

Understanding News Media: News Consumers & Creators in the Digital Age

The internet and other emerging technologies have changed news media dramatically. Increasingly, the average citizen is both a consumer and creator of news.

◆ Blog ◆

To write entries in, add material to, or maintain an online journal - weblog

Whether through a blog, social media or a comment posted to a more traditional news source, the reader is a growing part of the news communication process.

People “tweet” or capture streaming video and then post to the internet. Others share and link to it, updating the world almost instantaneously on what has happened. This interactive participation is good and has made it faster and easier to capture breaking news stories.

However, our communication technologies don’t guard against misinformation, plagiarism, propaganda or lies. As news consumers we can not assume everything we find online is true. Consider whether what you’re reading seems believable. If not, try to verify it with one or more other sources. Check to see who wrote or posted the information. Does it come from a known, reliable source or expert? How old is the information? When was the last time the website was updated? Think about if what you’re reading is fact or opinion.

As both news consumers and creators it is important to think critically and act responsibly.

Final installment: *Shield Law & Reporter’s Privilege*

◆ Tweet ◆

A post or status update on the social network Twitter, limited to 140 characters or fewer

Newspaper Activities:

- ◆ Look through the newspaper or newspaper website for examples of reader input or comment in a story. Do you think it makes the story better? Why or why not?
- ◆ Select a news story from the newspaper, in print or online, you find interesting. Now try to sum up the story using “tweets” of 140 characters or fewer. Remember spaces and punctuation count as one character. How many tweets did you use to convey the same information as in the original story?
- ◆ Imagine a communication technology of the future. Write a description or draw a picture of what you imagine. Do you think your new technology will change news media? If so, explain how?