—sometimes weeks—old. The telegraph sped up the process, allowing reporters to transmit stories so people could learn of news the day it happened.

Radio and television brought more immediacy to journalism, a new way of telling stories. Journalists were now able to bring audiences to the scene of news through the use of audio, video, and live reports.

The Internet opened up an entirely uncharted world for journalism and audiences. In the late 1990s, most news outlets' websites were simply a single static page. Print reporters were still focused on the newspaper and broadcast reporters on their stories for TV or radio newscasts. As the audience increasingly turned online for information, news outlets' websites became more robust, and with that came new tasks for journalists.

Journalists' responsibilities went far beyond stories for print or TV—producing multimedia web stories with a mix of photos, video, and audio became the norm. You can see that each new technology has affected how and where people get their news as well as how journalists do their jobs.

Fast-forward to the present day. Social media and mobile devices are the latest technologies shaping the field, and they have reached this position in a relatively short amount of time, considering the first iPhone was released in 2007 and Twitter was launched in 2006. Never before in such a short amount of time has a new technology had such a dramatic impact on so many facets of communications.

Before Social Media: One-Way Communication

The reason behind this has to do with fundamental differences between today's technologies and those in use prior to the introduction of social media, such as the printing press and television. Traditional print and broadcast journalism are based on the mass communications model of one-way communication.

The characteristics of traditional mass communications are these:

- From one entity, person, or group to a large audience
- One-way communication
- Passive audience

Producers of information, such as journalists, told the public what they needed to know with little or no interaction with the audience, in a one-way flow of information. It's the equivalent of someone talking at you, albeit with interesting and important

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@Frank Thorp V. Twitter Post. March 13, 2016.

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information, but you're not allowed or able to respond. A single voice speaks to many. That's not much of a conversation.

There's a concentration of power in this model. News consumers were considered passive, because previous technologies didn't foster immediate engagement with content and journalists. Consumers received the news but had little interaction with it. Writing a letter to the editor or calling a newsroom tips line were the extent of the feedback.

This model—what I call the “voice of God”—has been turned upside down with the emergence of mobile devices and social media now that nearly anyone can produce and share content. The audience has shifted from a passive one to an active one.

After Social Media: Journalism as a Conversation

The audience is at the center of social media. They're in the driver's seat. Jay Rosen (@jayrosen_nyu), author and journalism professor at New York University, describes the current audience as passengers on your ship who have a boat of their own.¹ They can connect with each other and with journalists, and they have the means to speak to the world.

Therefore, mobile devices and social media are characterized by

- **Accessibility:** Nearly anyone has access to these tools.
- **Active audience:** The audience can create and publish content.
- **Interactivity:** Messages and feedback happen simultaneously.

These characteristics challenge the traditional notion of mass communications. Because of broad access to mobile devices and social media, creating and publishing content has been opened up to the masses. This is in direct contrast to the closed model of traditional media.

The audience can turn to Twitter to complain about a product. They can snap images of a protest and instantly share them on Instagram. They can use Facebook to generate buzz about an event. The list of things this now-active audience can do is endless.

In addition, interactivity fosters a two-way conversation. When someone tweets at a company or journalist, for example, there's the expectation that the person on the other end will respond almost instantaneously. Just like a conversation.

What does this mean for journalism? Journalism has shifted from a one-way to a two-way conversation that is redefining how journalists report and interact with the audience. Think of journalism as a conversation, rather than a lecture. News outlets can't ignore audiences active on mobile devices and social media. Journalism as a conversation is a shared action with shifting journalist-audience relationships.

Journalism as a conversation fosters interactivity between the audience and journalists, an informal tone, and an openness on the part of the journalist to audience feedback. As we'll discuss later in the chapter, this engagement can build trust with the audience. Mobile devices and social media allow journalists to strengthen their connections with the public and ultimately better serve them.

As was the case with NBC News correspondent Hallie Jackson, journalists are expected to not simply wait to share information on the traditional newscasts, in a

newspaper, or in an online story. That's an old way of thinking. As the story unfolds in the field, journalists must turn to social media to share the latest, track online conversations about the story, and respond to people who reach out to them.

Those are just a few of the evolving responsibilities addressed in this book. The skills you will need in today's newsrooms go well beyond one, or even two, platforms.

Let's take a deeper look at how mobile devices and social media are impacting the audience and journalists. We start with the audience, because their changing role and habits directly affect how journalists do their jobs.

CHANGING ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

January 2009. A US Airways plane makes an emergency landing in New York City's Hudson River. Janis Krums, commuting home on a nearby ferry, snaps a photo of passengers huddled on a wing of the plane.

Krums (@jkrums) tweets out one of the first images of what became known as the Miracle on the Hudson. "There's a plane in the Hudson. I'm on the ferry going to pick up the people. Crazy," wrote Krums in a tweet heard around the world.

Krums had shared his dramatic photo before any journalist could get to the breaking news scene. Within a half hour, the tweet spread like wildfire well beyond his 170 Twitter followers. News outlets around the world were showing the image, and Krums was being interviewed live on TV news networks.

"This may be among the most striking instances yet of instant citizen reporting," wrote the *Los Angeles Times* the day of the emergency landing.²

Indeed, the Miracle on the Hudson was a turning point, an eye-opening moment that showed the impact of social media on journalism. It was one of the first instances in which journalists realized the power of the audience in a mobile and social media world.

Twitter, Facebook, and other social networking sites are more than just ways for people to keep in touch with friends and family. They're platforms for news. Platforms where everyday citizens can share newsworthy content alongside professional journalists.

This was never more evident than during the Boston Marathon bombings and their aftermath, major news events that underscored the changing role of the audience. From the initial explosions at the finish line to the manhunt for the two suspects, the chaos unfolded live—on social media. Immediately after the explosions, many peoples' first reaction was to reach for their mobile phones and share via social media platforms.



<http://twitpic.com/135xa> - There's a plane in the Hudson. I'm on the ferry going to pick up the people. Crazy.



Miracle on the Hudson: Janis Krums tweeted out this photo in 2009 after a US Airways plane made an emergency landing in the Hudson River. Within minutes of Krums sharing this image, news outlets around the world were using it as part of their coverage.

Janis Krums. Twitter Post. January 15, 2009.

Andrew Kitzenberg. Twitter Post. April 19, 2016.



Andrew Kitzenberg @AKitz · 19 Apr 2013
Bullet hole through our wall and the chair #mitshooting #mit #boston

7.1K 999

Andrew Kitzenberg captured the shoot-out between one of the Boston Marathon bombing suspects and police outside of his home in Watertown, Massachusetts. Bullets came flying into his apartment, and the world was watching it unfold in real time on his Twitter feed.

The tables were now turned, as journalists and others learned about news events via social media.

Who Are the Gatekeepers Now?

The term *gatekeeping* is used as a metaphor to explain the process of selecting content that will make it through the “gates” and into a news product, such as a news website, newspaper, or newscast. Gatekeepers hold the keys to the gates. They determine which content is most relevant, who it’s intended for, and how it will be delivered.

Prior to social media, editors, news directors, producers, and reporters were gatekeepers in journalism. They were the guarders of the gates, controlling what information got through to the audience.

In editorial meetings, without much input from the audience, they would decide which stories to cover and how much space or time to dedicate to them, among other considerations. Traditionally, this meant journalists relied on predictable newsgathering channels dominated by official sources, press conferences, news releases, and government proceedings.⁴

The Boston Marathon bombings and the Miracle on the Hudson raise the question: Who are the gatekeepers now?

There are new forces at the gate: the active audience. The concept of traditional gatekeeping has been turned upside down. Editors, news directors, producers, and journalists no longer have sole control over content that makes it through the gates. While they make the ultimate decisions about what news is included on a website, in a broadcast, or in a newspaper, the audience influence on the process is unquestionable.

Hours later, Andrew Kitzenberg (@Akitz) gave the world a front-row seat to a shootout between authorities and the suspects. Kitzenberg heard pops outside of his home in Watertown, Massachusetts, darted to look out a window, and saw gunfire.

He too grabbed his iPhone and began posting to Twitter: “Shoot out outside my room in Watertown. 62 Laurel st. #mit #boston #shooting.” A round of gunshots entered his home and became lodged in his office chair, another image he shared on Twitter.

Social media users and journalists were living the frantic events in real time through his words and photos. Kitzenberg, interviewed on the CNBC documentary #TwitterRevolution, said he never even thought about calling a TV station or newspaper.

“They didn’t even cross my mind. It was Twitter.”³

Mobile devices and social media are now at the heart of today's editorial discussions. Audience members have become a source of news items, as they create their own content. The audience is also able to communicate stories or topics that interest them, which in turn influences news outlets' judgments about an event's newsworthiness and which stories ultimately are considered "news."

My nationwide survey of news directors, those who manage broadcast television newsrooms, explored the impact of the active audience on the gatekeeping process in newsrooms.⁵ Nearly all of the 126 news directors who took part in the study indicated their newsrooms regularly find story ideas or content from social media users that ends up in newscasts. It should come as no surprise that this practice is the norm and is indicative of the practices in all types of news organizations.

The results of the study also show that what is being talked about or "trending" on social media is a significant factor in choosing stories to cover. Would newsrooms cover these stories if they were not popular on social media? Eighty percent of TV news directors said there would be only some chance or little chance that they'd even think about covering these stories if it weren't for their popularity on social media.

As one reporter who I spoke with about the changes put it, "It used to be that we told them [the audience] what was happening. Now, because of social media, they are trying to tell us. . . . Who online 10 years ago was telling us what our top story was going to be?"⁶

Once-passive audience members, then, are not only consumers of news, but also influential producers of content. Consumers *and* producers—habits at the heart of the changes in the field.

Content Producers: The Power of an Active Audience

The power of the audience as producers is reflected in the term "user-generated content." User-generated content refers to photos, videos, and other information captured by people who are not professional journalists and shared to social media platforms.

CNN iReport is one of the earliest examples of user-generated content. Citizens turned into roving reporters, snapping up videos and photos of newsworthy events, and then sending them to CNN for distribution online and on air.

When iReport launched in 2006, the term *social media* wasn't even part of our everyday vocabulary. Many of us were just hearing about a new "website" called Facebook. The first generation iPhone hadn't even hit store shelves.

The dominance of mobile devices and social media platforms in the years following has created a flood of user-generated content. Nearly 70 percent of smartphone owners use their phone to take and share pictures, videos, or commentary about events happening in their community, with 35 percent doing so "frequently," according to the Pew Research Center.⁷

The audience now has the tools (mobile devices) in their hands to easily create content and new platforms (social media) to instantly share content with anyone. This has shifted their habits from those early days of iReport. Many nowadays don't even consider contacting a news outlet with content. Instead, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat are just a swipe and tap away.

“When people are uploading content, they’re not sending it to a newsroom, they’re sharing it with their friends,” says Claire Wardle (@cward1e), former research director at Columbia Journalism School’s Tow Center for Digital Journalism.⁸

People sharing this content may not have intended for it to be used by journalists. But, by chance, it may happen that the content is the story or becomes a key part of a story. We saw this in the Boston Marathon bombings and Miracle on the Hudson coverage.

Journalists are relying on social media content, particularly in breaking news situations, to provide audience members with information from a location prior to a reporter’s arrival. User-generated content is also helpful when a news event is taking place in a remote area.

For instance, when a Carnival cruise ship was stranded in the Gulf of Mexico, news outlets turned to Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook for photos, video, and other information posted by the ship’s passengers.

Searches of the keywords and hashtags “Carnival” and “Triumph” revealed first-hand accounts from aboard the ship—images of sewage backed up and people sleeping on outdoor pool decks because of the unsanitary condition aboard the ship. Because news outlets could not get their own crews to this news event taking place in the middle of the gulf, they relied on the passengers’ social media posts to paint a picture of what was unfolding.

Sometimes, the audience unknowingly shares news, as was the case for Sohaib Athar. Athar didn’t realize he was tweeting about one of the most historic news events of our times—the raid that killed Osama bin Laden. Athar noticed helicopters circling near his home in Abbottabad, Pakistan. He then heard a blast and ended up live-tweeting the raid by US Navy SEALs on bin Laden’s compound.⁹

It wasn’t until later that he learned what he was tweeting about. Seven hours after Athar’s first tweet, US President Barack Obama officially announced bin Laden’s death. Athar tweeted, “Uh oh, now I’m the guy who liveblogged the Osama raid without knowing it.”

Journalists scrambling for information about the raid came across Athar’s Twitter feed. He received over 200 interview requests.

Sohaib Athar live tweeted the 2011 raid in Pakistan that killed Osama bin Laden. Athar, who lived near bin Laden’s compound, later learned that all the activity in his neighborhood was part of the raid.



Sohaib Athar
@ReallyVirtual



Follow

Uh oh, now I'm the guy who liveblogged the Osama raid without knowing it.

RETWEETS
6,837

LIKES
2,203



12:41 AM - 2 May 2011



6.8K

2.2K



While this type of user-generated content can be captivating and enhance reporting, there are pitfalls. Below are some of the important considerations journalists must be mindful of. These points will be addressed in future chapters.

- Journalists must first determine if the content has news value. Note the use of *content* and not *news* in the term *user-generated content*. This is an important distinction, because not all user-generated content is news. In the sea of social media content, some is newsworthy. Plenty is not.
- Before deciding to use newsworthy social media content in their reporting, journalists must be skeptical about information. The speed at which content travels over social media, the sheer volume of user-generated content, and the rise of fake news make fact checking even more important now. Social media information should be held to traditional journalistic standards. Journalists must verify the accuracy and authenticity of the information. The reliance on social media content has increased the chances that newsrooms will spread misinformation. In my nationwide study of news directors, a third of respondents indicated their stations had reported information from social media users that was later found to be false or inaccurate.¹⁰
- Another question to consider is whether journalists, before using the content, need to obtain permission from someone who's posted material on social media. Since the content is on a public platform, is it fair game to use without securing permission?
- News outlets must not become overly dependent on social media as a source for stories. Focusing on topics from social media can lead the public to perceive those issues as more important than stories uncovered through traditional means. Social media is not a replacement for journalists attending school board meetings, walking the halls of City Hall, or poring through the county budget, for example. Putting down the iPhone and pounding the pavement in search of stories is still critical.

