

NewsPro

The Magazine for News Professionals

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would like to congratulate all of
Crain's NewsPro 2020
"12 to Watch in TV News"



BILL HEMMER

anchor of
"Bill Hemmer Reports"
Debuting January 20th



DANA PERINO

anchor of
"The Daily Briefing"



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FROM THE EDITOR

Our Truth Ache



An unusual thing happened in the process of assigning stories for this edition. I reached out to a few highly regarded pros, asking them to write guest columns. And almost every single one not only agreed but wanted to write about different variations on the same theme: how journalists, and the truth, are under siege. Each one offers a unique view and provides different “tools” for how the problem can be handled.

It’s crucial that we consider all facets of the concern. A new Pew Research Center analysis emphasizes the need for this. It shows that 31% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents say journalists have very low ethical standards, roughly six times the 5% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning who have that opinion.

How do we address that? George Washington University’s Frank Sesno, our “Sign Off” columnist, offers several concrete ideas about how those opinions might be changed. Rod Hicks, of the Society of Professional Journalists, provides a tough reality check on why so many people don’t trust news reports. Mike Cavender of the Radio Television Digital News Association reports on how artificial intelligence could warp news and information to a much more insidious extent than what we’ve seen so far — and gives some thoughts about what to do about it.

We look to the future of our profession with two other special focuses in this issue, on education and journalists to watch. Our cover story, from Jill Goldsmith, highlights 12 TV correspondents reporting the hottest topics of our day.

Nancy Dupont, a professor at the University of Mississippi, discusses how educators need to equip their students with a constantly changing and amazingly broad knowledge base. Her piece leads into our celebration of 10 academics who are at the top of their game — all nominated by students, readers and members of news organizations. We also have a story from Danae Bucci, of Northeastern University, about experiments in storytelling that could make TV news more compelling.

Some parts of 2020 seem predictable: Wildfires will rage. President Trump will come up with new name slurs for his challengers. Americans will go to the polls. Children will protest. And maybe, through careful actions, America’s journalists will earn more respect and trust.

— Janet Stilson, Editor



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12 TO WATCH IN TV NEWS

By Jill Goldsmith

NewsPro's 2020 selection of TV journalists worth keeping an eye on speaks to the times. There are seasoned pros sprinkled throughout the list as well as an up-and-coming journalist covering national security (Kylie Atwood). Some are tracking key political campaigns (like Arlette Saenz). One has moderated a presidential debate for the first time with a star turn (Linsey Davis). Another (Amna Nawaz) has spearheaded in-depth reporting on pollution and immigration. They are fanning out across day parts, from morning shows (Tony Dokoupil) to weekend news coverage (Kendis Gibson). And Fox News Channel's Bill Hemmer is getting a brand-new program.

Some on the list (like Jacob Soboroff and Ed O'Keefe) worked for years as print journalists. Others (like Justin Dial) are at the forefront of the digital evolution of broadcast news.

Underneath it all there's a thump: the beating heart of the 2020 presidential race. That, intertwined with impeachment, has dominated coverage. In some important respects, we are in uncharted waters. Politics are more polarized than ever. Vilification of the news media has amped up. But these reporters are dedicated to finding the words and visuals (Steve Kornacki) that will help Americans better understand events as they unspool. Here, in no particular order, are 12 TV pros worth watching in the year to come.

KYLIE ATWOOD

NATIONAL SECURITY REPORTER, CNN

“Steady rise” is an apt phrase when describing the career trajectory of Kylie Atwood. Since graduating from college in 2012, she’s covered the U.S. State Department for CBS and landed at CNN a year ago. Atwood has been reporting on major developments in the impeachment hearings and critical national security issues, two beats that are sure to continue generating headlines.

Atwood has followed the shifting political fortunes of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and unrest in the ranks of the diplomatic corps he oversees. Her breaking news coverage has included reports on Rudy Giuliani’s actions as President Donald Trump’s attorney. And she recently reported on the Trump administration’s decision to lift a mysterious hold on security assistance to Lebanon, which officials have called “Ukraine all over again.”

At CBS News, Atwood followed Secretaries of State Mike Pompeo and Rex Tillerson to dozens of international cities, including Moscow, Manila, Beijing and Mexico City. On Pompeo’s most recent visit to North Korea, Atwood was the sole pool reporter. She’s broken news on multiple foreign policy fronts, including U.S.-North Korea talks and discussions between the Trump White House and Mexico. She produced Tillerson’s “60 Minutes” interview in 2018 and reported on the Philippines drug war in 2017.

Atwood was a campaign digital journalist for CBS in 2016. Before that, she was an assistant and researcher for former “Face the Nation” host Bob Schieffer and a producer on that show’s Emmy-winning broadcast in 2013 commemorating the 50th anniversary of President John F. Kennedy’s assassination. She studied abroad in Kenya and is on the board of Report for America, which supports a new generation of journalists who serve in community news organizations across the U.S.

TONY DOKOUPIL

COHOST, “CBS THIS MORNING”

When Tony Dokoupil took a seat at the “CBS This Morning” desk in May 2019 he was the “new kid” in a trio that also included Gayle King and Anthony Mason. It’s a high-profile, high-pressure position. The franchise has struggled against its morning-show rivals, and the cast has been in flux since CBS fired Charlie Rose in 2017.

But Dokoupil was no stranger to CBS viewers when he joined the show. He’d been a substitute anchor, a contributor to “CBS Sunday Morning” and a correspondent for CBS News since joining the team in 2016. His diverse coverage has ranged from vaping — including an exclusive broadcast interview with now former Juul CEO Kevin Burns — to features on suicide, struggling public school teachers and a successful rehab program for drug and alcohol-addicted airline pilots.

He anchored “CBS This Morning” live from the Kennedy Space Center on the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission. And his long-form work includes profiles of Chuck Lorre and Ben Stiller. He’s interviewed Hillary Clinton, Steve Martin and Dolly Parton. Dokoupil reports have also focused on the joys of quitting your job, the benefits of working with your hands and the fight over plastic straws, marijuana legalization, digital privacy and the Second Amendment.

Before joining CBS News, he was a correspondent at MSNBC, where he met his wife, anchor Katy Tur. Previously, Dokoupil wrote for Newsweek and The Daily Beast. He’s also the author of a memoir, “The Last Pirate: A Father, His Son and the Golden Age of Marijuana,” about his father’s exploits smuggling weed in the 1970s and 80s.

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KYLIE ATWOOD



TONY DOKOUPIL

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KENDIS GIBSON

WEEKEND ANCHOR, "MSNBC LIVE"

In the current era of fraught politics, news never stops. That means an increasingly higher profile for weekend anchors like MSNBC's Kendis Gibson.

The network's epiphany on the changing state of news coverage came in 2017 when it replaced its weekend "Lockup" franchise — which focused on life behind bars — with extended live news broadcasts. For the past year, "MSNBC Live With Kendis Gibson" has occupied the 2–4 p.m. block on Saturday and Sundays covering politics and news of the day. He's on hand to anchor breaking stories like New York City's plunge into a blackout last summer.

Gibson jumped to MSNBC from ABC News, where he spent five years as anchor of the overnight newscast "World News Now" and the (very) early morning show "America This Morning." During his sign-off broadcast, he told his loyal nocturnal fans he was going to join the "day walkers."

At ABC News, he was known for his on-air dance moves. The network hilariously promoted Gibson's departure with a montage of his "dancing to unemployment." He had a primetime TV debut as himself on the ABC series "Deception" in March 2018.

While covering the 2016 presidential election cycle, Gibson's mix of headlines and quirky signature segments were seen across all ABC News programming, including "Good Morning America," "World News Tonight With David Muir," "Nightline," "20/20" and "This Week With George Stephanopoulos."

Gibson, who is originally from Belize in Central America, was the first network correspondent to cover the devastating Santa Barbara oil spill. He reported on the FIFA scandal in Switzerland; the shooting of an unarmed black man by a white police officer in South Carolina; and the aftermath and recovery following Hurricane Sandy.



