

**“You’re not wrong for long”
verification and “truthiness”**

Gloomy Time for Journalism

We are pre-Leveson and post the BBC Jimmy Savile scandal and the following lapse.



Core Skills Remain

Some differently applied.



“Churnalism.”



Facebook and Twitter are now key tools for news.



Challenge

Balancing need to use social media to engage audience in inventive ways while maintaining ethical standards and core skills.

“You’re not wrong for long”

- “Sky’s amusing phoney slogan – and there’s a grain of truth in it” (Alastair Campbell, Leveson submission, 30/11/2011)

- Process news

- Jeff Jarvis link

- <http://newmediarockstars.com/2012/11/must-watch-pbs-video-debates-the-impact-of-twitter-on-journalism/>



Process News

Covering a breaking story in the 24 hour news context with caveats:

- ‘this is what we know now’
- ‘what do you know?’
- ‘send us what you know’
- ‘what do you want to know?’
- ‘tell us who to talk to.’

Andy Carvin “ I tweet revolutions”

“...when I was in Tahrir Square in Cairo and hundreds of people were injured ... I could only tell what was going on immediately in front of me ... When I was using social media I felt I had a better sense of what was happening on the ground.”

(Carvin, cited by Kiss, Guardian, 4/9/11)

Transparency

A breaking news story in the 24 hour context is different from getting a fait accompli story like a court decision wrong, just to be first.

“The scoop is a dangerous act of journalistic narcissism”

Jarvis: 2012

Transparency - how far should it go?



'Bad Tweets' – The Debate

If your tweet sparked controversy that needs to be clarified, you shouldn't just delete it and try to sweep it under the rug.



For photos you find on social media, ethics and verification are the same, just in a different context.

2012: The Summer of Sin.

Often the media, which let significant errors through, followed up with either “silence or thin statements.”

(Silverman, 10/9/12)

Are young journalists missing out on basic learning?

“Every reporter who came up in legacy media can tell you about a come-to-Jesus moment, when an editor tattooed a message deep into their skull: show respect for the fundamentals of the craft, or you would soon not be part of it.

I once lost a job I wanted because I misspelled the name of the publisher - a brutal lesson.

Nobody did that for Mr Lehrer.”

(David Carr, 20/8/12)

“The old safety nets have gone”

“The industry we work for shares some of the blame for his failure.

I'm 10 years older than Lehrer but had my work scrutinized by layers of editors, before a single word got published...

...Lehrer rose to the top in a flash, and despite having his work published by major media companies, was operating, most of the time, without a safety net.”

(Seife, 9/3/12)

Truthiness

Stephen Colbert came up with the word 'truthiness' – best described as:



“the gut feeling that something is true without evidence”

The Multimedia Reporter's Tools

- Curiosity to investigate in the public interest.
- The sense of what's newsworthy in the mass of data and information.
- An ear for narrative and an eye for telling or poignant detail.
- A sense of the tragedy of human experience.
- The sense that what we do matters, is different from gossip and prejudice, that mere information, no matter how well disseminated - that mere data - no matter how well mined and scraped - are not enough.

News we can trust

Platforms will come and go but if news does not stick to its core values, what will distinguish it from truthiness...

<http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/417670/august-09-2012/who-s-honoring-me-now---psychonomic-bulletin---review>

Question Time!