Social media is like the wild west—exciting but chaotic, and often lacking order. It's the responsibility of trained journalists to make sense of all the noise, of the fire hose of information from the active audience.

This burden falls on everyone in a newsroom. Since social media content is such an integral part of news today, many newsrooms are hiring journalists whose sole responsibility is to manage audience engagement and user-generated content.

Fergus Bell (@fergb) was the first international social media editor and user-generated content editor at the Associated Press. Bell helped develop standards for verifying user-generated content and collaborating with social media users.

"Users know that they can contribute to news stories, so we need to find a way to work with them by giving them the credit they deserve," says Bell. "[They] should not be people we should be battling against. We need to get into a position where we're working together."¹¹

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Sohaib Athar, Twitter Post, May 2, 2011

News Consumption: Mobile and Social

The audience as producers is one piece of the evolving news landscape. How they're getting news today—and what they're doing with it—is also having a monumental impact on journalism.

The public's news consumption habits are undergoing a fundamental shift: mobile and social.

With the swipe of a finger, mobile devices are the go-to place to access news. Mobile phones and tablets are becoming the dominant platforms for news consumption.¹² They're portable and on-demand, giving people access anytime and nearly anywhere.

Think about your own habits. How do you typically get word of a major news story? It may be a local story, such as a car accident that shuts down a highway in your hometown; or, a story of national and international significance, such as the 2016 deadly shooting in an Orlando nightclub.

There's probably a good chance you first hear about these types of news stories through a breaking news alert on your mobile device or a social media post. Then, that may lead you to a news outlet's website for more details, all while using your mobile device. You may also interact with the news by sharing it on social media or commenting on it.

Not only are people increasingly reading and watching news on mobile devices, they're learning about news while on social media sites and engaging with it—in real time as news happens. That brings us to the idea of news as something “social.”

These trends show no signs of slowing down. A survey conducted by the Knight Foundation showed that nearly 90 percent of mobile device owners in the United States access news and information via their smartphones.¹³

And hitting home the point of the active audience, their encounters with news are hardly passive. The audience participates with the news and therefore becomes part of the conversation about a topic or story. At least half of social network site

Key Points about News Consumption

- **News is mobile.** Mobile devices are becoming the dominant platform for news consumption. More and more people are visiting news websites on a mobile device. This “mobile majority” has news outlets rethinking how websites are designed and how news stories are packaged for mobile users. “We have more people reaching our content through mobile than desktop,” said Karen Magnuson (@kmagnuson), editor and vice president of news at the *Democrat & Chronicle* in Rochester, New York. “A top priority is testing how our content looks on mobile devices, because that’s likely how people are going to consume it.”
- **News is social.** Rather than directly typing in the web address, people are being led to news websites by social media. Social referrals—links that are shared on social networks such as Facebook and Twitter—are a crucial source of website traffic. In addition, the trend is for people to first hear about news via social media, and then engage with the content by sharing or commenting.

users share stories, images, or videos from news outlets. Nearly as many discuss a news issue or event on social media.¹⁴

Taking a look at how people reach news websites is also eye opening. "You can no longer assume people are coming to you. You have to go out and get them," says Lisa Tozzi (@lisatozzi), news director at BuzzFeed.¹⁵

People are less frequently opening up a web browser and typing the address of a news website. Rather, more and more people end up at news websites by clicking a link in a social media post that catches their attention.¹⁶

The active audience on social media is a key driver of traffic to news websites. This means journalists must provide engaging content on social media platforms. Much of this book, particularly Chapter 6, focuses on this important skill.

Today's flow of news from a journalist to the audience is a far cry from the days of waiting for the morning paper or the evening news to tell you the top stories. The idea of news as mobile and social has significant implications for journalists. They must adapt to where the audience is spending a considerable amount of time and how they are interacting with news—on mobile devices and with social media. This means a shift in how and where journalism is produced and delivered.

"As journalism becomes ever more dependent on these new distribution platforms to find audiences, news publishers are forced to examine their business models and strategies for the future," says Emily Bell (@emilybell), director of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism and former director of digital content for Britain's *Guardian News*.¹⁷

Part of a successful strategy must be centered on where a news outlet's target audiences are spending their time. For younger generations, it's predominately mobile and social spaces. For older generations, it tends to be a mix of traditional and digital spaces.

All we have to do is take a look at where people got news about the 2016 US presidential election. For 18- to 29-year-olds, social media was the most helpful source for learning about the election, according to the Pew Research Center.¹⁸

Social media drops off for older Americans. Those 50 years and older named cable TV news as the most helpful. That's not to say mobile and social don't play an important role for them. While TV (78%) was the most common place for US adults to learn about the election, digital spaces (65%) including news websites, apps, and social networking sites weren't far behind. Radio (44%) and print newspapers (36%) trailed.

Even though this is only one snapshot in time, these findings are consistent with research on news consumption. It speaks volumes about the future of where journalism must be delivered. What will we see in 10, 20, 30 years as the younger generations age? It's unlikely that digital natives (students, that's you), those born with new technologies in their hands, will change their habits.

Older generations grew up accustomed to traditional print and broadcast, so they still rely on them for news more than their younger counterparts. But as the younger generations age, odds are they'll continue to rely on what they're familiar with, mobile and social spaces. This is key to the story of journalism's future.

It hits home the point of news organizations' need to evolve with the audience, because all signs indicate that news consumption on mobile and social will only increase and eventually outpace news consumption on traditional spaces—television, radio, and print—for all demographics. This isn't to say that these traditional spaces

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won't still be a source of information, but rather those outlets have to make mobile and social a top priority for delivering news and engaging with audiences.

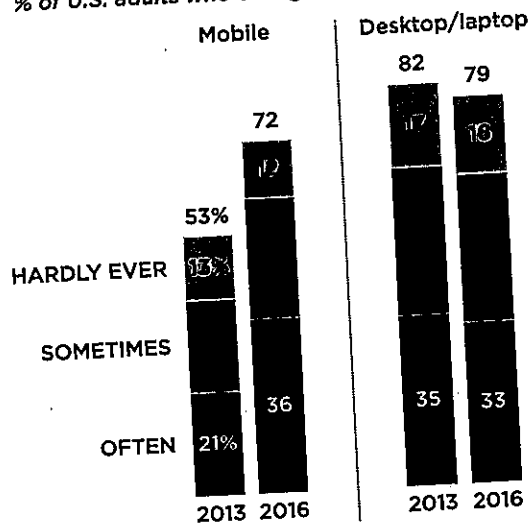
The good news is that many newsrooms are already taking a mobile-first mindset (see Chapter 2). For example, fueled by the "mobile majority," making websites user-friendly for mobile device users has become a top priority.

It's a necessity when you consider that the majority of traffic to news websites comes from people using mobile devices, not desktop computers. As Table 1.1

TABLE 1.1
The portion of Americans who ever get news on a mobile device is increasing rapidly.

Rapid growth since 2013 in portion using mobile to get news; desktop/laptop usage holds steady

% of U.S. adults who ever get news on . . .



Among people who get news on both, more prefer mobile

66% get news from both mobile and desktop/laptop

Of those . . .

56% Prefer mobile

42% Prefer desktop/laptop

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 12-Feb. 8, 2016.

"The Modern News Consumer." Pew Research Center, Washington, DC (July, 2016). <http://www.journalism.org/2016/07/07/pathways-to-news/>

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shows, mobile traffic continues to gain prominence over desktop traffic in all sectors of journalism.¹⁹

The BBC News, for instance, said that two-thirds of traffic to its website is now generated by smartphones and tablets. In fact, most Google searches are now done by people on a mobile device.

In response to the “mobile majority,” news outlets are developing new strategies to better serve the audience. For example, launching responsive websites is part of the approach. A responsive website is the industry standard. A website that is responsive gives visitors the best experience based on their device—mobile, tablet, or desktop.

Responsive websites adapt to which device a visitor is using in order to give the user optimal viewing and interaction with content. Google even boosts the search rankings of sites that are mobile friendly if the search was made from a mobile device.²⁰

Stories also need to be mobile friendly. (We’ll chat more about this in Chapter 6.) Journalists have to be mindful of the layout of stories and how they’re written, so the stories can be easily viewed on mobile devices. You have to make the content digestible on a small screen while maintaining the attention span of the “mobile majority.”

Or else, they might just swipe away.

IMPACT ON JOURNALISTS

Journalists must take an audience-centric approach to their work. It’s essential in order to thrive in today’s newsrooms.

The audience as producers and active consumers of news across many platforms clearly impacts the skills journalists need today. Making news stories user friendly for people viewing them on small screens is just one example.

Budding journalists entering the field, or those trying to stay relevant in their current jobs, will have to be able to assume a range of job responsibilities to serve the audience in spaces where they get information.

All you have to do is look at job openings for reporters. Mobile and social media skills are required of both new graduates and more seasoned journalists, in addition to reporting skills for traditional platforms.

When the MLive Media Group was hiring a reporter in Kalamazoo, Michigan, “understanding the imperatives of multiple platforms—print, mobile, Internet” was listed as a priority. The outlet, owned by Advance Publications, wanted someone experienced with using social media to source and promote content. The person was expected to have a “mastery of social media and digital interaction” and would be required to post frequently and incrementally throughout the day.

A job description for a general assignment reporter at WMUR-TV in Manchester, New Hampshire also highlights the importance of being able to report across multiple platforms. The person in this role “will contribute pictures, video and text updates to digital platforms, including social media, consistently throughout the day,” the job post explained.

There are also newsroom positions, which we’ll address in Chapter 8, dedicated to mobile and social media: Facebook editor at *The Boston Globe*, mobile newsroom

3). <http://www>

From the Newsroom



DAVID MUIR (@DAVIDMUIR)

Anchor and
Managing Editor

ABC World News Tonight
with David Muir

**YOU STARTED
IN TELEVISION
NEWS MORE THAN 20 YEARS AGO.
THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE LOOKED
QUITE DIFFERENT THEN. HOW HAS
NEW MEDIA IMPACTED JOURNALISM
SINCE YOUR EARLY DAYS IN
NEWSROOMS?**

I vividly remember working in local news when the primary purpose for a station's website was to simply post pieces from a newscast that already aired. Reporters or anchors would often say, "For more on this, go to our website."

In today's environment, social media allows us to engage in a living, breathing conversation with the viewer all day long. I think the bar is much higher for what viewers will be interested in online. They don't want to watch a report they've already seen on television. There is an expectation we will deliver something they didn't see or something with added value, and, rightly so, it provides us with an opportunity to take the audience along on the journey, and we've used it during reporting trips to the Syrian border on child refugees and during our historic conversation with Pope Francis.

YOU'RE CONSTANTLY CONNECTING WITH THE AUDIENCE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA, ESPECIALLY TWITTER. HOW HAVE THESE PLATFORMS CHANGED YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AUDIENCE?

Viewers have been given a voice in a way that wasn't even possible a few years ago. We learn immediately on Twitter or on Facebook about a question viewers want asked during a presidential primary debate or of factories that want us to profile them for our *Made in America* series. I love that. Viewers are helping to drive the conversation.

I grew up watching Peter Jennings, and I have long said he was masterful at having a conversation every night with America, but that conversation now truly goes both ways. Viewers can communicate with me before, after, and during the newscast, and they do.

DESCRIBE HOW YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA ON A DAILY BASIS. (THAT'S YOU TWEETING FROM @DAVIDMUIR DURING COMMERCIAL BREAKS, RIGHT?)

I tweet during commercial breaks, but I'm not necessarily tweeting or posting on Instagram to drive people to their TV. I'm on social media because America is on social media. And I believe our broadcast should reflect how people are living their lives. People are documenting their own lives in ways we never could have imagined. It's helped to build an army of citizen journalists who capture moments with their own phones that, when combined with the proper context, can give us a window into something we never would have seen.

developer at *The New York Times*, and social media producer at CBS News. In the not so distant future, these are some of the jobs you may find yourself working in.

So how do you make sense of what's expected of you as a reporter? It can seem a bit overwhelming at first. You use mobile devices and social media, but likely not in journalistic ways—at least not yet. You may be wondering, as a journalist, what do I tweet? How do I use social media to find credible sources? I should use Snapchat for . . . journalism?

This book will answer those questions and many more. Future chapters show you detailed ways to use these tools as a journalist. First, in this section, I want to help you better understand, in broader terms, how mobile devices and social media are impacting journalists' day-to-day routines.

There are three areas to consider: newsgathering, distribution of news, and audience engagement.

In my experience, approaching reporting responsibilities through these three areas provides students and journalists with a clearer sense of what's expected on mobile and social media platforms. It's a way to guide you through what may seem a bit chaotic, to wrap your head around how audience habits are directly shaping how journalists do their work. Remember, worrying only about what you're going to do for a web story or newscast is a thing of the past.

The bottom line in journalism is employers want reporters to use mobile devices and social media for newsgathering, distribution of news, and audience engagement (all while maintaining the fundamentals of journalistic standards, of course).

This book helps you gain hands-on experience in these three areas. Chapter 5, for example, provides you with a toolkit for a digital-first story pitch. A digital-first story pitch must include a plan for using mobile devices and social media for newsgathering, distribution, and audience engagement. For each story you cover, you'll come up with your own checklist, a game plan, to follow while reporting.

Now, here's a brief overview of the three key areas that you'll learn more about in future chapters.