KENDIS GIBSON



ED O'KEEFE

ED O'KEEFE

POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT, CBS NEWS

The 2020 presidential campaign is front-and-center in the life of Ed O'Keefe, as CBS News political correspondent based in Washington, D.C. He's interviewed current (and some now-former) Democratic contenders, including Pete Buttigieg, Julian Castro, Kirsten Gillibrand, Kamala Harris, Amy Klobuchar, Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders. And he's also reported on Republican contender William Weld.

O'Keefe helped cover the 2018 midterm elections, the contentious confirmation hearing for Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh as well as the funerals of former President George H.W. Bush and Arizona Sen. John McCain. He also reported on the record-long federal government shutdown and the blackface scandal and sexual misconduct allegations that rocked the Virginia state government in early 2019.

Before CBS News, O'Keefe spent nearly 13 years at The Washington Post following congressional and presidential elections, Capitol Hill and federal agencies. While there, he was also author of "The Federal Eye" blog. He first joined CBS News as a contributor in 2017, then moved on staff in April 2018.

O'Keefe is half-Guatemalan and a member of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. He has written about U.S. immigration policy, including how health care, education, literacy, malnutrition and public safety have driven impoverished Guatemalans to the U.S.-Mexico border. O'Keefe's career path was clear at a young age. According to his reminiscences in the Times Union, his upstate New York hometown paper, in middle school he launched "O'Keefe Etc.," a quarterly newsletter for his extended family sharing information about reunions and relatives' health struggles along with vacation photos.

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We proudly salute our friends and clients

Tony Dokoupil
Kendis Gibson
Bill Hemmer
Ed O'Keefe

on being named to

Crain's NewsPro 2020
12 to Watch in TV News

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ARLETTE SAENZ

POLITICAL REPORTER, CNN

This rising correspondent joined CNN in 2018 from ABC News. She's been riding the rollercoaster of stories about former Vice President Joe Biden during his 2020 presidential campaign — not the least of which is President Trump's request that Ukraine investigate Biden and his son Hunter, which propelled impeachment hearings. She was tapped to chronicle the Senate impeachment trial.

Saenz's reporting has followed Biden's reaction to the impeachment probe; the decision by Biden's allies to form a super political action committee to help his candidacy; his reversal on the Hyde Amendment abortion measure; and his reaction to Michael Bloomberg's entry into the race.

At ABC News, Saenz reported on the Trump and Obama administrations, Capitol Hill and national politics. She was an embedded reporter during the 2012 presidential cycle, covering the runs by former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, former Texas Gov. Rick Perry, former Sen. Rick Santorum as well as Biden's re-election campaign with President Barack Obama.

Saenz started her journalism career as an intern with "Nightline" in 2005 and joined ABC News in 2007 as a senior desk assistant. In 2010, she began working as a digital journalist covering the U.S. Senate and politics as a White House reporter and producer.



ARLETTE SAENZ

AMNA NAWAZ

SENIOR NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT, PRIMARY SUBSTITUTE ANCHOR, "PBS NEWSHOUR"

For nearly two years, Amna Nawaz has tackled critical, in-depth stories for "PBS NewsHour" as senior national correspondent and primary substitute anchor. She joined the iconic series from ABC News in April of 2018.

As host of "The Plastics Problem," a documentary that aired on PBS in November, she crisscrossed the globe exploring environmental damage caused by single-use plastic and potential solutions. The same month, "PBS NewsHour" launched "Broken Justice," a podcast miniseries hosted by Nawaz, which examined the U.S.'s public-defense crisis by focusing on the story of a Missouri inmate's 22-year fight to overturn his conviction.

Nawaz often reports on immigration and the Trump administration's policies, especially regarding children. She visited border communities across the Southwest and followed one toddler's journey from Mexico to the U.S. border. She had the first interview with former Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) director Mark Morgan after President Trump announced mass raids across the U.S.

Other Nawaz interviews have ranged from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Brazilian politician Eduardo Bolsonaro, who is the son of Jair Bolsonaro, the country's current president.

While at ABC News, Nawaz was both an anchor and correspondent. She led the division's digital coverage of the 2016 presidential election. In addition, she reported the documentary "Roberts County: A Year in the Most Pro-Trump Town" and hosted the podcast series "Uncomfortable," which focused on issues dividing America.

Before that Nawaz was a foreign correspondent and Islamabad bureau chief for NBC. She was the first foreign journalist allowed inside North Waziristan, which was the global hub of Al Qaida and the Taliban at that time. Nawaz covered the Taliban attack on Malala Yousafzai, the raid on Osama bin Laden's compound and the impact of U.S. drone strikes.

She also founded and led the platform NBC Asian America, which focuses on the interests of the U.S.'s Asian community.



AMNA NAWAZ

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Congratulations to

AMNA NAWAZ

Senior National Correspondent and
Primary Substitute Anchor  PBS NEWSHOUR

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STEVE KORNACKI

NATIONAL POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT, NBC NEWS AND MSNBC

All platforms across NBC and MSNC benefit from Steve Kornacki's reports on the latest political developments. He frequently guest hosts "Hardball With Chris Matthews," "All in With Chris Hayes" and "The Rachel Maddow Show." Along the way, he's carved out the key tech-meets-politics niche as a virtuoso of the network's interactive map. And he will be seen with increasingly frequency as campaign season heats up.

As he taps and swipes an interactive screen, Kornacki also talks fast, leading viewers enthusiastically through voting patterns, exit polls and election results. That allows him to show how states, districts and counties leaned during the last elections and how voting plays out in real time in any given race. Recently, he broke down polling numbers and funding issues that led Sen. Kamala Harris to drop out of the 2020 presidential race.

Kornacki also hosts "Article II: Inside Impeachment," a NBC News podcast. And he penned a 2018 book, "The Red and the Blue: The 1990s and the Birth of Political Tribalism," which follows the twin paths of former President Bill Clinton and former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich in a decade that shaped U.S. politics.

Previously, Kornacki hosted the 4 p.m. hour of "MSNBC Live," the Monday edition of "MTP Daily" and "Up With Steve Kornacki" (now "Up With David Gura") on Saturday and Sunday mornings. He also cohosted MSNBC's ensemble show "The Cycle," which ran from 2012 to 2015. Before that, he wrote for the New York Observer and Roll Call and was politics editor for Salon. He spent three years in New Jersey covering state politics.



STEVE KORNACKI



JUSTIN DIAL

JUSTIN DIAL

SENIOR EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, ABC NEWS LIVE

A new chapter in Justin Dial's impressive cross-media career began in November when he was named senior executive producer of ABC News Live, the rising 24/7 streaming news service. He's been charged with building up an editorial team across day parts and managing the programming — including original shows and specials. The overall creative direction and design of the service is under his purview, and he also oversees coverage during breaking news and live events.

Previously, Dial was at Vice Media, working as a supervising producer of news and a founding member of the innovative series "Vice News Tonight" on HBO. Dial led the show to a Peabody Award for reporting on the violence in Charlottesville and four Emmys honoring the program's coverage of Mosul; the war in Yemen; the Brett Kavanaugh Supreme Court confirmation hearings; and families separated at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Before Vice, Dial headed U.S. newsgathering and field reporting for Bloomberg, and before that he was senior producer for "American Morning" at CNN for five years.

In a memo welcoming Dial, ABC News president James Goldston called him "an exceptional leader with a talent for showcasing great journalism in new forms." That will be critical as ABC News Live strives to gain further traction in the fast-growing live online news space.

The service launched in 2018 and had 5.5 million monthly average viewers as of November. Its special coverage has ranged from the Apollo 11 anniversary to the Oscars Red Carpet to a wide range of Democratic debate reporting. A signature show, "The Briefing Room," has aired interviews with nearly every Democratic presidential candidate as well as press conferences, congressional hearings and voter discussions.

