



NEWS IN EDUCATION

NIE 4-Week Fake News Lesson Series

Appendix: Real Journalists Share

We asked real journalists for their take on some of the things we've covered in this series. They are the best source for input, advice, and wisdom in the world of media literacy. Here are some of their thoughts:

What is something you wish students knew about the media/news?

That ethics, particularly in places such as newsrooms that grew out of the newspaper industry, are talked about in every single journalistic decision. Our reputations are far and away the most important thing we consider in every news judgment call we make. *-Derek Donovan, Community Engagement Editor & member of the Editorial Board, The Kansas City Star*

That some entities make it their mission to be as fair, accurate and transparent as possible in their reporting, but this is a challenging task. We are human and we have biases that sometimes cause us to see things that aren't there or not see things that are there. We operate under conditions that we often have no control over, such as deadlines, availability of sources, privacy laws, and in recent years, declining revenues that have caused us to cut back on reporters and editors that find news and vet it before it gets published. *-Dan Kane, Staff Writer, The News & Observer, Raleigh*

What is the difference between a reporter and a journalist?

I'm old school in that I believe a person is only a journalist if they have had training to report fairly with multiple sources, both sides of the issue, and without sensationalizing the facts. I'd expect a real journalist to have a degree from a reputable journalism program or a degree in a related field like political science, English or history and then training with a mainstream, reputable media source. If they are not properly trained, then they are not journalists because they have no knowledge of journalistic ethics, how to check facts or the process needed to report news fairly. Anybody can put up a website, proclaim themselves a blogger and begin posting whatever they want to promote. So check out who the information is coming from. *-Deborah Jackson, Print Desk Director, The News & Observer (Raleigh) and The Herald-Sun (Durham)*

What do you do in a given day?

As a reporter on the investigative team, I spend my days reading documents and talking to sources to find stories involving questionable behavior, troublesome trends or sometimes a fascinating development that has so far stayed under peoples' radar screens. *-Dan Kane, News & Observer*

The journalist identifies a topic, learns as much as possible about it, and then writes a story or makes a video explaining it to the audience as well as possible. *-Derek Donovan, Kansas City Star*

Describe an op-ed vs. a report.

An op-ed is a commentary and inherently contains a point of view from the author. A straight news report, which is what the news side does, makes every attempt to relay the facts of news events accurately, fairly and impartially. In an op-ed, authors also use facts, but they choose the ones that help buttress their point. There's no such thing as a "biased" op-ed, because an opinion is baked in. *-Derek Donovan, Kansas City Star*

Tell us about fact vs. opinion in the media.

Fact is direct news reporting. Mayor A announces a new initiative. Opinion journalists (columnists, editorial board members, commentators) share their opinions about that fact, with a variety of other contexts. *-Derek Donovan, Kansas City Star*

What is one piece of advice you would give to people in navigating the news and media today?

Don't just check news sites that share your views. Keep an open mind and check liberal and conservative news sites as well as those with a solid reputation for checking facts before they report them. If you're reporting a story, get input from people on both sides of the story. *-Deborah Jackson, News & Observer, Herald-Sun*

Look for news from providers that are transparent as possible in their reporting, identifying and vetting sources that are at the core of the news that's happening, and making sure that anyone seriously impacted has an opportunity to respond. I'd also add providers that show a willingness to correct when there's an error. *-Dan Kane, News & Observer*

Trust established sources. And realize that huge volumes of "news" out there from sources you don't know are coming directly from the people involved in that news. It's public relations, not journalism. *-Derek Donovan, Kansas City Star*