Newsgathering

Journalists use mobile and social media in a number of ways during the newsgathering process:

- **Tips line:** To find story ideas
- **Sources:** To find sources for a story they're working
- **Content:** To find information for a story. This often includes user-generated content or crowdsourced information

Before journalists head into editorial meetings, it's common for them to scan social media platforms for what's happening in their city. For example, they might do a Twitter search of "Dallas." The daily routine as a reporter is quite different from years prior, when journalists started the day by making beat calls to police agencies, checking in by phone with other official sources, and sifting through news releases.

Social media is a modern-day tips line. It has become a powerful tool to find stories in your community. Monitoring social media platforms is a way to listen to the public, to put your finger on the pulse of what people are talking about.

Journalists now have immediate access to a wealth of new material and voices during the newsgathering process. Let me share one of my favorite examples of how scouring social media platforms, often referred to as "social listening," can turn up impactful stories.

I'm in and out of newsrooms frequently. One day I was visiting a newsroom in Syracuse, New York, when a reporter noticed a complaint on Twitter about paint dripping along a street after city workers painted new traffic lines. During a public meeting a few days prior, the mayor discussed how the city planned to save money by purchasing a different type of paint than it had previously used. The complaint on social media led the reporter to uncover a noteworthy story. She investigated whether the new paint was actually as cost effective as the city had presumed.

In addition to finding story ideas, journalists are also turning to social media to locate sources for stories they're already working on. Let's say you're assigned a story about the cost of school supplies. Speaking with parents is key to telling a compelling story. How can you use social media to track down someone to interview?

Tammy Palmer (@TammyNC9), a reporter covering this story for WSYR-TV in Syracuse, New York, logged onto Facebook.

"So I posted on our Facebook page, 'Hey, any moms about to go shopping?' That is how I connected with a mom," Palmer said. "Before you just had to kind of stumble upon people like this, and now you can look for them online. And it gave me options, because I had a number of moms respond. I had three moms who had different scenarios. That is where it created flexibility for me."²¹

Tapping into content created by the audience has also become commonplace. Earlier we discussed how journalists are incorporating user-generated content into their reporting. Another way to gather audience content is through crowdsourcing.

Crowdsourcing is an open call by news outlets to gather a range of content including photos, data, and comments about an issue. In crowdsourcing, journalists make a specific request, usually through social media, for content from the audience. Crowdsourcing is different from searching for user-generated content that has already been created. It's a call to action, inviting people to take part in the reporting process.

The New York Times used crowdsourcing during a blizzard that paralyzed the north-

east. *The Times* asked people to share their snow storm photos on Instagram and tag them with #NYTsnow. *The Times* published nine of the photos on the front page of its print edition. (By the way, the paper never notified users that their photos would actually be published, nor was it mentioned as a possibility in its crowdsource request. What do you think about this? Chapter 7 will address best practices related to user-generated content.)

How journalists receive content from and interact with traditional sources in the newsgathering process is also evolving, thanks to mobile devices and social media.

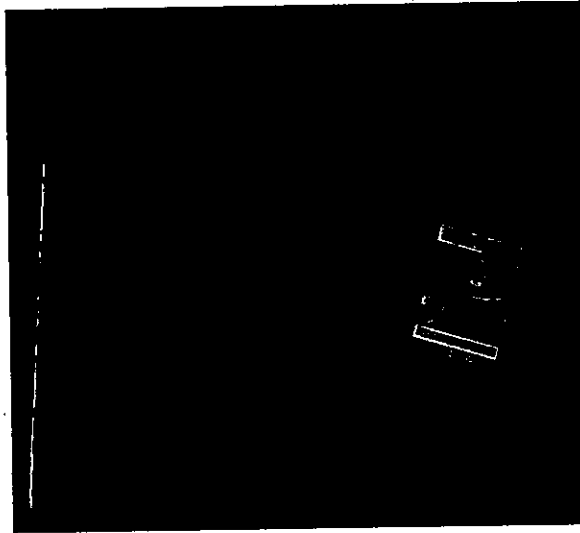


Photo by Katie Hawkins-Gaar.

Tapping into the crowd: *The New York Times* turned to social media users for images of a blizzard. Some of these photos were published on the front page of the paper.

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When traditional sources, such as police departments, release information, they often bypass journalists.

They're increasingly sharing information on social media pages prior to or in place of contacting news outlets. Journalists must routinely monitor the social media pages of these sources, particularly during breaking news.

When fire engulfed a 160-year-old church in New York City, journalists relied on the New York City Fire Department Twitter page for the latest details. As the fire raged, @FDNY shared video of firefighters battling the blaze and details such as the number of firefighters on the scene.

The Boston Police Department also turned to Twitter, instead of news outlets, to share urgent information during the Boston Marathon bombings. This is yet another instance in which the idea of journalists as the sole gatekeepers of news is turned upside down.

"In the past the police were at the mercy of the general media—to journalists—to tell their story. Now we can tell our own story. We can put out the information directly on Twitter," said Cheryl Fiandaca (@cherylfiandaca), spokesperson for the Boston Police Department at the time of the bombings.²² Fiandaca, a veteran journalist, has since returned to investigative reporting.

The Boston Police Department even released on Twitter the first photos of the suspects. Within seconds of the tweets from @bostonpolice, journalists were holding up their phones live on-air, referencing the tweets.

Distribution of News

It should come as no surprise that reporting the news is a constant, never-ending process.

Distribution of news in our mobile and social media world requires journalist to

- Share on multiple platforms as they report from the field.
- Provide real-time updates on stories.
- Use mobile devices to capture, produce, and publish content.

Journalists can't wait for a news broadcast, a morning newspaper, or even a web story to deliver the latest information about a story. Because the audience expects information in real time and across multiple platforms, journalists must share tidbits of information as they report from the field.

FDNY @FDNY 27m
 170 #FDNY members on scene of 4-alarm fire at 25th & Broadway #Manhattan



311 121

FDNY @FDNY 32m
 #FDNY members operating at 4-alarm fire at 25th & Broadway #Manhattan



@FDNY, Twitter post.

Traditional news sources are increasingly bypassing news outlets to get information to the public. Using social media, they can now share updates directly with the public. That was the case in 2016 when the New York City Fire Department battled a massive fire at a historic church.

“We operate almost like the AP [Associated Press] alerts that newsrooms use for breaking news. Well, now the everyday person is expecting those types of alerts for stories, especially for breaking news,” one reporter told me. “The end user has already established the fact that they don’t want to wait for news. They’re going to consume news on their own time. Getting it out quicker serves the audience.”²³

This means embracing a digital-first approach to reporting, thinking about what needs to be distributed on social media platforms while in the field and ensuring all content can be easily viewed by people using mobile devices. Reporters have to juggle feeding information to audiences active in many spaces—Twitter, Facebook, website, and mobile applications, among others. Depending on where you work, you’ll also be turning stories for TV, radio, or print. Stories live on mobile, social, and more traditional platforms.

At this point, the process may seem a bit messy. (It’s also fun, believe me!) Gathering information in the field while almost simultaneously sharing the latest updates to a story will become second nature.

Any journalist will tell you that honing these skills comes from practice—repetition, repetition, repetition. This book is intended to get you in the field as soon as possible so you can put the strategies and skills into practice. The checklists in each chapter help you plan and prioritize the many tasks.

A smartphone or tablet will be your go-to tool. With a single mobile device, journalists can broadcast live from a scene. They can snap photos and record video and audio that can be instantly shared to social media platforms. They can live-tweet from the scene of breaking news. Mobile devices and apps allow journalists to easily distribute content in real time across platforms.

Taking a photo on a traditional camera, for example, and then sharing to social media would be a cumbersome process. You would have to get the image onto a computer or mobile device in order to share. That’s a time-consuming workflow in today’s news environment.

From small daily papers to major news outlets, it would be nearly impossible for journalists to do their jobs today without mobile devices. The Gannett Company, which owns dozens of daily newspapers across the country, including *USA Today*, was one of the first outlets to hand out devices to reporters. In 2011, Gannett purchased thousands of iPhones, iPads, and portable wireless hotspots for reporters to use in the field.

And journalists are grabbing their devices to produce content for more than just new mobile and social media platforms. Gannett and many other newspapers have their reporters use mobile devices to capture photos and video that accompany traditional website and print stories. In other words, all the multimedia elements distributed across all platforms can be produced with a single device.

At TV stations, the process may look slightly different. Most news packages that air on television newscasts are still shot with traditional video cameras. The main reason is that the quality of video recorded on mobile devices may not always be the best for high-definition television, although I would argue it’s pretty close.

Some of my students and I experienced this firsthand while covering the 2016 South Carolina Republican primary for NBC News. Armed with iPhones, iPads,

and traditional cameras, we crisscrossed the state to report from the campaign trail. The students shot video for two correspondents' packages that aired on *NBC Nightly News*. While that footage was recorded with traditional cameras, we used mobile devices to gather, edit, and distribute videos and photos for the TV news network's social media platforms and website. From my iPhone, we even took over NBC News's Snapchat account on primary day. More about this collaboration later in the book.

Distributing news across multiple platforms as quickly as possible presents challenges. Among the most notable concern is maintaining traditional journalistic values while sharing information at the speed that is now expected of journalists. You can't be first *and* accurate all the time. Those are two competing values. Fact-checking takes time. When in doubt, accuracy trumps speed. Unfortunately, there are far too many cases in which news outlets did not follow this basic journalistic principle.

Then, there's writing across all these platforms. Clear, concise, and accurate writing has always been a hallmark of good journalism. But reporters need to be mindful of their writing now more than ever. What you write in a tweet likely won't work for the headline of a web article. The tone of a post on Snapchat will be (a lot) different than the tone of one on Facebook. Being able to adapt your style and tone of writing based on where you're posting is an important skill.

The brevity of social media posts also requires a new way of thinking about what information to share, how often, and how to frame it. For example, tweets, with a maximum of 140 characters, do not allow for a detailed explanation. You have to be careful delivering news piecemeal, because you don't want it to be misinterpreted by your audience. Providing context and a consistent stream of information is key. Don't leave your audience hanging.

Audience Engagement

We've talked about newsgathering and distribution of news. Now, let's throw audience engagement into the reporting mix. Newsgathering, distribution of news, and audience engagement often happen all at the same time. Don't think of them as three neatly separated buckets. They occur in concert with each other.

Just take a look at a day in the life of NBC News correspondent Hallie Jackson, who you met earlier. Jackson traveled weeks at a time, covering the GOP side of the 2016 US presidential race.

As Jackson gathered news in the field, from candidates' rallies to polling centers, she kept tabs on what was being said about the campaigns on social media. Jackson almost simultaneously shared nuggets of campaign news with her Twitter followers.

On Snapchat, she took a laid back approach. Her Snapchat stories gave a behind-the-scenes, and sometimes comical, look at life on the road as she lived out of a suitcase. Lots of coffee! (She sometimes had to type in gas station bathrooms.)

Jackson also invited the public to "hang out" with her and fellow correspondents covering the election. They were dubbed "The Road Warriors." During live chats on MSNBC's Facebook page and on Twitter, The Road Warriors frequently answered questions from followers.

“As part of my Road Warrior travels, I think about what I can provide on social media that is going to be different than what other reporters covering the campaign are providing,” said Jackson. “It’s about finding those interesting elements and moments from my travels and bringing them to my audience.”

And don’t forget about her TV reports. Along with everything else on her plate, Jackson juggled the demands of reporting live for MSNBC and preparing packages for *NBC Nightly News*.

Technology brings people closer not only to the news she covers, but also to her as a journalist. They get to know her as a “real” person. They can connect with her at almost any time. Jackson says she thrives on this audience engagement.

So what does the term *audience engagement* mean? The collaborative nature—the idea of bringing an audience into the reporting process—is at the heart of audience engagement.

Effective engagement with the audience includes

- Consistent and authentic interactions.
- An informal yet professional tone.
- Openness and responsiveness to audience feedback.

It’s about news as a conversation, rather than a lecture. It’s about meeting people on platforms where they already are. It’s about responding to social media followers’ questions. It’s about listening, not simply spewing out information or promoting your stories. All of these approaches will go a long way to make the audience feel invested in your work as a journalist.

This two-way conversation can help create a better understanding of issues people care about and lead to better journalism. Ongoing interactions can also build trust and credibility with the audience. Journalists who interact with their followers are seen as more credible and are rated more positively than journalists who use social media solely to distribute news.²⁴

Using social media to lift the veil on the reporting process is one way journalists are doing this. Giving followers an insider’s look at what it takes to get a story, as Jackson does, gives them a stronger connection with journalists. It’s a more authentic approach than simply tweeting out headlines and links to stories.

Hallie Jackson, Twitter post, May 6, 2017.

Hallie Jackson @HallieJackson

TODAY: hang out with us on Facebook! Taking your q's with @Kasie and @KatyTurnNBC (while @kwelkernbc mans the desk)

Facebook event: TODAY AT 1:30

RETWEETS 5 LIKES 11

8:59 PM - 22 Sep 2016

Following

Hallie Jackson, Twitter Post, September 22, 2016.

NBC News correspondent Hallie Jackson connects directly with audience members, offering them opportunities to “hang out” with her.

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Hallie Jackson, Twitter Post.
September 22, 2016.

Through this type of engagement, journalists are also demystifying the reporting process, helping the audience understand that journalism is about much more than simply pushing out information.

You may have heard it yourself: Everyone is a journalist. That's simply incorrect. Yes, nearly anyone can "publish" content, but that doesn't make them journalists. Journalists have the skills to put information in context, verify, and fact-check.

Journalists' skills are needed now more than ever to help the audience navigate through the "noise"—to make sense of the flood of (mis)information. Social media is an avenue to let people in on what that journalistic process entails.

The hope is that through authentic engagement the active audience recognizes the value of journalists, and that keeps the audience coming back for more on the platforms they find most convenient.

Checklist

Welcome to your first checklist! Each chapter has at least one. They're a way for you to put into practice what we've discussed. This first checklist connects you with additional resources to keep tabs on the latest mobile and social media journalism news.