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DANA PERINO

ANCHOR, "THE DAILY BRIEFING" AND COHOST, "THE FIVE," FOX NEWS CHANNEL

Fox News Channel has mined Dana Perino's celebrity in all sorts of ways since she joined the team in 2009. The former White House press secretary for President George W. Bush anchors "The Daily Briefing" from 2 to 3 p.m. and cohosts "The Five" from 5 to 6 p.m. She also hosts "Dana Perino's Book Club" on Fox Nation, FNC's subscription-based streaming service, and cohosts a podcast, "I'll Tell You What," with FNC politics editor Chris Stirewalt.

On "The Daily Briefing," Perino takes on major issues facing Americans. For example, she had an exclusive interview with Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg in October, which focused on the state of social media, political advertising and regulation. During "The Five," she's part of a squabbling, entertaining roundtable ensemble with Greg Gutfeld, Juan Williams, Jesse Watters and a different guest each day.

Perino is prominently featured across FNC's election and political coverage during the current election cycle. She was a constant on panels breaking down developments during the 2018 midterm elections. In the 2016 political season, she cohosted special editions of "The Five" around the 2016 Republican and Democratic National Conventions, election night and President Trump's inauguration.

Perino founded Minute Mentoring, a women's leadership program, and is active in global health through the nonprofits One Campaign and Mercy Ships. She worked in communications at the U.S. Justice Department before moving to the Bush administration for seven years. When a TV journalist hurled shoes at Bush in a 2014 press conference in Bagdad, Perino got a black eye in the ensuing melee.

JACOB SOBOROFF

CORRESPONDENT AND ANCHOR, NBC

Jacob Soboroff is a Los Angeles-based MSNBC correspondent and anchor who reports across NBC News and MSNBC on wide-ranging issues — from immigration to climate change to politics.

He was one of the first journalists to tour two facilities in southern Texas housing migrant children separated from their families under the Trump administration's zero tolerance policy and received multiple awards for his coverage. A "Dateline NBC" special report he hosted explored the realities of life along both sides of the border. His reporting on the real-world impact of climate change took him 750 miles north of the Arctic Circle for a "Today Show" series of reports.

Ahead of the 2018 midterm elections, he asked Americans what they cared about most in a "Today Show" and MSNBC series of news reports as well as a related documentary. He traveled cross country for the 2016 elections and political conventions employing a signature style. *Variety* described him as "a hipper, latter-day Charles Kuralt."

In 2017, he was a part of NBC and MSNBC special coverage of the opioid crisis, the eclipse, the Charlottesville attack, Hurricane Irma, the Global Citizen Festival, the Las Vegas mass shooting and the California wildfires. He hosted two documentaries: "The Trump Equation," on factors that led to President Trump's victory, and "One Nation Over Dosed," about the drug fentanyl.

Before joining MSNBC in 2015, Soboroff hosted projects for YouTube, Vanity Fair, The Huffington Post, CNN, PBS and NPR. He is an advocate for protecting the right to vote through the organization Why Tuesday? and gave a TED Talk about election reform.

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DANA PERINO



JACOB SOBOROFF

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BILL HEMMER

HOST, "BILL HEMMER REPORTS," FOX NEWS CHANNEL

Bill Hemmer was just given his own show, which debuts Jan. 20, and a role leading breaking news across the Fox News Channel. He'll be moving from "America's Newsroom" — the 9 a.m.-to-noon weekday block, where he's been a coanchor since the show's debut in 2009. One sign of "Newsroom's" success came in 2018, when it was expanded from two hours to three.

"Bill Hemmer Reports" will take the 3 p.m. slot previously held by Shepard Smith, who resigned abruptly in October. (Smith had publicly tangled with primetime host Tucker Carlson.) Hemmer's new hour of hard news will debut just as the 2020 election season swings into high gear. "Leading our breaking news division with a signature hour has enormous value to me, personally, and to our audience," Hemmer said when the change was announced in December.

Hemmer will continue to utilize state-of-the-art technology including the "Bill-Board" — FNC's version of the interactive map. At the same time, he'll lead a team of producers and specialists prepared to interrupt regular programming with breaking news.

On "America's Newsroom," Hemmer interviewed foreign dignitaries, politicians and newsmakers and anchored all pre-noon breaking news coverage. He recently contributed to FNC's live coverage of the first open impeachment hearings against President Trump in the House of Representatives. Hemmer also coanchored the 2018 testimony of former Federal Bureau of Investigation director James Comey before the Senate Intelligence Committee.

When he joined Fox in 2005, Hemmer was immediately dispatched to Louisiana to cover Hurricane Katrina. Prior to FNC, Hemmer spent 10 years at CNN.



BILL HEMMER



LINSEY DAVIS

LINSEY DAVIS

CORRESPONDENT, ABC NEWS

Linsey Davis' rave reviews for co-moderating the September Democratic debate in Houston launched her onto the national stage. Calm and well-prepared, her tough questions marked the debate's pivotal moments, highlighting key issues for black voters in particular. One headline called Davis the real "MVP" of the night.

In one memorable exchange, Davis discussed race and segregation with former Vice President Joe Biden. Referring to a controversial comment he made years ago, Davis asked: "What responsibility do you think that Americans need to take to repair the legacy of slavery in our country?" It threw him. She also pressed Sen. Kamala Harris on her record as a prosecutor, noting her criminal justice reform plan contradicted some of her prior positions.

Davis started her TV news career at WTVH-TV Syracuse, N.Y. And she's been an ABC News correspondent for 13 years, reporting for "World News Tonight," "Good Morning America," "20/20" and "Nightline." Her 2016 election coverage included a series called "Running Mates," which featured her interviews with spouses of seven presidential candidates before the Iowa caucuses.

Politics aside, Davis' coverage of the Las Vegas massacre helped ABC News win an Emmy. She reported on charges against Harvey Weinstein as well as the MeToo movement more generally. She also had a rare interview with comedian Bill Cosby in the wake of dozens of sexual assault allegations. In addition, she covered Hurricane Katrina and reported from the Olympics in Turin and Athens.

Davis has won two Emmys and a regional Edward R. Murrow Award. She published her second children's book, "One Big Heart," in August 2019. ■

When Passion Pays Off

Educating Future Journalists Is Getting More Complex for the Best and Brightest Academics

By Nancy Dupont

Every semester, I require my media history students to watch “All the President’s Men.” And every semester, I am surprised at my students’ reactions. They can’t imagine that investigative reporting could have been done without Google, and they can’t contemplate doing a story and having to find a phone booth. (They make fun of the clothes, too.) But the movie makes an important point: to do good journalism, you have to knock on doors and ask questions face-to-face.

But journalism professors have to teach more than the basics today. Each new media has its own set of rules. The words and images that work on Facebook won’t work on Twitter. The digital world is exploding, with graphic design and analytics — even e-sports — taking over. All of these have to be taught in media, requiring the professor to keep up with every new media and every innovation.

We have to teach good writing, but we’re not English professors. We have to teach the way the government works, but we’re not political science professors. We have to teach the way the First Amendment came to be, but we’re not history professors. We have to teach how digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) cameras work and how video cameras work, but we’re not engineering professors. And we have to teach how all of this innovation changes society, but we’re not sociology professors.

All of this we have to do as journalism professors. The range of knowledge required to teach journalism now is dizzying, because media changes every day. At times it seems like too much for one person to do. Yet journalism teachers do it every day, and most of us love it. There is no greater reward for this love than our graduates getting jobs in the media, which leads to them loving it, too. When they establish great careers, they love their jobs even more.

But there’s a problem brewing in journalism education and in journalism in general. First there were the rumors of no jobs in journalism because newspapers were closing. Some parents didn’t want their children to go into journalism because they feared unemployment. (Actually, there are new jobs in digital media and marketing.)

Now the problem in journalism education is much worse. Some parents really believe that journalism is “the enemy of the American public,” and that is much harder to counter. People with that mindset are going to prevent their children from studying journalism in high



NANCY DUPONT

The range of knowledge required to teach journalism now is dizzying, because media changes every day.

school and college, and those students will never be exposed to the thrill of writing a lead story, or delivering a broadcast news report, or writing for a digital news site, or marketing for the media.

Despite those challenges, we still have to recruit the best and brightest to study media because they just might fall in love with it. As their professors have.

Most, if not all, journalism teachers had careers in the profession before they went into academics. They bring the love of the First Amendment, accurate information and neutrality with them into the classroom.

They also bring soft skills, like showing up on time, returning phone calls (yes, phone calls) and dressing professionally. Those are examples of lessons all students need to learn. They are essentials in journalism classrooms because the students will one day represent their employers, the public and their clients.

Most journalists respect themselves; otherwise they would never endure the long hours, working weekends and the lousy pay at the beginning of their careers. A few go into journalism education because they want to pass that passion to the next generation. And the veterans are passionate.

It is clearly not easy to teach journalism. It’s a tough job with lots of moving parts: the need to stay current with changing technology, to teach many skills and to pass on the basics. (Objectivity, fact-based journalism and the importance of media in a democracy are on top of that basics list.)

The top 10 educators highlighted in this issue of NewsPro represent the best of the best. They meet the challenge and do it with merit. It’s a complicated job, and you have to be dedicated and work hard to do it well. Some excel in this hard job, bringing passion and love to education. ■

Nancy Dupont is a professor of journalism and an adviser to the NewsWatch at the Student Media Center at the School of Journalism and New Media at the University of Mississippi. She is also an interest division representative to the Broadcast Education Association. She can be reached at (504) 460-6381 or nancymdupont@gmail.com.

Stellar Journalism Educators

What Does It Take to Get Top Marks From Students? Ten Academicians Exhibit a Varied Array of Attributes.

By Dinah Eng

When it comes to learning from the best, journalism students often cite the professors, advisers and college deans who taught them what it takes to succeed in the business. This year's NewsPro Noteworthy Journalism Educators were nominated by readers, students and members of leading journalist organizations. Here are the academicians, in alphabetical order, who were cited for their outstanding work.

DAVID BOARDMAN

Dean, Klein College of Media and Communication
Temple University

David Boardman is an award-winning journalist and veteran editor who joined the Klein College of Media and Communication at Temple University in 2013.

As a result of his initiatives, the program received the Equity and Diversity Award from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications in 2018. Temple University Television, part of Klein College, was also named the nation's best college television station by the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System in 2018. Boardman was previously executive editor and senior vice president of



The Seattle Times, which won four Pulitzer Prizes under his leadership. He has received numerous honors, including the National Ethics Award from the Society of Professional Journalists and the Goldsmith Prize in Investigative Reporting from Harvard University. He sits on the boards of several journalism organizations and was cited for his “approachable, down-to-earth, boyish enthusiasm and an uncanny ability to get things done on behalf of the news business.”

CHANDRA CLARK

Assistant Professor, College of Communication & Information Sciences
University of Alabama



Chandra Clark teaches broadcast journalism courses that are often tied to opportunities to serve the community through experiential learning. She has presented innovative teaching ideas at various academic conferences, including the Broadcast Education Association's annual Ignite teaching-tip workshop and the World Journalism Education Congress teaching-tip workshop. She also contributes to the training of news people at The Media Institute of the Caribbean. Clark was cited for “becoming an expert in crisis communication” and coproducing “First Informers,” a series of public service announcement/mini-documentary videos about how broadcasters cover natural disasters. Her work was screened at the National Association of Broadcasters' State Leadership Convention for several years as part of an effort that led to legislation designating media members as first responders.

PATTY LOEW

Professor, Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications
Co-Director, Center for Native American and Indigenous Research
Northwestern University

Patty Loew brings a wealth of experience to her teaching, with a
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Educators *continued from page 14*



background in producing documentaries and work as a broadcast journalist in public and commercial television. A member of the Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Ojibwe tribe, she is the author of four books, including “Native People of Wisconsin,” which is used as a social studies textbook in Wisconsin schools, and “Seventh Generation Earth Ethics,” a collection of biographies of Native American environmental

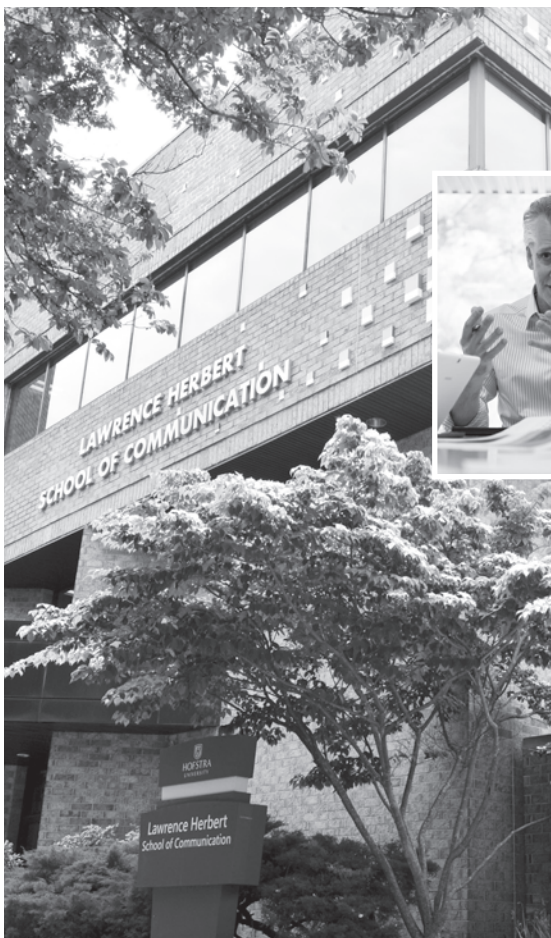
leaders. Her PBS documentary “Way of the Warrior” aired nationally in 2007 and 2011. Her outreach work focuses on Native American youth and digital storytelling.

MARK LUKASIEWICZ

*Dean, Lawrence Herbert School of Communication
Hofstra University*

Mark Lukasiewicz hit the ground running as dean of the Lawrence Herbert School of Communication at Hofstra University in 2018, initiating the “Hofstra Votes LIVE” project that created a multi-platform simulcast of the 2018 midterm elections, involving 200 students in the production. Lukasiewicz has won numerous awards throughout his career, including 10 Emmys, two Peabody Awards and the Grand Prize of the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism

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Educators *continued from page 15*

Awards. Previously senior vice president of specials at NBC News, Lukaszewicz also served as NBC News' first vice president of digital media. He was cited as believing "strongly that a liberal arts education, with an emphasis on ethics and writing, is a key to good journalism."

MINDY McADAMS

*Professor, Department of Journalism
Knight Chair, Journalism Technologies and the Democratic Process
University of Florida*



Mindy McAdams is an online journalism innovator. She teaches production and theory courses about interactive media at the University of Florida and has trained hundreds of journalists in digital skills at U.S. newspapers, state newspaper associations and other organizations. During 2011 and 2012, she served as a Fulbright Senior Scholar, with a teaching grant that took her to Indonesia for 10 months. She also received a 2004-05 Fulbright for teaching and researching press

freedom in Malaysia. McAdams has led journalist training workshops in South Africa, Argentina, Vietnam, Laos and Bulgaria on missions for the U.S. State Department. Her book "Flash Journalism: How to Create Multimedia News Packages" was published by Focal Press/Elsevier in 2005. Prior to moving to Florida, she worked as a journalist for various organizations, including Time Magazine and The Washington Post.

ALLISSA RICHARDSON

*Assistant Professor of Journalism
Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism
University of Southern California*

Allissa Richardson is a pioneer in mobile journalism. She launched the MOJO Lab, the first smartphone-only college newsroom on the campus of Morgan State University in Baltimore in 2010. As a consultant, she designed mobile journalism workshops for The Washington Post, GlobalGirl Media, Black Girls Code and the U.S. Embassies for Morocco and South Africa. She researches how African Americans use mobile and social media to produce innovative

forms of journalism, as well as historical contributions of the black press. Her upcoming book "Bearing Witness While Black: African Americans, Smartphones and the New Protest #Journalism" (Oxford University Press), due out in May 2020, explores the lives of mobile journalist-activists who documented the Black Lives Matter movement using only smartphones and Twitter from 2014 to 2018.