- ✓ **Beyond the Book.** Let's extend the conversation beyond the pages of this book and your classroom. Connect with me on Facebook ([fb.com/MobileandSocialMediaJournalism](https://www.facebook.com/MobileandSocialMediaJournalism)) and Twitter (@MobileJourn). I'll share updates on the industry and my own teaching. I also want to hear from you. Have a question about something you read here? Come across a neat example of how a journalist is using mobile and social media? Doing something cool with what you've learned in the book? Drop me a line! We can learn from each other.
 - > Start by tweeting me one item you found interesting from this chapter, and tell me why. (Of course, I hope you find everything in this book to be interesting!)
- ✓ **Class Hashtag.** As a class, create a Twitter hashtag that can be used throughout the semester. I have one for my mobile and social media journalism course at Ithaca College's Park School of Communications (#ICParkSM). A class hashtag serves as a channel for discussions about course topics. Use it to share insights from guest speakers to your class. It's also a great way to share with your classmates interesting items you come across related to mobile and social media journalism. Simply include your class hashtag when you share on Twitter. In future checklists, we'll chat more about using your class hashtag.
- ✓ **Stay Informed.** There are a number of trade organizations that distribute e-newsletters with related content and research. You can also follow them on Twitter. Subscribing to their e-newsletters and following them on Twitter will provide you with ideas for the Teaching Moment assignment that is part of Chapter 5's checklist. The following

(Continued)

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are my go-to sources. I've provided Twitter handles and links for you to subscribe to e-newsletters:

- > MediaShift's Daily Must Reads: @MediaShiftOrg and bitly.com/MediaShiftNewsletter
- > Poynter: @Poynter and bitly.com/PoynterNewsletter
- > Pew Research Center: @pewjournalism and bitly.com/PewResearchNewsletter
- > Nieman Lab: @NiemanLab and bitly.com/NiemanNewsletter
- > Knight Digital Media Center: @KDMC and bitly.com/KnightNewsletter

✓ **Discussion.** Consider the following as a class:

- > What are the positives and negatives of an age that allows nearly anyone to create and publish content?
- > What is meant by an "active" audience? How have news consumers' habits changed?
- > Describe the relationship between journalists and the audience today.
- > What are the skills journalists need in our mobile and social media world?

Managing Change: The Mobile-First Newsroom

2

“Imagine, if you will, sitting down with your morning coffee, turning on your home computer to read the day’s newspaper.”¹ Flashback to 1981. That’s how a San Francisco television anchor introduced a report about two of the city’s newspapers experimenting with the Internet. At that time, it took two hours to download a paper.

This story about the infancy of online news surfaced decades later on, where else, social media sites. It’s a must-watch video—fascinating and comical considering what we now know about the monumental changes in the way we consume and deliver news.

There’s also a bit of irony in the story. The report goes on to say, “We’re not in it to make money. We’re probably not going to lose a lot, but we aren’t going to make much either” and “the new tele-paper won’t be much competition for the 20-cent street edition.”

Today, we’re witnessing what was once thought to be far-fetched. The online medium provides countless channels for people to consume information, and the impact on the newspaper and broadcast industries has been seismic. Print newspaper readership has plummeted and television news viewership has steadily decreased as people increasingly turn to online resources.

And, out of a need to survive, advertisers followed the audience. Companies have shifted much of their marketing effort from traditional platforms to online spaces where people are spending time. This has spelled trouble for media outlets relying on traditional revenue from print and broadcast advertising.

The recession of the late 2000s only exacerbated this situation by adding to the erosion of advertising dollars on traditional platforms. People were spending less, and

In this chapter you will

- Gain a deeper understanding of the evolving business models in journalism.
- Learn what mobile-first means, and explore how it’s transforming business models and editorial strategies.
- Discover three factors at the heart of mobile-first: the audience experience, newsrooms serving as multiplatform hubs of content, and evolving business models.
- Develop a mobile-first mindset that will equip you to plan news coverage that best serves today’s audiences.

that hurt many businesses' bottom lines. Companies, including big advertisers such as car dealers and furniture stores, slashed their advertising budgets.

The loss in advertising dollars hit news outlets, especially print, hard. For example, between 2007 and 2010 alone, print newspaper advertising revenue was cut nearly in half, plunging from \$42 billion to \$22 billion.² This downward trend has continued. Meantime, digital advertising revenue has steadily moved in the opposite direction, but not at a fast enough pace to make up for the drastic losses on the print side.

It was a perfect storm: people going online for news coupled with a loss in the stream of traditional advertising revenue.

Journalists felt the impact. During and immediately following the economic downturn that started in 2007, the journalism industry experienced layoffs of newsroom staff and the closure of some media outlets, particularly in the newspaper industry.

As a result, news outlets have had to change their business models in order to remain competitive in today's marketplace. Businesses can collapse if their "theory of business"—assumptions a business is based on, including customers, competitors, values and behavior, and technology—is not revised to keep up with the changing marketplace.³

In an attempt to remain competitive, newsrooms are reaching audiences in new ways. First it was through traditional websites, and now it's increasingly about mobile devices and social media. From the audience's perspective, newsrooms today must meet the needs of news consumers who are flocking to mobile devices and social media.

A mobile-first culture is taking shape in newsrooms across the country.

This chapter gives you an overview of how mobile-first is transforming newsrooms' business models and cultures. You'll walk away with a better understanding of the business of journalism today and its relationship with newsroom editorial strategies. After all, regardless of your role in a newsroom, your responsibilities will be directly tied to these changes.

Sure, there's uncertainty about what lies ahead. But that's part of the excitement of teaching, studying, and practicing journalism today. I strongly believe we're witnessing a rebirth of journalism. And you have a front-row seat. You're part of it.

"There's a sense of energy that hasn't existed inside the industry for quite some time," said Amy Mitchell (@asmitch), Pew Research Center's director of journalism research.⁵

The industry has rebounded in many ways since the Internet disrupted journalism more than a decade ago. There are exciting ways to tell stories and connect with the public that weren't possible before.

The hemorrhaging of jobs, particularly in print, has slowed down tremendously overall. As traditional print and broadcast newsrooms make mobile and social media a priority, they're hiring staff members to specifically manage these platforms. In addition, digital-only outlets are setting up shop, all part of a new business model.

"It has become a cliché: The only constant in the media industry today is change. The cliché however is reality."⁴

This has also led to the creation of new jobs within the industry, though not enough to offset the layoffs of years prior.

Thousands of journalists, including many veterans, are now working at these digital-only news outlets—from smaller start-ups such as Philadelphia's Billy Penn to bigger sites such as The Huffington Post. The digital news world has created roughly 5,000 full-time jobs, according to the Pew Research Center. Nearly 3,000 of these jobs were created by 30 large digital-only news outlets.⁶

Journalists have to be willing to embrace this change in order to survive—and thrive. What is most striking to me about the San Francisco TV report about “tele-papers” is how two newspapers were willing to experiment with the Internet at least a decade prior to most newsrooms.

This foresight and innovate spirit in newsrooms is critical at this juncture, as mobile devices and social media now disrupt “business as usual.”

It's not good enough to say, “We have been around for 50, 75, 100 years, so come to us.” The active audience has plenty of other options to get news on platforms that are convenient for them.

The traditional way of doing business will leave news outlets in the dark.

MOBILE-FIRST MINDSET

Just as the infancy of the Internet was a wake-up call for newsrooms, so too are mobile devices and social media. Newsrooms are using lessons learned a decade ago to try to stay ahead of the curve this time around. Some are moving quicker than others.

Digital-first is a term that is often used in newsrooms. After the rise of the Internet, digital-first meant publishing news on websites first—where people were flocking to keep up to date.

Then mobile devices and social media came knocking. Today, digital-first means mobile-first. Again, following the audience's lead.

Mobile-first is about making it a priority to deliver quality content that can be easily accessed by audiences on mobile devices and in social media spaces. As we discussed in Chapter 1, this mindset requires journalists to share information to mobile and social media platforms first in many cases, prior to a web story or broadcast report.

News websites and other traditional platforms are increasingly becoming the secondary places to publish information. That's because Facebook, Twitter, and the like are the audience's portals into the world of news. They're the avenues where people are exposed to journalists' work and news outlets' brands.

We also have to think about the user experience more than ever before. The content must be optimized and packaged in a user-friendly way for viewing (we'll explore this in Chapters 5 and 6). The key to mobile-first, National Public Radio's Brian Boyer said, is thinking: “Who are your users and what are their needs?”⁷

Key Points about a Mobile-First Mindset

- **Audience experience.** Journalists must reimagine how news is reported and in what spaces in order to make it accessible to audiences who move among devices and platforms. A positive user experience with quality content in all of these spaces is key. Engagement, a two-way conversation with your audience, is also part of this experience.
 - **Multiplatform hubs of content.** A news outlet can no longer plant its flag as a newspaper, television station, or radio station. The same goes for reporters. Newspaper reporters are doing more than just print. TV reporters are doing more than just
- TV. Radio reporters are doing more than just radio. Think of each newsroom as a hub of content. They have many different platforms to reach audiences, and each story must be told across these platforms. Often that means taking different approaches for each space, as we'll discuss later in this chapter and in future ones.
- **Evolving business models.** Different business models are emerging that tap into new revenue streams from the mobile audience and digital advertising. Solid journalism still needs to be funded. That's always been the case. What has changed is how it's funded.

"We don't do journalism for our own satisfaction," Boyer (@brianboyer) added, "so if folks can't use your stuff because they're on the bus, you're doing it wrong."

This mindset is directly tied to the business side of journalism. A seamless user experience with content is one important factor to keep the audience coming back for more.

Mobile-first has given rise to evolving business models. News outlets are tapping into new revenue streams on these platforms. They're experimenting with how they can monetize the news products they offer people on their small screens and how to capitalize on the digital advertising market.

Here are a few examples of how a mobile-first approach is taking shape at news outlets. Note how **audience experience**, the idea of newsrooms as **multiplatform hubs of content**, and **evolving business models** come into play in each of these case studies.

The New York Times. Today's story pitch meetings inside the *New York Times* are radically different from those of years prior. In 2015, Dean Baquet, the *Times* executive editor, announced the newsroom was retiring the system of pitching for page 1, the front page of the print edition. The process of selecting page 1 stories will play a less prominent role, Baquet wrote in a staff memo. Under the new system, editors now pitch stories to be considered for a list of stories that get "the very best play on all our digital platforms"—web, mobile and social.⁸

Baquet noted the system would give more flexibility for the paper to target people using mobile devices and social media. "These changes are intended to ensure that our digital platforms are much less tethered to print deadlines."

This is a significant shift in strategy for an outlet whose culture has been tied to page 1. For many reporters, getting a story on page 1 of the *Times* has been the holy

with a career-defining goal. Revamping of editorial meetings was one step toward the mobile-first strategy outlined in an internal *New York Times* innovation report.

"Our home page has been our main tool for getting our journalism to readers, but its impact is waning. Only a third of our readers ever visit it," acknowledged the *Times*.⁹ "Readers are finding and engaging with our journalism in vastly different ways. More readers expect us to find them on Twitter and Facebook, and through email and phone alerts."

Syracuse Media Group. At regional outlets, old-school ways of doing business were being kicked to the curb. In Syracuse, New York, the *Post-Standard* and its website Syracuse.com were run out of two different newsrooms. In fact, the newsrooms weren't even in the same building. The print and digital operations were separated across town from each other.

This silo approach changed in 2013. Advance Publications, which owned the print and digital divisions, implemented a new, digitally focused strategy. The news operation and business model were overhauled.

The wall between the print and digital came down. The *Post-Standard* and Syracuse.com were combined into one integrated operation called the Syracuse Media Group. News staff now work out of new headquarters, a collaborative workspace with no separate desks. All reporters here are mobile journalists. They're given backpacks with mobile devices and laptops they need to report and distribute news directly from the field. It's now every reporter's job to think about how his or her stories can live across mobile, social, web, and print platforms.

These changes also came with layoffs. The shift to mobile-first eliminated some longstanding newsroom positions while creating new digitally focused jobs. The newspaper laid off 115 full- and part-time employees, nearly a third of its staff. Syracuse Media Group then hired about 60 people focused on creating digital news content.¹⁰

While ramping up the digital side, the news outlet reduced home delivery of its print edition from seven days to three days per week.

Advance Publications was one of the first media companies to implement such a top-to-bottom mobile-first culture, making an attempt to leap ahead of the changes. This cultural shift wasn't limited to Syracuse. The company owns newspapers and associated news websites across the United States. It has implemented a similar strategy at its other media outlets, including the *Times-Picayune* in New Orleans, Louisiana, and the *Plain Dealer* in Cleveland, Ohio.

Cable News Network (CNN). The cable network is focused on much more than just TV these days. "We're no longer a TV news network," said Samantha Barry (@samanthabarry), CNN's head of social media. "We're a 24-hour global multiplatform network."¹¹

This is quite an evolution from when CNN launched in 1980 as the first channel to provide 24-hour television news coverage. The network has pumped \$20 million into a digital expansion dedicated to mobile. In 2016, CNN announced it planned hiring more than 200 new staffers, including a mix of reporters, mobile and social media video producers, analytics and audience development experts, and mobile product developers.¹²

National Public Radio launched the NPR One app as a way to provide content to a new generation of listeners—those on mobile devices. The app offers a customizable experience for users.