MAGGIE RIVAS-RODRIGUEZ

*Professor, School of Journalism
Moody College of Communication
The University of Texas at Austin*

Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez was cited for her volunteer efforts to bring greater diversity to news media. She helped found the National Association of Hispanic Journalists in 1982 and launched one of the organization's most successful student projects, a convention newspaper produced by college students and professionals. Her research interests include the intersection of oral history and journalism. She founded the Voces Oral History Project, (formerly the U.S. Latino & Latina World War II Oral History Project) in 1999, which is designed to reach audiences ranging from school children to the general public. Rivas-Rodriguez was a reporter at The Boston Globe, WFAA-TV Dallas and The Dallas Morning News. She also served as Morning News U.S.-Mexico border bureau chief, based in El Paso, before earning her Ph.D. in communication from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1998 as a Freedom Forum fellow.



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Educators *continued from page 16*

COREY TAKAHASHI

*Associate Professor, Magazine, News and Digital Journalism, Communications and Online Master's Program
S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications
Syracuse University*

Corey Takahashi specializes in multimedia and multiplatform storytelling, teaching undergraduate and graduate students from multidisciplinary backgrounds. He co-created and helped launch the first Newhouse Mobile Magazine Competition, a digital editorial contest modeled on Silicon Valley hackathons, and has developed several new classes for the school. A founding editor of the music magazine *Blaze*, he later worked as an editor for *Vibe*, has written for numerous national publications and is a longtime cultural contributor to NPR. Takahashi was in the first group of professors nationally selected for YouTube's experimental Educator Lab in Los Angeles, and his current research focuses on generational shifts in media and culture around the world.



TIM UNDERHILL

*Associate Lecturer of Telecommunications
Department of Telecommunications and Department of Journalism
College of Communication Information and Media
Ball State University*

Tim Underhill teaches courses in visual storytelling, video production and news writing. He has worked for network TV affiliates in Rockford, Ill., Grand Rapids, Mich., and Indianapolis, Ind. In addition to his work as a teacher, he continues to freelance for various networks, including ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN and ESPN. In 1997, Underhill was named to the faculty of the News Video Workshop, sponsored by the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA), and has earned awards from numerous organizations, including the NPAA, the Society of Professional Journalists and the Television Academy. He was cited for always

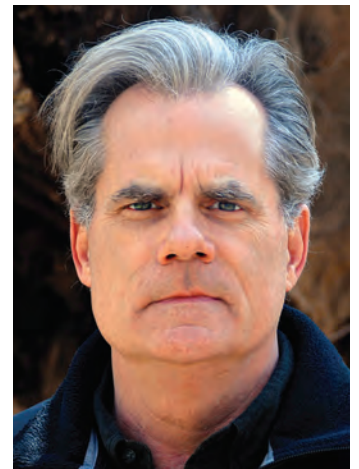


having an open door to students; being responsive to their questions and concerns; and “grading that starts with a baseline of what professional work should look like.” That’s helped “students realize their potential, and be as picky with their own work as an employer would be in the real world.”

SCOTT WALLACE

*Associate Professor
Department of Journalism
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
University of Connecticut*

Scott Wallace has covered the environment, vanishing cultures and conflict over land and resources around the world for 35 years. He’s worked for CBS News, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Newsweek* and *National Geographic*. In addition, Wallace is the author of “*The Unconquered: In Search of the Amazon’s Last Uncontacted Tribes*,” a personal account of his journey deep into the Amazon rainforest to track a tribe of mysterious archers living in extreme isolation, without making contact with them. In addition to his appointment in the journalism department, Wallace is an affiliate faculty member in the University of Connecticut’s Institute of Latino/a, Caribbean and Latin American Studies, and he’s the recipient of The Explorers Club’s Lowell Thomas Award for excellence in reporting from the field. His nominator wrote: “He brings visceral real-world experiences to those whom he teaches and mentors... He always finds a way to make time to educate, guide and pull up the next generation of journalists.” ■



CONGRATULATIONS
to **MINDY MCADAMS**
Knight Chair, Journalism and the Democratic Process, and winner of the 2019 SPJ Distinguished Teaching in Journalism Award, for being recognized as a Notable Journalism Educator in 2020.

UF College of Journalism and Communications
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Stepping Up to the Funding ‘Plate’

Google, Facebook and Others Are Bankrolling News-Related Projects

By Debra Kaufman

Forget about funding from one foundation. Instead, journalists have an opportunity to seek out fellowships and grants from an increasing variety of resources. That is due in part to Facebook and Google’s initiatives related to the news. And there’s also been growth in the number of grants from private and family foundations that support independent journalism.

“We have seen a rise in interest among foundations and philanthropists in funding local news.”

– Teresa Gorman

Facebook and Google’s initiatives come at a time when both are facing intense regulatory scrutiny. As has been widely reported, the two internet behemoths have been accused of spreading fake news, and, most importantly, dominating digital advertising, which has had a direct impact on the health and sustainability of local news outlets. Whether their grants and fellowships will be enough to keep indie local news alive is a matter of debate, but both have committed \$300 million each towards funding local journalism initiatives.

The Facebook Journalism Project has partnered with the Lenfest Institute for Journalism to fund 23 recipients of the Community Network grants. They support local news projects that aim to build community and improve the health of local news media.

The Local News Membership Accelerator was also designed to help publishers from local U.S. newspapers learn from each other and coaches about building audiences. The three-month program

brought together 17 news organizations and allowed in-person collaborations three times over a three-month period.

Led by news industry veteran Tim Griggs, the accelerator was organized by the Lenfest Institute and funded by The Facebook Journalism Project. In its third session, the Accelerator project hopes to connect 100 community grant winners with coaches for the year.

“The Facebook Journalism Project is our way to more intentionally and officially work with the industry to understand

how it could best serve publishers and journalists looking to connect with communities,” said Facebook Local News Partnerships lead Josh Mabry.

Separately, Facebook’s Instagram site and the Reynolds Journalism Institute have partnered to provide fellowships to three students at the University of Missouri’s School of Journalism. The students are tasked with helping three metro newsrooms refine their Instagram strategy.

Google has established a unit with similar goals. It launched the Google News Initiative (GNI) in 2018 with the stated goal of helping “publishers earn revenue and combat fake news.” The Innovation Challenge, unveiled in May 2019, gave grants totaling \$5.3 million for 34 projects, mainly for grassroots efforts and small newsrooms located in 17 states and provinces.

Another part of the effort, the Google News Initiative Fellowship, places journalism students in newsrooms or media organizations around the world. And the GNI Newsroom Leadership Program, a partnership with Columbia University’s Journalism School, focuses on rising journalists in the Asia-Pacific region.

Funders like Google, Facebook and Lenfest are helping to fuel a growing trend of partnerships between those holding the purse strings, noted Lenfest’s Joseph Lichterman, manager of editorial and digital strategy. “[By doing so, we can] increase the reach and make the money go further,” he explained.

“We’re not experts in program design or grant making,” added

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JOSH MABRY


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The Synthetic-News Danger

Fast, Cheap Fake News Campaigns Are Made Possible With Artificial Intelligence

By Mike Cavender

Fake News. By now, it's become a hackneyed phrase. But it's one President Trump still uses to describe stories that aren't fake, but just ones he doesn't like.

Recently, the Florida chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) decided it had enough of Trump's constant attacks. So chapter officials applied for a U.S. Trademark of the term. To bolster the reasoning for why it should receive it, the chapter launched a website designed to help people identify fake news. We don't yet know if the trademark office will grant the application. However, while it is pending, SPJ can send cease-and-desist letters (complete with the threat of a lawsuit) to Trump to put him on notice. The effort was tongue-in-cheek, but the chapter president said it was a "joke with a point."

Let's be honest, it's frustrating to be continually subjected to the president's verbal tirades. We're tired of hearing how the "corrupt" media are "the enemy of the American people." But as producers of news — and for consumers of it — there's an even more insidious threat facing journalism and democracy about which we should be concerned. That is the manufacture and distribution of real fake news by those who truly have bad intentions.

We all saw the result of Russia's involvement in our elections. It included the creation of thousands of phony Facebook posts,

Twitter tweets and bogus web pages. Contained within many of them were fake stories designed to look like real news. That became clear when Robert Mueller released his report after nearly two years of investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 campaign.

Now technology has evolved to the point where the next onslaught of foreign election interference could be even harder to discern and, as a result, even more damaging to our election process. One of the ways it may happen is through the



MIKE CAVENDER

manipulation of artificial intelligence (AI).

"Large-scale synthesized disinformation is not only possible but is cheap and credible," Cornell University AI researcher Sarah Kreps, as quoted in an October 2019 *The Wall Street Journal* article.

Kreps noted that there are new tools powered by AI that can generate a fake news story in seconds. Such is the current state of

artificial intelligence development, and advances in the field are only making it easier and faster.

To be sure, automated story-writing is not new. For the past five years, the Associated Press has been using commercially available software to generate stories about run-of-the-mill corporate earnings. But that program is far simpler than what is becoming possible today with the advancements in AI.

The U.S. Defense Department has launched a program called Semantic Fortress to defend against automated disinformation attacks.

One of the latest entries in the field of synthetic-text generation tools is a program called GPT-2. It can produce fake stories (and other types of writings) by drawing on its storehouse of 40 gigabytes of text, which span 8 million websites. It was introduced at the Open AI conference in San Francisco in February 2019.

In October 2019, *The Journal* reported on some impressive, albeit alarming, early test results: "The GPT-2 system worked so well that in an August survey of 500 people, a majority found its synthetic articles credible. In one survey group, 72% found a GPT-2 [generated] article credible, compared with 83% who found a genuine article credible."

Even though this technology probably hasn't been used to create fake news yet, the concern is real enough that the U.S. Defense Department has launched a program called Semantic Fortress to defend against automated disinformation attacks.

Since GPT-2 was introduced, *The Journal* reported other AI researchers have released similar tools that can be used by bad

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A News-Bias Report Card

Frank Opinions in Casper, Wyo., Suggest Ways to Win Back Public Trust

By Rod Hicks

Reporters can spend weeks, or even months, poring over complicated documents and spreadsheets to uncover consequential stories about airline safety or drinking water quality or tax proposals. It's unglamorous work that's done outside of public view.

But people do see journalists on TV yelling embarrassing questions at President Trump, or they read negative stories in the mainstream press that contradict what they've seen on Fox News. And that, more than the tedious, inconspicuous review of public records, helps shape Americans' unflattering perception of the press.

"Journalists will never change their tone or positions because they believe they are right and superior to us," said Noreen Stutheit.



ROD HICKS

She was one of 36 residents in Casper, Wyo., who participated in a six-month media trust project I conducted last year in my role as journalist on call for the Society of Professional Journalists.

The study, "Media Trust & Democracy: The Casper Project," provided forums for participants to explain why they abandoned the mainstream press or stopped believing much of what it reported. Our aim was to help them become more discerning about the news they receive. And it also gave us some insights that may be useful to news organizations in developing strategies for rebuilding trust.

Hearing Stutheit and the others speak candidly and passionately about issues they have with the news media was one of the most rewarding experiences in my 30-plus years as a journalist. I listened, resisting the temptation to challenge or correct unsubstantiated or misinformed opinions. I needed to hear their unfiltered assessments of the news media, which was trusted by just 41% of Americans in a 2019 Gallup survey, down from 72% in 1976.

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PHOTO: CAYLA NIMMO/CASPER STAR-TRIBUNE



CASPER RESIDENT DAN ALLEN SPEAKS ONE-ON-ONE WITH HAYES BROWN, WORLD NEWS EDITOR FOR BUZZFEED NEWS, FOLLOWING THE LAST SESSION OF THE CASPER PROJECT.

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The participants didn't all share the same political ideology, and discussions during the five two-hour sessions were tense at times. They wanted to be heard. They cared enough to sign up for meetings that started last winter and stretched into the summer.

Some may have read stories I helped shape during the nearly 10 years I worked as an editor at the Associated Press. I hope fellow journalists will read their words and consider them while reporting and crafting stories.

Here are a few more:

- Bob Gervais: "Personally, I do not read news articles that should be in the opinion pages, and there seems to be more and more of them."
- Arianne Braughton: "The media is so intent on being the first person to have the story out ... that accuracy and verification get pushed to the wayside."
R.C. Johnson: "It has a white perspective. It has a white orientation. It values whiteness more than anything else."
- Chuck Hawley: "It's really not what you report; it's what you don't report. When the stories are positive towards conservative ideas, they get buried, or they get ignored."

I was particularly interested in the comments from Hawley and Johnson. They're both right. The mainstream media do overlook

or downplay many legitimate stories that conservatives would care about, and most news coverage is filtered through the values, experiences and culture of predominantly white journalists.

On the other hand, I don't agree — as several in the group suggested — that reporters and editors deliberately avoid conservative themes because they're at odds with the "liberal agenda" journalists allegedly are expected to follow. What seems more likely is journalists are drawn to stories that resonate less among conservatives.

Also, far more liberals than conservatives choose this profession. In a 2013 survey by Indiana University, four times as many journalists identified themselves as liberal than conservative.

Among those surveyed, 28.1% were Democrats, and 7.1% were Republicans. The survey also reported that 50.1% consider themselves Independents.

It seems undeniable that the ideology that shapes a person's worldview would, however insidiously, occasionally influence how he or she pursues a story — or, as Hawley suggests, whether certain stories would be considered at all.

"The industry is not effectively addressing what it means that there is a lack of political diversity in the newsroom," according to Joy Mayer, director of Trusting News, a project funded by The Knight Foundation and American Press Institute, along with several other organizations. I interviewed Mayer for the Casper Project report.

Because of that, reporters and newsroom managers should actively seek to identify bias in reporting and story selection.

The white-perspective issue that Johnson raises has been talked about for decades within the industry. Yet, a half-century after the Kerner Commission found news organizations had been "shockingly backward" in seeking, hiring and promoting African Americans, the industry remains overwhelmingly white.

The commission's report suggested linkage between employing black journalists and achieving the "legitimate" expectations of black citizens that their communities be fairly and thoroughly covered.

A 2018 Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data found that not only are journalists more likely to be white and male, they're even more white and more male than U.S. workers overall. According to the research, 77% of newsroom employees were white, compared to 65% of all U.S. workers. What's more, 61% of journalists were men, compared to 53% of all workers.

Washington Post media critic Margaret Sullivan, a former top newspaper editor, aptly explained the value of having diverse newsroom staffs. "My experience leading a newsroom showed me, time and time again, that staff diversity results in better and different coverage," she said.

"When the group is truly diverse, the nefarious groupthink that makes a publication predictable and, at times, unintentionally biased, is much more likely to be diminished," Sullivan added.

Given the importance of this issue, particularly as the country's seven-decade decline in white population accelerates, I'm thankful to Johnson for pointing it out for fellow Casper group participants. ■

Rod Hicks is journalist on call for the Society of Professional Journalists. He can be reached at rhicks@spj.org.

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Remixing News Stories

Experiments to Enhance TV Journalism Are Underway at Northeastern University and Some Stations

By Danae Bucci

It's no secret that news organizations constantly face a variety of very immediate existential threats. Yet hidden behind the gloomy headlines is an overlooked but crucial nuance: while print newspapers are struggling, even folding, local news broadcasting is still largely profitable.

Despite all of the technological disruption, television remains the primary pathway for news consumption for many Americans. Yet there is no denying that viewership has steadily declined; if trends hold, broadcast could see a newspaper industry-like crisis. Given that, newsrooms are having to decide whether doing more of the same will suffice for now, or whether they must pivot toward new strategies to both hold their existing — but increasingly content-saturated — audience and to attract new, younger viewers.