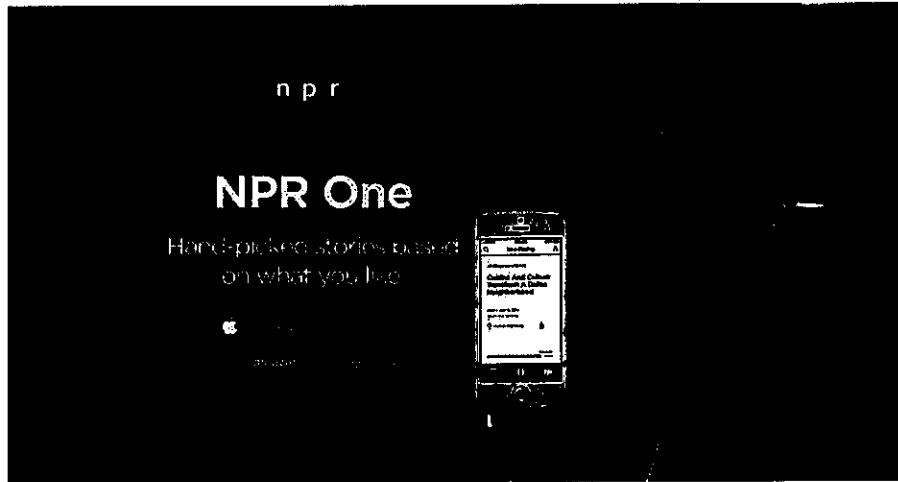


Image by NPR.

About 50 CNN staffers lost their jobs in the overhaul. The laid-off staff members included people who worked on CNN's traditional desktop website. (They were invited to apply for the new positions.)

As part of the mobile-first strategy, CNN has built a team solely focused on creating and distributing content on platforms such as Facebook and Snapchat.

National Public Radio (NPR). The graying of NPR's traditional audience has the media outlet rethinking its journey with listeners in a new age. As its core demographic of listeners ages, NPR is strategizing how to attract a younger audience to its brand. It's an audience NPR needs to capture in order to survive.

The public radio broadcaster launched the NPR One app, a way for public radio to reach listeners who might not be tuning to terrestrial radio. The app gives users a personalized stream of mobile content. It pulls in stories from national shows, local newscasts, and podcasts outside the NPR world. NPR One users are significantly younger than NPR's traditional broadcast audience: 40 percent are under 35 years old.¹³

The app also opens up new revenue opportunities for NPR member stations. For instance, NPR One promoted a podcast from a member station in San Francisco to a national audience rather than the local one. Because the local station got a big enough audience, it could begin selling sponsorships.¹⁴

ADAPTING TO A MOBILE AUDIENCE: EVOLVING BUSINESS MODELS

Let's take a brief look at the evolving business models in four main sectors of journalism: newspaper, television, radio, and digital-only. I'm not a fan of thinking in silos; nonetheless, I segment them out here because each type of outlet is taking a different approach.

Your Social Media Brand: Who Do You Want to Be?



Remember: Whatever happens in Vegas . . . stays on Google.¹

— SCOTT MONTY, COMMUNICATIONS
CONSULTANT AND FORBES TOP 10
SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

SOCIAL MEDIA BRANDING AND JOURNALISM

If I were to do a Google search of your name, what would turn up on the Internet? I've never met you before. But those tweets, snappy Instagram videos, and bio descriptions all add up to convey who you are. That's your brand.

What comes to mind when you hear the name Anderson Cooper? Robin Roberts? Bob Woodward? Brian Williams? The images you conjure up in your mind are their brands. And if you've never heard of these journalists, you'll probably search online, where what you come across will give you a first impression of them—of their brand.

Brand and *branding* are terms people typically associate with marketing and advertising. Some journalists turn their noses up at the idea of branding in journalism. But step away from the preconceived notion of what a brand is.

In reality, journalists have always built an individual brand based on the quality and style of their writing, reporting, and delivery, among other factors. (Bob Woodward, for instance, created a brand for himself long before the Internet and social media existed.) Journalists' brands have traditionally been tied to their affiliations with news organizations.

In this chapter, you will

- Explore how social media provides journalists the opportunity to build a brand through the type of information they share and their interactions with the public.
- Examine online presence as an extension of your reputation as a journalist. It's your digital business card.
- Discover how using social media in journalistic ways will make your brand stand out to potential employers as well.
- Learn how to conduct a social media audit and steps to build your brand as a journalist.

Today, mobile and social media allow journalists to build their own brands by sharing their work directly with the audience and fostering an informal relationship with them. Journalists don't have to rely solely on the outlet they work for to find a following for their reporting. The brand they establish through their online presence can make them a go-to source for information. In turn, this also benefits their news outlets.

You too have been establishing your individual brand. Every tweet, like, and comment is a reflection of who you are. When you apply for a job in journalism, or even an internship, you can expect hiring managers to scrutinize your social media profiles. The result of a Google search is the new resume—a digital business card, if you will. What you've posted can come back to haunt you. It also can set you apart from the competition by demonstrating you know how to use mobile and social media in smart ways, as a journalist.

Your online presence and digital savvy will be a key part of interviews for journalism jobs. I frequently hear from current and former students who share interesting information about the process. One senior who applied for a TV reporting position in a small market was given a breaking news scenario. He was then asked to write a TV story and a web version based on the scenario, in addition to crafting posts for Facebook and Twitter. A student who interviewed for a prestigious journalism fellowship had her social media accounts dissected by members of the hiring committee. They asked questions about her approach on different social media platforms as well as about how she uses mobile devices in the field. Fortunately, the students were well versed in the tools of the trade, and their online presence shined. Both were offered the positions. (Chapter 8 outlines what to expect during the job hunt and interview process.)

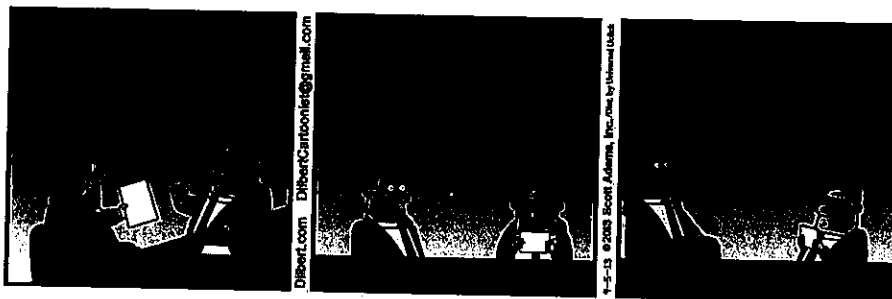
Now is the time to start taking ownership of your brand across all platforms. Even though you're a digital native (you grew up with these tools at your fingertips), do you know how to use them as a professional journalist? That's key.

The goal from here on out in this book is to build your journalistic skills with mobile and social media in three areas: newsgathering, distribution of news, and audience engagement. We start in this chapter by getting you going on creating a solid foundation—your own brand.

Key Points about Building Your Brand

- **Go-to source.** Journalists can use social media to build a tribe for their work. Become an audience's trusted source for credible information by providing quality content and interactions.
- **Real person.** Engage authentically and conversationally to create meaningful connections with users. Be professional, but don't be afraid to show your personality.
- **Traditional journalistic standards.** If you wouldn't say it to your audience in person, don't post it on social media. Your social media presence is an extension of your reputation as a journalist.
- **Slow and steady.** Building your brand takes time and requires consistency across platforms.
- **Digital business card.** Using digital tools in journalistic ways will make your brand stand out to potential employers as well.

DIGITAL SKELETONS: SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIT



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Have you Googled yourself recently? Not at all? Now is the time to clean up your past. After all, 93 percent of managers say they review job candidates' professional social media profiles prior to hiring.² What they find could determine whether or not you get an offer. Fifty-five percent have reconsidered a candidate based on information they got online.

A social media audit will shed light on your digital footprint and help put your best foot forward. As part of this chapter's checklist, you'll also team up with a classmate to audit each other's profiles.

Search

First, conduct a search of your name using at least two search engines. Use Google and Bing or Yahoo, as these are the three most-used sites for searches. Odds are someone sniffing around for information about you would turn to these sites.

- Log out of e-mail accounts and clear your web browser history. This will give you a better sense of what someone searching your name encounters—what's making it to the public. Search engines tailor results based on your browsing history and other information that's part of your digital viewing. If you're logged into personal accounts and haven't cleared your history, the results may be different from what potential employers see when they search.
- Search your name. If you have a common name, enter more specific information. For example, let's say you're John Smith, a student from Champaign, Illinois, who's studying at the University of Texas at Austin. Try several different search terms, such as John Smith and Champaign, Illinois and John Smith and University of Texas at Austin, to weed out results for other people with the same name.
- Moment of truth. Don't stop at the first page of results. That's only part of your digital story. It's equally important to click on the Images, Videos, and News tabs located at the top of most search engines. You'll see content specific to your name and those three areas. When I have students conduct these audits, this is the point where I usually hear some of them cringe a bit, most commonly because the results turn up photos posted to Facebook, even if

someone else tagged them. They're not necessarily inappropriate photos, but the surprise comes from the fact that these can be picked up by search engines for anyone to see.

There's typically another camp of students surprised at how little the results say about who they are. These students usually have social media accounts, but are inactive on the platforms. For aspiring journalists or journalists looking for a job, social media *inactivity* can also influence your social media brand. Your use of mobile and social media on a consistent basis will make you appear more engaged and more attractive on the job market. Odds are if it comes down to two candidates, one using social media in smart ways versus another who hasn't touch social media in a while, the former is going to get the job.

- Now, visit each of your social media pages and other digital spaces, such as a website, associated with your name. To view each as the public would, sign out of each account. Having classmates who are not friends or don't follow you on these accounts conduct searches is also beneficial. They can stay logged into their accounts on Facebook and Twitter, for instance, to check what they're able to see about you.

In addition, Facebook has a feature that allows you to view what your page looks like to other people. While signed in to Facebook, locate the Privacy Shortcuts menu button at the top right of your screen. Go to the "Who can see my stuff?" section, and choose "What do other people see on my timeline? View As." You'll see what your profile looks like to the public. To view how your profile appears to a specific person and what they can access, click "View as Specific Person" at the top of the page and type their names.

Analyze and Act

At this point, you should analyze what your searches revealed. Here are key questions to reflect on when auditing your online brand.

- **About you.** Are your bios informative and consistent across platforms? Do they tell us who you are? Does a professional photo accompany your bios?
- **Content.** What type of content do you typically share? Is it an accurate reflection of your interests as a journalist? Of your general interests? Both?
- **Frequency.** How often do you post on each platform? How often do you engage with followers?
- **Personality.** What do your posts say about you? Do we get a sense of you as a person?
- **Professional interests.** What about your professional interests? Have you highlighted your journalism skills and career aspirations?
- **Journalism skills.** Speaking of skills, do posts show any sign that you use social media for finding story ideas and sources, sharing interesting content—including your own reporting, and engaging with your followers?

If your brand doesn't reflect who you are as a journalist, there are specific actions to get you on track to building a standout online presence. More on that in the next section of this chapter.

I posted that! Now what? If you find something that you now regret sharing, deleting the post is your best option. But don't assume it will be gone for good. It will take at least a few weeks for the item to no longer be picked up in search engines. Keep in mind, people may not know the context around that photo or video you posted. So if you think it would make your grandmother cringe or question why you posted it, get rid of it.

I recommend deleting inactive accounts—those that you haven't touched in a while, as long as they're not needed as part of your professional brand. (A list of important platforms is addressed below.) Let's say you created a website in high school, but haven't updated it since. As time goes on, this will reflect an outdated version of you. If you don't plan on using this website as part of your professional work, consider deleting it. The other option: Breathe new life into an old website by using it as the centralized place to highlight your work, as we'll discuss shortly.

Some items are difficult to get rid of. Do an Internet search of the name: Vandon Gene. You'll easily discover how this self-described aspiring journalist, who worked for a Canadian news station, has made a name for himself. And not in a good way. While covering a deadly shooting in Ottawa, Gene asked CNN's Anderson Cooper to take a selfie. Cooper rejected the request, saying it would be wildly inappropriate, considering the context. But Gene, with his mobile phone recording, wouldn't back down. He continued to insist Cooper take a selfie with him. Gene posted the video to YouTube and turned to Twitter to lambast Cooper. Gene was let go from the news outlet, and that incident will forever be part of his digital business card.

This case underscores the importance of acting appropriately on and off line. Journalists are accountable to the public. Journalism relies on the trust of the public. What you post on social media can easily break that trust, undermining your reputation and that of the industry. As we discuss in greater detail in Chapter 7, crossing the line on social media can ruin your brand and your reputation, and cost you your job. Anything that would make the public question your integrity, ethics, and general professionalism as a journalist should be avoided. That's why scrutinizing your social media activity is so important.

Assume Everything Is Public

But it's only accessible to my friends. Not true.

You should assume everything you post online is in the public domain—for good. Even the strictest privacy settings on your social media accounts don't ensure your content is locked down. Everything you post is fair game. You don't have any reasonable expectation of privacy on social networking platforms. A photo of you posted behind the wall can easily be downloaded by a friend and shared with anyone.

You also have very little control over what someone else posts about you. Certainly, if a friend tags you in a photo or posts something of you that's undesirable, you can

ask the friend to untag or take it down. But you can't undo the potential harm done if the post doesn't portray you positively. A few social media platforms, including Facebook, allow you to approve or reject being tagged in posts. You must first activate this feature in your account settings.

From the Newsroom



JUSTIN AUCIELLO
(@AUCIELLO)

Founder, Jersey Shore Hurricane News

Freelance journalist Justin Auciello (@auciello) has carved out a niche by building a brand on social media. Around the time Hurricane Irene hit in 2011, Auciello launched a Facebook page, Jersey Shore Hurricane News, and related Twitter account, @JSHurricaneNews. Jersey Shore Hurricane News became the go-to community resource. Its popularity grew after Superstorm Sandy devastated the Jersey Shore in 2012. His social media-only outlet was a lifeline for people who needed information about their homes, communities, and loved ones.

His Facebook page has more than 245,000 followers. Auciello's work attracted a following by focusing on hyperlocal issues that many mainstream media outlets no longer covered with consistency in the months and years following the disasters. He has filled a desperately needed void in the communities. The platform was even used by the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management to communicate with people who needed to be rescued, as 911 was overloaded.

HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE IDEA FOR JERSEY SHORE HURRICANE NEWS?

It really started when I got on Twitter in 2007 and I saw the emergence of citizen journalists. The emergence of technology to facilitate not only the sharing of info, but also the collaboration—doing journalism by piecing together information

gleaned from eyewitnesses on the ground and using that to build a report. I had been into social networking even before social media. The trigger was when I saw the potential with Twitter and began to build my personal brand as someone interested in emerging media. I started to blog about the changing media landscape and how citizen journalists could play a part.

When the moment came in August 2011, you can say I was prepared in a sense. When Irene was coming, I said this was an opportunity to create a pop-up news outlet that is two-way and can democratize news where I live, because there was nothing else that existed at that point. It caught on very quickly because of Facebook. People were desperate for information. I came in and let people know that I needed their information and I would package that with traditional journalistic methods and standards. It snowballed from there. After Irene, I had first thought this would only last for a few days, but people kept hanging around. It turned into something that was beyond just a hurricane. It turned into daily news, traffic, weather, et cetera. The take-away is that once the community was connected to Jersey Shore Hurricane News and found value in the content, it unfolded organically.

WHAT'S YOUR EDITORIAL PROCESS? HOW DO YOU CURATE THE CONTENT AND FACT-CHECK?

On a day-to-day basis, there's about one breaking news story in this area—for example, a car accident with a fire that shuts down a major road. In a case like that, I couple content from official sources and social media users to piece together a narrative and verify information. Because I'm cynical at first and doubt everything, like any

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good journalist should be, I fact-check in a few ways. I get information from official sources to corroborate what I'm being told and see if anyone else on social media is sharing something similar. Giving people credit also fosters a trusting relationship, making them more likely to send content that is reliable. I give credit to contributors in order to reinforce that they're part of the team. It's a social contract. People love it and are more willing to engage in the future.

HOW CAN STUDENT JOURNALISTS BUILD A BRAND USING SOCIAL MEDIA?

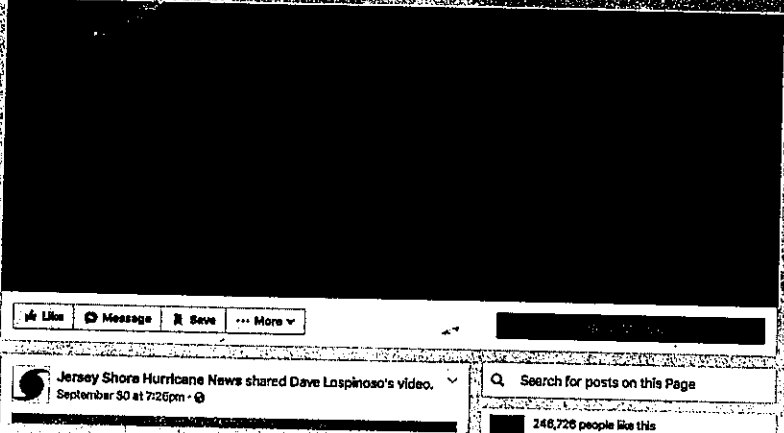
Write a lot, and publish it. Create a blog where you can share your best content. Be active

on social media. That's a given. But many people don't use social media for community building, so be in tune with how to do that on social media. To build a community you need a specific focus. It could be a very niche community or topic. Focus on what interests you. Know enough about the area or topic to be somewhat of a go-to expert for people.

For me, it was familiar with the Jersey shore, so that played a key role in engaging with people in such a way based on my knowledge and passion for the area. Now people reach out to me for anything going on in this area. Stay true to the focus.



Jersey Shore Hurricane News
@JerseyShoreHurricaneNews
Home
About
Photos
Likes



Jersey Shore Hurricane News

BUILDING A SOCIAL MEDIA BRAND

Your brand is built over time by your behaviors. The content you post and your interactions—both good and bad—all make up your online reputation. In this section, you'll learn to how to craft your professional social media brand.

So now is a good time to think about who you want to be as a journalist. When people see your name or come across your Twitter account, what do you want them to think of? Keep that question at the forefront of your mind as you fine-tune your digital footprint.

Separate Personal and Professional Accounts?

I'm frequently asked: Should I create separate profiles for my personal and professional activity? Having only private accounts would defeat the purpose of a journalist's use of social media. These profiles would be accessible to friends only.

"Trust and integrity are two of the coins of the online realm, in my opinion. . . . People will determine whether Joe is trustworthy by what he says, what he does, who he associates with, how he talks with others, who he links to, what he links to and who he's friends with and follows. People develop that sense of Joe over a period of time watching him and talking with him."

*John Robinson
@johnrobinson, journalism
instructor and former editor of
the Greensboro News & Record*

As a journalist, you need to optimize your profiles so anyone can follow and engage with you.

The best approach is to have one account for each platform, but it's a personal decision, and there are varying views depending on who you ask. Managing both personal and professional pages on a variety of social media platforms can be time consuming. Maintaining one account on each key platform simplifies your digital life.

In addition, what are you posting on a private personal page that can't be shared on the public one? Again, this goes back to the basic concept that everything you post should be considered public.

There's one exception: Facebook. Facebook has an option for brands—journalists, businesses, politicians, and the like—to create professional pages. This approach has advantages for a number of reasons, mainly because professional pages offer an analytics feature, something personal pages do not. In the addition, the Facebook culture is generally one where you share more personal moments with real-life friends and family. Photos of your summer vacation in Europe. A video remembrance of a family member who passed away. Sure, you may end up sharing some of this type of content with a general audience. But, simply put, some things are more private than others. For that reason, having a separate personal Facebook account is a logical choice.

The answer to whether you need to establish two separate accounts may also be determined by the policy of the newsroom where you work. According to a study conducted on newsroom social media policies, two-thirds of local television news managers said it's the policy of their station to own the professional social media accounts of reporters.⁴ This type of policy is becoming common across the industry. In some cases, this means journalists are required to submit their passwords to newsroom management, and such a policy raises the question of whether employees are allowed to keep their accounts and associated followers when they leave the newsroom.

Facebook Privacy Settings

Check the privacy settings of your personal Facebook page. Recommendations for the most privacy:

- Allow only friends to see your stuff.
- Turn off the feature that allows search engines to include your personal Facebook page as part of search results.
- Enable reviewing of posts in which friends tag you before they show up on your timeline.
- Who can see posts you've been tagged in once you approve them? Limit to friends.

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This policy alone may be enough to eventually force you to establish separate personal and professional accounts.

The Online Spaces You Should be in.

Your professional online presence should consist of the following:

Website

A website serves as your portfolio. Create your own website to highlight your professional work and skills. It's the perfect place to publish your reporting for journalism classes. Include the website link in all your social media profiles and on your resume. When applying for jobs, the website serves as a centralized spot where hiring managers can quickly get a sense of you.

I recommend creating your site through WordPress (*wordpress.com*). I require my students, starting in their first year, to create a WordPress site. WordPress allows you to create a free account or purchase a premium plan that includes a more customized domain name. With the free version, *wordpress.com* is part of the website address. The paid version removes *wordpress* from the URL, creating a cleaner link (For example, *anthonyadornato.wordpress.com* versus *anthonyadornato.com*).

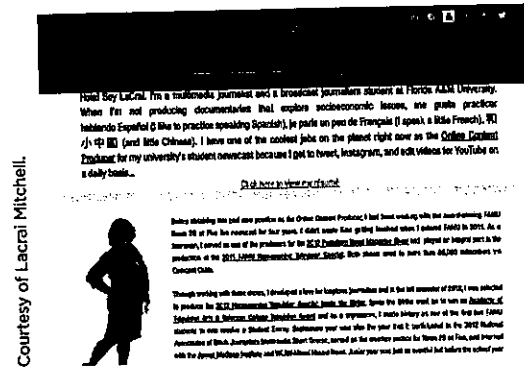
WordPress has a variety of website templates. Whichever platform you choose for a website should have built-in analytics. The analytics dashboard measures key metrics, as we discuss in Chapter 6, that you'll need to understand as a journalist. Without the analytics, it will be difficult to measure how website material is performing and what role your social media activity plays in driving traffic to your website.

- **Domain name.** A domain name is what people type into their browser to go to a site. It's your unique web address. When you set up a website, you'll be asked to select a domain name. Check whether a domain with your first and last name is available. A domain with your full name makes it more likely that your website will turn up when someone searches for you. If a domain with your full name is already taken, use only your last name. Still, no luck? Include your middle name or initial. Bottom line, keep your web address as close to your name as possible.
- **Home page.** This is the front page of your website. The welcome mat. By default, many website templates, including those from WordPress, publish posts (these are stories or blog posts) on the homepage. In your website settings, you can change the location of where your published posts appear. For example, you may want your About page to be the first thing people see when they come to your site and have your posts live on another page.
- **Site title.** A site title is important, because it's what appears in the header on a browser tab when someone visits a website. You can customize the site title in the settings section of your site. For branding purposes, using your first and last name makes most sense.

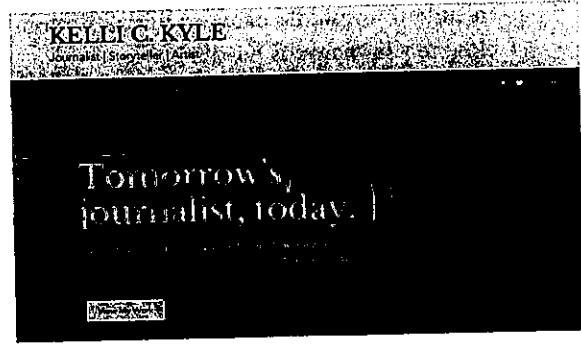
- **About page.** Include a short blurb about yourself and professional photo followed by your resume. Do not simply link to your resume or attach a file that someone has to download to view. Embed the resume in the page for easy viewing.
- **Contact page.** This is where you want to include your e-mail address and links to your professional social media accounts. Make sure you hyperlink the text. A hyperlink allows readers to simply click the text and be taken directly to the page you're linking to. Otherwise, they have to open a web browser and type in the information. This all goes back to making content user friendly.
- **Portfolio page.** Put links to your best work here. If you're just starting to get your feet wet in reporting, you may not have enough content for this page. No worries. Add this page later. It could be reporting you've done for a campus outlet, for a class, or during an internship. Include the title of the story, the outlet, and a hyperlink. I recommend listing stories on this page even if they're already published somewhere else on your website. This makes it easier for visitors to see your most compelling work compiled in one area.
- **Twitter widget.** Widgets are the featured elements typically located on the side of a website. The Twitter widget embedded on a site gives visitors a flavor of your social media activity. It displays your most recent tweets. These timelines are interactive, so visitors can reply and retweet favorite tweets straight from your website. How you add a Twitter widget depends on the platform you use for a website (see your account's settings area).

Social Networking Platforms

Your profiles on these social networking sites should be open to the public: **Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Snapchat.** Why these sites? They're the most frequently used by journalists and news organizations. And they're where audiences



Courtesy of Laci Mitchell.



Courtesy of Kelli Kyle.

Journalism students should create their own websites as a way to build their professional brands. These two websites are easy to navigate and give visitors a sense of who the journalists are. Notice the integration of social media on both websites.

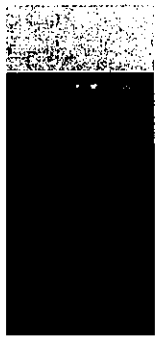
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Courtesy of Kelli Kyle.

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are most active. (LinkedIn isn't necessarily a go-to place to distribute content, but it's a great tool for showcasing your brand, finding sources for stories, and networking for jobs, as we discuss in Chapters 4 and 8.)

Reminder: Create a professional Facebook page instead of using a personal one for your brand. To set up a professional Facebook page, go to facebook.com/pages/create. In the Artist, Band or Public Figure section, select the Journalist category. Enter your first and last names. In the next chapter, we dig into specifics of these social networks.

Whether you're creating new accounts or updating existing ones, make it your goal to maintain them beyond the semester. Carry these digital tools throughout your journalism studies and as you enter your career.

Video Sharing Sites

Create an account on YouTube or Vimeo. Either of these sites can serve as a centralized spot for video content you create. Video editing apps (Chapter 5) allow you to upload your finished video directly from a device to either of these sites. From there, you can embed the video in stories on a website and share to social media.

Creating Standout Social Media Profiles

Building the best version of you online begins with your profiles. Be consistent with how you present yourself—through your handles, profile and cover photos, and bios—across platforms.

Handles

Most people in the social media world know others by their handles. A handle is a username. In the professional world, you want to be recognized by your name. So when it comes to building your brand, choose a handle that is as close to your name as possible. Think @FirstnameLastname.

Username consistency also makes it easier for connections to find you in the social media sea. Ideally, when you choose a username, stick with it for all your accounts. If you previously chose a handle that has nothing to do with your brand, the good news is that many social networking sites allow you to edit it at any time.

A quick note about LinkedIn. The system automatically generates a unique link for you that doesn't include your name. You should edit your profile URL to include your name.

Profile and Cover Photos

A profile photo is the smaller thumbnail size image associated with your account. Some social networking sites also give you the option to upload a cover photo, larger images typically at the top of your profile page. Just as you would be careful to avoid errors on your resume or in a story you write, your profile and cover photos also need to be well thought out.⁵ For starters, don't leave these spaces blank.

Profile Photo. Would you go into a job interview looking the way you do in your profile photo? A single profile pic can impact the perception of you. Hiring managers are most likely to see you first in that format. As people scroll through their feeds,

the profile photo is often how they determine who is sharing the content, and their perception of you impacts how they perceive that content. Choose a headshot photo that is professional and shoulders up so that people can easily recognize and see your face in the thumbnail pic.