Around the country, there are some important experiments now underway that are testing such new strategies.

Northeastern University School of Journalism's Reinventing Local TV News Project is exploring new ways to ensure broadcast television will be viable for years to come, demonstrating both why and how every local station should embrace innovation. (I am involved with the project as a research assistant.)

In the first project phase, completed in 2018, researchers conducted controlled experiments to see how they might “remix” stories using various elements that often characterize web-native video, from more animation and different sound elements to greater explanatory context and background depth in segments. The results showed great promise.

In the new phase, the Northeastern research project is leveraging its prior findings and new knowledge to field “clinical trials” in partnership with WLS in Chicago and WCVB in Boston. Researchers want to know precisely how animation, graphics and data visualization can be used to make stories more engaging.

Northeastern has embedded research fellows at WLS and WCVB, where the new hires serve as visual content producers whose job it is to supplement reporters in their storytelling process by using different techniques that were not otherwise being used in the stations.

GRASSROOTS EXPERIMENTS

As the Northeastern research project gets off the ground with WLS and WCVB, the “green shoots” of similar innovative efforts are sprouting in other stations, putting cutting-edge storytelling techniques to the test through reporting that has won national and regional Edward R. Murrow Awards.

Chris Vanderveen, director of reporting at KUSA in Denver, is doing an entire series boiling down complex, data-heavy subjects using animation.

“I wanted to see really what we could do with a totally new concept

as far as television news is concerned,” he said in a recent interview.

KUSA is one of the nation's more innovative local TV news stations, in part due to its willingness to modify elements of newscasts. Vanderveen says that being “different” is difficult for stations, and he admits that animation and graphics have traditionally been seen as “gimmicky and goofy.”

But for the veteran reporter, animation has proven a vital and creative tool for addressing an increasingly complicated world. He says animation allows him to “boil down somewhat complex” topics for viewers.

Vanderveen believes that efforts to expand the storytelling vocabulary have been missing from local TV news for years: “Forever ... and ever local television news has been defined by just dumbing down news and feeding the audience really easy-to-digest kinds of stories.”

And with that, Vanderveen believes, the TV industry has alienated entire generations of people, who may have different expectations for video in terms of content and style.

Historically, when newsrooms have tried to find ways to attract younger audiences, producers and reporters have turned to what might be called “what's trending” stories, celebrity gossip or just surface-level news. Yet TV journalists are realizing that it's not enough.

“I think we still have a ways to go in terms of understanding a newer audience,” says KUSA news director Megan Jurgemeyer. She

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Remixing News Stories continued from page 23

says she lets her viewers decide how they want their stories to be told — and doesn't assume she knows what people want to see. "I think that what's important is to be open to feedback from viewers who aren't like us to understand how we connect with them — and being flexible and open to adjusting so that we can connect with them."

Vanderveen believes most stations don't adopt this more open philosophy. "Typically, big decisions are being made by people way outside of the demographic of that audience," says Vanderveen. He notes that news stations falsely believe a younger audience can't digest complex subjects, and complexity will turn them off and lead them not to watch.

"If these people don't start watching us, we don't have a future. It's that simple," he says. "I don't believe — and I never will believe — that you get a younger audience by talking down to them." Vanderveen says one way to stop this perpetual "patronizing" is to directly challenge the audience — and the conventional wisdom — and tackle stories that are often seen as too difficult to tell in the current broadcast news model.

Similarly, Brendan Keefe, chief investigative reporter of "The Reveal" news show on WXIA in Atlanta, believes that using experimental techniques to tell complex stories is a direction all newsrooms should be pursuing.

"Sometimes I get my best inspiration from an 11-year-old who knows the editing system better than the adults do," Keefe says, referring to YouTube videos.

Having the capacity to find inspiration quickly and learn techniques anywhere, at any time, has empowered Keefe to be able to create stronger pieces. He conceptualizes, shoots and edits all of his pieces. He says it limits station bureaucracy and the challenge of having to convince a team to accept new ideas.

Both Vanderveen and Keefe say they believe that segment or package length should not be the limiting factor in telling a good story. Indeed, KUSA and WXIA tell stories that push the five-minute mark, or beyond. For example, "The Reveal" on WXIA is a weekly half-hour investigative news show airing at 6 p.m. Oftentimes its episodes cover only one story in the entire show.

At KUSA, Vanderveen has been able to cover a complex, running series on medical bill-related subjects for more than four years. But

only certain topics benefit from such in-depth coverage. He says that "complex subjects that could be boiled down to a few lines to help [viewers] better understand it" are often best told with experimental elements such as animation.

"I will admit they do take extra time to create," says Jurgemeyer. But if a story warrants more time, she'll give it that. "I think we used to be in this place in the TV news business of trying to cram as many stories as we could into a newscast," she says. "Sometimes we miss the point of being able to give a broader explanation to the background of a story or to the bigger impact of a story."

With animation, "I'm not limited by what video I have. I'm not limited by anything — I can do a story on anything I want to."

— Chris Vanderveen

VIRTUES OF ANIMATION

KUSA and WXIA operate on the belief that data-heavy stories — content that's long been seen by the broadcast industry as too complex for television news — can also be aided by animation. Animation as a field has grown, too, as the software has become more sophisticated and more efficient to use. The online community of practitioners and learners also makes it easier to pick up techniques and rapidly innovate and prototype.

Vanderveen says that animation provides greater narrative flexibility, and he never has to worry about which visuals he has to pair with his scripts. "With animation, I can write the lines that I want to," he notes, "and then the animator just simply comes in and augments it with a visual or visual theme. Therefore I'm not limited by what video I have. I'm not limited by anything — I can do a story on anything I want to."

Of course, a chief concern for stations is cost and return-on-investment when drawing on precious resources. But Vanderveen and Keefe say that their projects have cost their stations little-to-no extra money. Instead, it's about creatively leveraging the resources

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Remixing News Stories continued from page 24

“We’re caught in this dynamic tension between innovation pulling us toward something new, and legacy revenue streams and habits ... pulling us in another direction.”

– Brendan Keefe

they already have and rethinking the boundaries between different newsroom jobs and roles. “For me, it’s whatever tool you need to enhance understanding, so I don’t really use names or [job] titles or anything like that to sort of limit creativity,” Keefe says. “I think a lot of people are still saying, ‘Are you a reporter; are you a photographer; are you an editor?’ Well no, I’m a storyteller.”

Keefe says that as he has shed the limitations associated with traditional job roles, he has been able to tell more multifaceted stories.

“If you’re storytelling, then you’re not bound by your title, and you can do whatever it takes to tell a good story,” he says.

KUSA’s Vanderveen says he was able to create his animation through the already-existing graphics department in his station’s ownership group, TEGNA. The only drawback is that the team cannot spend the time necessary to pump out the animation quickly enough to feature them in every newscast. “They’re not working on



BRENDAN KEEFE OF WXIA ATLANTA RECENTLY WON A NATIONAL EDWARD R. MURROW AWARD FOR HIS STORY “FLIPPED: SECRETS INSIDE A CORRUPT POLICE DEPARTMENT.”

this full time,” he says. “They have multiple other projects they’re working on any given time, for the day-to-day content.”

No one can be sure how important new visual elements and animation will ultimately be to the long-term future of broadcast. But the research shows that hard news stories that utilized creative storytelling techniques resonated with viewers of all ages. They found them more interesting and visually appealing.

Despite the promise, there remains significant resistance. In an industry that has seen little change in storytelling formats in recent decades, it can be hard to embrace change and to see why evolution is necessary.

“We’re caught in this dynamic tension between innovation pulling us toward something new, and legacy revenue streams and habits, and viewer habits ... pulling us in another direction,” Keefe says.

Keefe and Vanderveen’s efforts are making an impact. Keefe recently won two national Edward R. Murrow Awards. One for excellence in innovation, for the “Reveal” series on WXIA. And a second in the investigative reporting category for a piece called “Flipped: Secrets Inside a Corrupt Police Department.” Vanderveen won two regional awards.

The year ahead will see more industry-based testing of the proposition that creative storytelling can pay off, both through formal research like Northeastern’s Reinventing Local TV News Project and through grassroots experiments by a new wave of innovative TV journalists. What they find may have big implications for the country’s roughly 700 other stations — and for the future of news more generally. ■

Danae Bucci is a journalism student at Northeastern University and a research assistant on Northeastern’s Reinventing Local TV News Project.

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Funding *continued from page 18*



DORRINE MENDOZA

Facebook Local News Partnerships manager Dorrine Mendoza in explaining why teaming up with Lenfest made a lot of sense. “They helped us design a program focused on community building and local news with some elements of financial sustainability.”

Lenfest Institute for Journalism is fairly new to grant giving. The nonprofit was founded in 2016, when H.F. “Gerry” Lenfest, the owner of the Philadelphia Inquirer, donated his stake in the newspaper to the institute, with the goal of re-inventing local journalism.

When he made the donation, he essentially remade the Inquirer into a “live lab” for testing ways to evolve local news, according to Lichterman. “We like to think of ourselves as a startup, with a broader mission for sustainability of local journalism,” he said.

Lenfest’s partnership with Facebook is focused on community engagement. “We’ve done two rounds of funding, and the third round just wrapped up,” Lichterman said during an interview in early November. “With grant money from Facebook, we administer the grants to other organizations and help promote them.”

Those organizations include The Knight Institute, co-founded 2016 by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and Columbia University; the Democracy Fund, a bipartisan independent foundation established by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar; and the News Integrity Commission, launched in 2017, a project of the Craig

Newmark Graduate School of Journalism Foundation under the auspices of its Tow-Knight Center for Entrepreneurial Journalism.

They help administer grants related to audience engagement tools. “We’ve funded people all over the country,” Lichterman said. He also noted the involvement of “a small cohort” of other funders, including private or family foundations. For example, Lenfest partnered with the William Penn Foundation and National Geographic to fund collaborative reporting on the Delaware and Ohio watersheds.

The Democracy Fund has other projects that are separate from its Lenfest collaborations, according to Teresa Gorman, senior program associate for the organization’s Local News in the Public Square program. “Partnerships are important, and we do a lot of them with grantees and foundations. There’s always been that focus.”

However, Gorman says it’s becoming even more apparent that partnerships provide an opportunity to “use each others’ strengths.” For example, Democracy Fund helped bankroll the Colorado Media Project with the Gates Media Foundation.

“I hate to call it a trend, because I hope it continues,” says Gorman. “But we have seen a rise in interest among foundations and philanthropists in funding local news and understanding how important it is. Local news is trusted and provides connections.” ■



TERESA GORMAN

Synthetic-News Danger *continued from page 20*

actors to generate false stories. Programs in production or on the drawing board are already being trained on much more sophisticated language usage. While some experts say these aren’t likely to be used for malicious purposes because they still lack the ability to sense the nuances often present in writing generated by humans, the programs may eventually become “smart” enough to fabricate believable disinformation.

So where does this leave us in the increasingly challenging world of combatting fake and dishonest information?

What we know for sure is that technology doesn’t stand still. Artificial intelligence is an amazing force that is already dramatically changing our lives — often in ways we don’t even realize. And faster and better tools are being developed all the time.

As technology evolves to quickly produce and widely disseminate

slanted, phony stories, there will also be programs able to ferret out fake news. However, the detection capabilities must keep pace with language-generation capabilities used by the bad actors.

We know there are malevolent individuals bent on disrupting American democracy who are sophisticated enough to use highly advanced technology and have the means to do so. Foreign state actors, supported by governments that want to do us harm, fit that bill precisely.

Given what may lie ahead, we all need to sharpen our guard against what could become the next generation of fake news purveyors. On the part of journalists, that will require even more diligent and careful fact-checking of anything that raises a question. ■

Mike Cavender is executive director emeritus of the Radio Television Digital News Association. He can be reached at mikec@rtdna.org.

Countering the Attacks

Local Responses to the Global News Crisis Are Needed

By Frank Sesno

“Who will tell the truth about the free press?”

More demand than query, the question came from The New York Times in an extraordinary lead editorial in November that took withering aim at President Donald Trump for undermining journalism at home and abroad. The president has tweeted the term “fake news” more than 600 times, the paper noted. His anti-press attacks have encouraged others to follow suit. More than 40 governments have echoed his accusations of “fake news.”

“When an American president attacks the independent press, despots rush to imitate his example,” the Times observed.

Sadly, this is by now an old story. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has been chronicling the crisis, and its reporting serves as a geography lesson in efforts to discredit, control and punish those who seek to inform the public.

“Duterte threatens to shut down Philippine broadcaster ABS-CBN,” reads one CPJ headline. Another proclaims: “Hungary’s control unprecedented in EU, joint mission finds.” And from a country embraced by Trump despite its grisly track record: “Several journalists arrested in crackdown in Saudi Arabia.” In the United States, reporters now worry about their safety. Some have personal security when they cover major political events. A growing number of newsrooms are now locked behind scanners and security guards.

It’s time for news organizations to rise to the challenge, and while the crisis is playing out globally, the first response should start locally.

Local and regional news have been under siege for years, due to both economic as well as public perception issues. The University of North Carolina’s Hussman School of Journalism and Media reported in its 2018 “Expanding News Desert” study that since 2004, some 1,800 papers have disappeared in the U.S., and newspaper jobs have been cut in half.

But local news is hometown news. It is relevant. It matters. This is where people find out how their tax dollars are spent, decide whether the school budget will be cut, debate zoning ordinances, push back against incompetence, interact with police, grieve after a tragedy — or celebrate the winning team. This is where journalism is real, facts are personal, reporters are neighbors and credibility still counts.

A 2018 Poynter Institute study revealed that 76% of Americans have a “great deal” or “fair amount” of trust in their local television news. It showed similar positive attitudes toward the local newspaper: 73%. Journalism must build on that trust to explain its role in keeping communities informed, engaged and honest.

But this cannot be business-as-usual marketing. I’m not talking

about self-serving promotion with ad buys or online bravado about the exalted importance of intrepid reporters and the First Amendment. Instead, I’m advocating clear and constant, plain-English efforts to make journalism’s mission understandable and accessible.

Sustained and creative engagement is needed if quality reporting is to survive because, as the Times pointed out, “The capacity of news organizations to produce this kind of journalism — and to reach an audience that will listen — is contingent and fragile.”

There are several ways that local and regional news organizations — understaffed and overstretched as they are — can convey this message. They can open up their processes by explaining how stories are generated and pursued. They can ask citizens for story ideas and assign a reporter to do them, even occasionally if resources will allow. They can engage citizens through events, talks and online discussions. They can explain why accountability matters.

News organizations should also embrace and embody transparency by revealing some of the decision-making behind the news. They can explain how they work with sources and documents. They can provide context about why a story is significant. They can highlight “facts” in graphics and sidebars so news consumers can view the raw materials of reporting.

They can publish their guidelines on what reporters and editors can say and do across social media.

News organizations should get out of their defensive crouch. They must abandon their virtuous but ineffective just-do-the-job attitude. At a polarized time when journalism is under constant assault by those in power and through social media, it has no choice but to assert and explain itself.

The president has been relentless in his attacks on the Times, calling it dishonest, insisting it is “failing,” ordering federal agencies to drop their subscriptions to the paper, along with The Washington Post. He has called reporters enemies of the people, weak, and “sleaze.” The insults, demonizing accusations and up-is-down newspeak are meant to distract and confuse, to devalue the news itself. The strategy works. George Orwell would be incredulous.

Local and regional news organizations have an outsized role in addressing the crisis head on. They have access and influence. Taking advantage of the precious trust they enjoy, they can equip the public to distinguish between legitimate criticism and self-serving attacks that make more noise than sense. ■

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