Sree Sreenivasan (@sree), technology journalist and former Columbia University journalism professor, recommends this formula for a good profile photo:⁶

- Clear, recent close-up shot of your face
- No shots of you with a celebrity, national monument, pet, or child
- No wide shot of you at a landmark
- No hats, wigs, or sunglasses
- No tinting your photo (or putting a digital ribbon on it) in support of the cause du jour

Cover Photo. A cover photo is an opportunity to give followers a visual sense of you as not only a journalist, but also a real person. Because of the large size of a cover photo in comparison to a profile pic, the image you choose must be of high quality. Otherwise, the photo might appear grainy. Here are some tips:

- Upload a photo that represents your work, but keep it authentic and not overly promotional. Use a photo from the field in order to highlight some of your recent reporting. Or give followers a behind-the-scene glimpse via a photo that shows the inside of the newsroom or studio.
- Think beyond your professional world. A cover photo with coffee would let me know that we have something in common. Enjoy traveling? Upload a photo of your latest destination. These types of images humanize you. Whatever you choose, make sure it's understandable to the audience.
- Avoid including text with your contact info here. Save that info for your written bio.
- Even if you have the highest Facebook privacy settings for a personal account, every Facebook cover photo is public.

Bios

Create two distinct bios. The first is a short version for your social media profiles. A longer bio will be used for your website and LinkedIn profiles.

Short Bio. Your elevator pitch: short and sweet. You have 30 seconds to tell someone about yourself. In this case, you have a limited number of characters. On Twitter and Instagram, for instance, the character limit for a bio is 160 characters. It's more than just your followers who will look at your short bio. This bio will turn up in results when someone searches your name online.

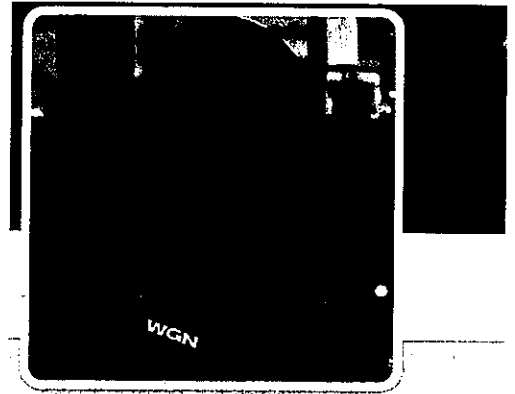
- Think about **keywords that describe you professionally.** Try to include a few of those in the short bio. But be specific. If you cover arts and culture for a

student newspaper, mention that. Don't simply write journalist or student at University of X. If you intern at a news outlet, tell us where by including the name.

- **What are you passionate about?** Drop a few hints about your interests beyond journalism. Mix in a snippet about you personally.
- **Avoid buzzwords.** There's a laundry list of words that are overused in profiles and resumes, so overused that they have little impact on the reader—words like *creative* and *innovative*.
- **Speak the social media language.** Use @mentions for specific names if possible. If your profile includes the names of your student media outlet or the place you intern, use their handles. For example, I cover life and culture for @IthacanOnline or sports intern @9News. It's important to use the proper handle for each platform. A newsroom's Twitter handle may be different from its Instagram handle (although for branding's sake, I hope not).
- It's critical to **include your website link**. Some sites have a specific section for this that doesn't count toward the character limit. Either way, every bio should link people back to your website.
- Don't forget to **include your location**.

Longer Bio. What's your story? Here's a chance to tell more about yourself. A longer, more detailed bio can be used for your website's About page and the Summary section of your LinkedIn profile.

- **Writing in first person makes you feel more approachable.** This is *your* narrative.
- **Don't overload.** This is not the space for a list of activities and positions you've had. That's what a resume is for.
- **Show you can write.** Being able to write clearly and concisely is an important skill for journalists. Demonstrate your ability with how you craft the bio. Keep it short and succinct—maximum of roughly 200 words.
- **Tells us about your journey.** Your collective experiences in and out of school, personally and professionally, make you you. In general, this bio should highlight your professional interests, give a brief recap of experiences, and tell



Nancy Loo ✓

@NancyLoo

Reporter, @WGNMorningNews

@WGNNews Chicago. Emmy winner.

Scrabble & Social Media Nut. Oregon

Duck. #ChicagonistaLIVE. #MsTech AKA

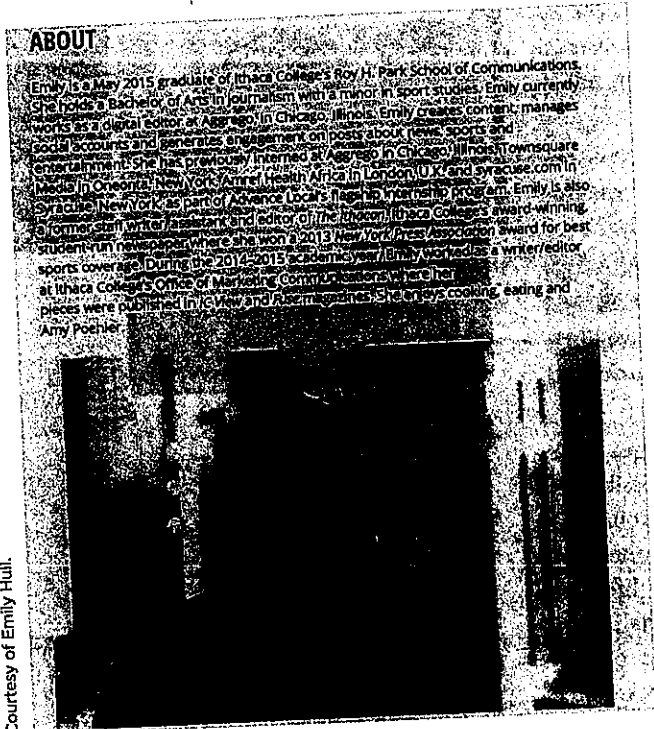
#BigTiny nloo@wgntv.com

📍 Chicago

🌐 wgntv.com/bigtiny

📅 Joined July 2008

Nancy Loo's Twitter bio is personable and to-the-point. She also effectively uses @mentions and hashtags.



Courtesy of Emily Hull.

Emily Hull's website bio is a good mix of her professional story, skills, and interests.

Consistency

Now that you've created accounts and fine-tuned your profiles, be consistent across platforms. First, use the same profile photos, handle, and bios for each site. Revisit these profiles at least three times a year to make sure they accurately reflect you at that point in time. Rejuvenate profiles as circumstances change, such as when you get a new job or complete your degree.

Also, take small steps each day to be active on social networking platforms. Creating an online presence and then abandoning it can appear worse than not having one at all. When a journalist or journalism student has a Twitter account but hasn't posted in months or even weeks, that simply doesn't look good to the audience or a potential employer.

Come up with a routine, and it will become second nature after a while. Start by building time into your day to manage social media platforms. At a minimum, check social media platforms first thing in the morning, midday, and evening. That includes not only posting fresh content, but also engaging with followers by replying to their posts, sharing others' content, and asking questions.

What does posting regularly mean? It's different for each platform. As we discussed in Chapter 2, some sites are intended for less frequent posts. As a journalist, the type of story you're covering will also factor into how frequently you share. Breaking news warrants more updates than a feature story. There's no magic formula for how frequently you should post on each site. Much of it comes down to experimentation.

us something that shows you're multidimensional.⁷ Personalize your story. Consider sharing what fueled your interest in journalism or how you spend your off time.

- **Show us, don't just tell.** Use specific examples to back up the claims you make about yourself. If you're interested in environmental reporting, for instance, briefly describe an issue or story you've covered.
- **By the same token, don't overhype.** Have the goods to back up your portrayal of yourself. If you interned at a TV network, don't write that you've worked for the network. That comes across as deceptive.
- **Unlike your short bio for social media, don't use @mentions here.** It's not the style of this type of profile.

Here are general recommendations to get you started:

- **Facebook**—at least once every other day
- **Twitter**—at least three times per day
- **Instagram**—one to two times per week
- **Snapchat**—one to two stories per week
- **LinkedIn**—once per week
- **Website**—at least two stories and/or blog posts per week

Checklists in future chapters include reminders for staying active on each social networking platform and your website.

Think before You Post

Don't post to simply post. Have something valuable to share. Even more importantly as a journalist, know where to draw the line when sharing personal thoughts and details of your life. As you prepare for a career in journalism, now is the time to think before you post that type of content.

As individuals, we all have our own opinions on topics. And it has become standard for people to share those thoughts on social media. But, as journalists, we have an obligation to try to remain unbiased, fair, and objective. Apply traditional journalistic standards. Just as it would be inappropriate for journalists to place political signs in their front yard, the same standard applies to online platforms.

As noted in the social media policy for student journalists at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, "actions that call into question a journalist's ability to report fairly on an issue harm not only that journalist but his or her news organization and fellow journalists."⁸

Indeed, it can be difficult to back down from posting personal thoughts about emotionally charged situations and issues, such as the 2016 shooting at an Orlando, Florida, nightclub that killed dozens of people. After the shooting, a *New York Times* editor sent a memo to staff members reminding them to avoid editorializing, promoting their political views or taking sides on hot-button issues, on social media.⁹

"Even if you personally are not involved in coverage of a particular topic, our colleagues are working hard to maintain the *Times's* credibility and evenhandedness, and we should not do anything to make their jobs tougher. People following *Times* newsroom staffers online expect them to be well-informed and thoughtful," wrote Philip Corbett, associate managing editor for standards at the *Times*.

What Not to Share

The following items are most frequently included in news outlets' social media policies.¹⁰ Sharing this type of personal content could jeopardize your chance of even getting an interview. Newsrooms do not want to take on the liability of having an employee whose actions, online or offline, could jeopardize the public's trust.

- Personal opinions about issues
- Political affiliation
- Religious beliefs
- Advocating on behalf of a particular cause or agenda
- Your involvement in illegal activity
- Unverified information from sources
- Internal newsroom communication
- Details of personal life beyond hobbies or interests

What to Share

As we've discussed, your social media activity should reflect your journalistic brand while also giving followers a flavor of you as a person. But what's the proper mix of professional and personal?

Consider the **80/20 rule of social media**. Keep 80 percent of your content professional related, but refrain from being overly promotional. The other 20 percent should show your personality.

In addition, the **rule of thirds for social media** is a surefire way to share the best mix of content, says Scott Kleinberg (@scottkleinberg), former social media manager at the *Chicago Tribune*.¹¹ One-third of the time, promote content related to your professional brand, another third of your posts should come from other sources, and the final third of the formula involves being human.

"I don't think in social media there is anything worse than following a feed that tweets the same thing all the time and never responds to your questions," says Kleinberg.¹²

Choose from this list to experiment with your own mix of professional and personal posts.

- Real-time updates while reporting in the field
- Behind-the-scenes look at the reporting process
- Links to your stories and/or blog posts
- Colleagues' stories and content from other credible sources
- Your own comments that provide context to social media posts that you share from credible sources.
- Your own questions, and responses ASAP to readers' questions
- What you're reading personally or professionally
- Hobbies and interests

Journalists' use of social media raises ethical considerations beyond what to share and not to share. For instance, liking a political candidate's Facebook page in order to stay abreast of campaign news could be misinterpreted. And is it appropriate to friend sources on Facebook? Chapter 7 delves deeper into these and many more ethical issues.

Become the Go-to Journalist

Social media affords journalists the opportunity to become a go-to source for information by owning a beat and cultivating a community online around a chosen topic. These activities define you as a brand.

Carve out a niche on a particular topic through:

- **Original reporting.** Write about stories in your local community on issues related to a beat.
- **Curating beat-related information.** Use blogging and social media activity to curate stories from other credible sources.
- **Sharing.** Use social media to share your original reporting and curated content.

Beat

Certainly, journalists must be well versed on a variety of topics. Often, they don't know what they might cover day to day. But it can also be professionally rewarding to focus some attention on one beat. Blogging and social media are ways for journalists to show they're knowledgeable in a subject area, helping to differentiate them from other reporters and sources in general.

This allows journalists to be part of a community around a specific topic. Developing these relationships will be mutually beneficial. People passionate about a journalist's given beat will turn to them first, share their work, and pass along story ideas.

It's never too early to test the waters. In my mobile and social media journalism course, students choose beats, ranging from disability to sustainability. Each student uses a combination of social media, blogging, and original reporting to build a portfolio of work around a beat. This is in addition to general assignment, or nonbeat, stories they're required to cover. The approach allows them to demonstrate their reporting versatility and an ability to dig deep into a given topic.

Curating beat-related information is an important part of the process. *Curation* is the gathering and sorting of fragmented pieces of information, and then providing analyses and context. Journalists have always served as curators of information, but it's even more critical today as people try to make sense of the overflow of content. That's where journalists focusing on a beat can be valuable. They do the work of sifting through the sea of noise and providing online communities with what they need to know. They create order among the chaos of information.

Brian Stelter (@brianstelter) is a textbook example of a journalist who created a brand and career around a specific topic. It all started from Stelter's dorm room in 2004 when he was a freshman at Towson University.¹³ He launched a blog with news and commentary about news outlets' coverage of the Iraq War. He soon attracted a loyal audience, including TV industry executives. Stelter's work around a specific niche caught the eye of the *New York Times*. Straight out of college, he landed a position covering media for the *Times*. He continued to amass a following online through his social media savvy. Stelter is now CNN's senior media correspondent and host of its Reliable Sources program.

Freelance journalist Justin Auciello (@auciello) used social media to create a niche beat and community focused on the Jersey Shore area. See the From the Newsroom section above to learn more about Auciello's experience.

Blog

Writing blog posts regularly is a great way to show your enthusiasm for a beat. Your website can serve as the centralized location for these posts, along with your original reporting. Here are tips to get you started blogging about your beat.

- **Consistency.** Write a post at least twice per week.
- **Keep it tight.** No more than 350 words. Headlines should be self-explanatory and easy to understand. A headline is your promise to readers. Deliver on it. Get to the point immediately, and keep the post focused on your promise.
- **Scanning friendliness.** Online readers skim impatiently to find information. Use short paragraphs, headings, bulleted or numbered lists, and pull quotes. These elements make reading much easier, especially on mobile devices. They serve as guideposts for readers.
- **Visuals.** Use pictures, video, and graphics in your posts. Visuals make posts more engaging and also break up text. Don't simply grab an image online. You may violate copyrights (Chapter 7), and that practice is unethical. You can either ask for permission from the original source or search the Creative Commons website (search.creativecommons.org). Content licensed under Creative Commons can be used as long as you properly credit the source. Each piece of Creative Commons content has instructions on how to attribute the material. This is a very helpful resource if you need an image to accompany a web story or blog post.
- **Reader engagement.** Your writing should spark a dialogue. Each post should make it clear you're open to interaction. To generate thoughtful discussion, consider asking a question that invites readers to comment. Remember to respond to comments.
- **Show your style.** Writing conversationally and in first person bring readers closer to you and the content. Write as if you're having a chat with a friend.
- **Research/informational value.** Don't merely regurgitate what others are saying. Nudge the conversation along by providing thoughtful analysis. Use credible sources, and avoid sharing your opinion.
- **Link.** Hyperlinking to the sources you reference is a general rule of thumb on the web. It's a way to give a hat tip to other sources. Links also provide an easy way for readers to check out what or who you're mentioning.
- **Keywords.** Place keywords in your headline and throughout your post as often as possible. This is often referred to as search engine optimization, or SEO. Using keywords makes it more likely people searching for the topic of your post will find it. Put yourself in the shoes of someone doing an online search. What words would they search for, if looking for information on the

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topic of your post? Use those. Also use these words in the tags section that appears on the back end of a website when drafting a post or story. Tags are keywords. Filling out this portion will also make your posts more discoverable to someone searching online.

- **Share.** Even if you have a following, don't expect people to constantly check your site for new content. You have to let them know. Sharing on social media is the way much of your audience will be alerted that you've posted something new. It drives people to your work and can foster interaction on social media.
- **Analyze.** How did you do? Monitoring website analytics sheds light on which posts got the most hits, how much traffic was generated from your social media posts versus people coming directly to your site, and much more. More on that in Chapter 6.

Social Media

The most effective use of social media for covering a beat or a general assignment story involves sharing, listening, connecting, and analyzing. Future chapters explore specific methods related to these four areas:

- **Share.** Spread more than just your published work. Share information from others that you find interesting, relevant, and credible. Think, does what I'm about to post provide value to my followers? When you share other users' content, give them a shout-out by including @mentions or tagging them in posts.
- **Find.** Monitor social media to find conversations and content related to your beat. These could tip you off to story or blog ideas and give you something worthwhile to pass along to followers. Conduct hashtag or keyword searches to discover what's being talked about. Twitter lists are also a fantastic tool. Twitter lists, as we discuss in the next chapter, filter your stream so that you see only tweets from users you place in a list.
- **Connect.** Become part of a community. If you're passionate about immigration, start by following people who share information about this topic and will add value to your social media streams. Consider other journalists, nonprofits, and experts in the field. Rely on your community. Listen

"Disability" Overlooked In Diversity Discussions

ADDED MAY 20, 2013, UNDER: JOURNALISM EDUCATION



There's an important part of diversity discussions in newsrooms and classrooms that needs to be addressed: disability. People with disabilities make up an estimated 20% of the population in the United States, and one in five families includes a member with a disability. Despite these statistics, in comparison to other minority groups, people with disabilities are

overlooked in news coverage and classroom discussions about diversity in journalism.

This semester, I introduced the topic of disability into my diversity lesson plan in a broadcast journalism course. My goal was to expand students' understanding of diversity. I hope, as they enter the real world, they apply what they've learned. I also recently conducted a workshop at Your News Now (Syracuse) on this topic (See presentation below).

My workshop and lesson plan focus on why it's important to include disability in diversity discussions, the proper terminology related to disability, the framing of disability stories, and how journalists can include disability in news coverage.

Key takeaways

- **Terminology:** Use person-first language (notice I've been using the phrase "people with disabilities"). You should avoid terms that fail to emphasize people with disabilities as "people first." The basic idea is to name the person first and the condition second in order to emphasize "they are people first." I've worked for a disability organization the past three years. People with disabilities face unique challenges, just like anyone else. However, disability doesn't necessarily define who they are. Disability isn't something they "suffer from." That's another phrase to avoid. Also, when describing an individual, don't reference his or her disability unless it's clearly pertinent to the story.
- **Story Frames:** Disability is a way of being, not something a person "has." Journalists should avoid story frames or angles that center on pity, charity, weakness, suffering, and deficiency, among others.
- **News Coverage:** There are many ways news organizations can integrate the topic of disability into news coverage. *Focus on the issues impacting people with disabilities, especially unemployment and health care.

This post I wrote includes many of the important element of blogging: keywords in the headline, a visual, hyperlinks, bullet points for scanning friendliness, and data from credible sources.

"Disability" Overlooked In Diversity Discussions" by Anthony Adornato.

and respond. Join existing conversations and invite people to weigh in. Be responsive by acknowledging audience feedback. Placing hashtags in your social media posts is a great way for others with similar interests to find you. Participating in tweet chats (Chapter 4) is also a valuable way to connect. A tweet chat is a real-time Q&A session on a topic that's regularly scheduled for a specific day/time.

- **Analyze.** What's working well? The effectiveness of your social media activity can also be analyzed by regularly visiting your analytics for each platform (Chapter 6).

Checklist

- ✓ **Social Media Audit.** Conduct a social media audit on yourself. Also, team up with one classmate to audit each other's online presence. Discuss your findings.
 - > Refer to the Digital Skeletons: Social Media Audit portion of this chapter for tips. Be sure to analyze bios, content, frequency of posts, personality, professional interests, and journalism skills.
 - > How would you describe your classmate's brand?
 - > What is your classmate doing well? What needs improvement?
 - > After your classmate's audit, clean up anything that doesn't reflect who you are in a positive light.
- ✓ **Build Your Presence.** Time to polish up and shine.
 - > Create a professional website. Follow the recommendations above for building a website. Establish professionally oriented accounts on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Snapchat. Set up an account on either YouTube or Vimeo. Remember, keep your website domain and social media handles as close to your name as possible. Invite people to like your professional Facebook page.
 - > Download mobile apps for each of these social networking sites.
 - > Create a short bio for your social media profiles and a longer version for your website and LinkedIn page. Have at least one classmate give you feedback on your bios.
 - > Ensure that your profile photo and bio are consistent across all platforms.

on Twitter. Put the # symbol at the beginning of a word or phrase you want to hashtag. The hashtag appears as a link that users can click to automatically see the larger conversation around that hashtag. Use a hashtag if there's already one for a story you're covering. They're great for live events and breaking news. People tend to search hashtags to keep up with an unfolding story. As we discuss later in this chapter, hashtags are also beneficial when crowdsourcing.

- **Tagging** enables you to link a picture, video, or other type of status update to another user. It's similar to including a handle in a post, in that a tagged person will be alerted to it. However, tagging is a separate feature from @mentioning someone in the text of your post. To tag a person, select the tagging option, start entering a username, and choose the person's handle from the dropdown menu. (Note that tagging in this sense is different from tags that you have the option of including when writing a website post. Website tags, as mentioned in the last chapter, are keywords related to a story.)
- **Geo-location** lets users indicate where they're posting from. On some platforms, the geo-location feature is called a "check-in." When you select the option, you'll see a list of places based on the location of your device. The feature is useful for journalists, particularly during breaking news, because a geo-location search can be a starting point when looking to find sources and content related to a story at a specific location. Social media users are also becoming savvy in conducting their own location-based searches. Journalists can make their work more discoverable by including the geo-location in posts about a story.
- **Notifications** on our mobile devices can be overwhelming. But, they're a critical way for journalists to monitor interactions on multiple platforms without having to constantly log in. Set up notifications on social media apps so that you're alerted when someone interacts with you, from a direct message to a comment on your post.

Now, let's examine the most used social media platforms for journalists. Each has a range of unique features, from character limits to live video options. Social networking companies update features periodically, making it all the more important to stay updated on the latest developments regarding new technologies.

Twitter

Twitter's 140-character limit is its distinguishing feature. Because of this, posts need to be crafted succinctly. The limit also impacts how frequently you share. On Twitter, unlike other platforms, it's acceptable to post a series of tweets back-to-back. A flurry of tweets, for instance, may be needed to share information on a developing story. One or two tweets simply wouldn't provide enough details or context for followers to understand a story.

Posting a series of tweets about an event or news as it unfolds is often referred to as **live-tweeting**. Tip for live-tweeting: Your first post should give followers a heads-up so they're not caught off guard. Let them know they'll see a series of posts from

Embed Social Media Posts into Stories

You can embed public Facebook and Twitter posts into an online story. It's as easy as pasting the post's URL into your website story on your WordPress site. Go to the social media post you would like to embed, and click on the timestamp (the day and/or time). You'll be taken

to the page for that individual post. Copy the URL from the address bar and paste it into your story. The image of that social media post will now appear in your story. This is useful when you're writing specifically about conversations on social media.

you and tell them why. An introductory tweet can also bring more attention to your Twitter coverage.

There are a number of **visual elements** that can be included in tweets. You can upload a maximum of four photos to each tweet. The images show up as a mini photo gallery in a tweet. It's an eye-catching feature. Twitter also has the option to share recorded video and to live-stream video through its Periscope app.

Keep in mind, some features may eat away at the 140 characters. So pay close attention to how many characters you have left when drafting a tweet. As is frequently the case with tweets, you'll have to adjust how you craft a tweet based on what you want to say and how much space you have. Twitter announced in 2016 that media attachments (still images, videos, GIFs, and polls) will no longer reduce the character count. However,

 **Washington Post** 
@washingtonpost

TWEETS 196K FOLLOWING 1,298 FOLLOWERS 7.6M LIKES 4,438 LISTS 33 MOMENTS 24

Washington Post 
@washingtonpost

Tweet-length breaking news, analysis from around the world. Founded in 1877. Follow our journalists on Twitter: twitter.com/washingtonpost...

📍 Washington, DC
🌐 washingtonpost.com
📅 Joined March 2007

 Tweet to Washington Post

👤 227 Followers you know



📷 11.8K Photos and videos



Subscribed to Member of

Orlando Shooting by Washington Post

Washington Post reporters who are covering the Pulse nightclub shooting on the ground from Orlando.
13 Members

Poet Interns 2016 by Washington Post

Summer 2016 Interns of The Washington Post.
22 Members

Pope Francis Visit by Washington Post

Washington Post reporters covering Pope Francis' 2015 U.S. visit.
48 Members

WHCO 2015 by Washington Post

The Who's Who of the 2015 White House Correspondents' Dinner ... on Twitter
134 Members

Navy Yard shooting by Washington Post

Sources at the scene of the Navy Yard shooting in Southeast D.C.
25 Members

SCOTUS by Washington Post

23 Members

Top News by Washington Post

45 Members

<https://twitter.com/washingtonpost/lists>

The *Washington Post* uses Twitter lists to organize sources for stories. The outlet also places the accounts of its reporters and interns in lists to easily see what they're tweeting. View all *The Post's* lists at twitter.com/washingtonpost/lists.

links still count toward the character limit. All links posted in tweets are automatically shortened by Twitter so they won't take up as much space as the original URL.

One of the most useful features of this platform is **Twitter lists**. Twitter lists filter the noise. After all, when you're following hundreds of Twitter users, it can be overwhelming to keep up with what they're saying. In fact, some people, including myself, rely more heavily on lists than the main Twitter stream. You can place a user into a specific list. Viewing a list timeline will show you a stream of tweets from only users on that list. Lists can be set to be public or private. If a list is set to public, anyone can see the list, and users will be alerted when they're placed in the list. So, make sure your lists have an appropriate name. To create a list, go to the profile page of your account, and locate the Lists section. Add users by going to their profiles and selecting "Add or remove from lists." You can add a person to multiple lists. Get in the habit of adding new followers to a list right away. It will make your Twitter life easier. You can put a user in a list even if you don't click Follow on the user's account. In this case, the user's tweets will show up only in the list feed, not in your main Twitter feed. As we'll discuss later in this chapter, lists are a great way to find sources and story ideas. As part of this chapter's checklist, you'll create several Twitter lists, including one for your beat.

Other Twitter features:

- **Retweets, replies, and likes** are forms of engagement on Twitter—ways to join the conversation. A retweet, commonly referred to as RT, is the sharing of someone else's tweet with your followers. The simplest way to do this is by clicking the retweet icon under a tweet, which brings up a screen with the original tweet. You then have the option to add your own message before the original tweet. A reply begins with the @username of the person and is a response to another user's tweet. To reply to a tweet, click on the Reply button on a tweet. Your reply will be attached to that original tweet, along with others' replies. The heart-shaped "like" icon under each tweet can serve several functions. It's a way to show appreciation for a tweet. In addition, you can "like" a tweet that you want to come back to at a later time—maybe it includes a link to an article you want to check out, but don't have the time for at that moment. On your profile page, you can locate tweets you've "liked."
- **Direct Messages (DM)** are private conversations with a user. Direct messaging can be used to contact sources without everyone seeing the exchange in your public stream. It's good for quick exchanges of information. You can then connect via phone or e-mail, if needed. There's one caveat: You can initiate DMs only with users who follow your account or who have enabled the setting that allows anyone to DM them.
- Pose a question to followers by creating a **Twitter poll**. Find this option in the main text box when composing a tweet. Type the question in the message box, enter answer options, and select the length of time you want the poll to remain open.
- **Mobile notifications for individual users** can be useful if you're tracking a particular source. By turning on the notification for the source's tweets, you'll receive an alert every time the source posts something. Turn on this notification directly from the source's profile page.