Welcome to the world of journalism, where reporters have been digging dirt, raking muck, king headlines and adlines for centuries. It’s a history full of bloid trash, of slimy sensationalists, of runkards, deadbeats and “rummers” (as a Harvard university president once described reporters).

But it’s a history full of roes, too: men and men risking their lives to tell stories of war and tragedy, risking imprisonment to defend free speech. And as you see here, reports have come beloved characters of culture, too, turning up in movies, comics and TV shows as if guided by an uncult hand.

Every culture seeks effective ways to spread new information and gossip. In ancient times, news was written on clay tablets. In Caesar’s age, Romans read newsletters compiled by correspondents and handwritten by slaves. Wandering minstrels spread news (and the plague) in the Middle Ages. Them came ink on paper. Voices on airwaves. Newsreels, Web sites, and 24-hour cable news networks.

Thus when scholars analyze the rich history of journalism, some view it in terms of technological progress—for example, the dramatic impact of bigger, faster printing presses. Others see it as an inspiring quest for free speech, an endless power struggle between Authority (trying to control information) and the People (trying to learn the truth). Which brings to mind the words of A.J. Liebling: “Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one.”

In the pages ahead, we’ll take a quick tour of 600 years of journalism history, from hieroglyphics to hypertext: the media, the message and the politics. Technical advances and brilliant ideas forged a new style of journalism. It was a century of change, and newspapers changed dramatically. The typical newspaper of 1800 was undisciplined mishmash—undisciplined legislative proceeding long-winded essays about secondhand gossip. By 1900, a new breed of reporter had emerged. Jour had become big business. Reporting was becoming a disciplined craft. And newspapers were becoming more entertaining and essential than ever, with features we see today: Snappy headlines, ads, comic strips, sports pages. And an “inverted pyramid” style of writing that made stories newsier.

Radio and television brought an end to newspapers’ media monopoly. Why? Well see for yourself: Which did you come first?
How newsrooms work

What is news?
What readers want
How the news comes together
Who’s who in the newsroom
What it’s called
Tools, talent & temperament
What is news?

Editors, reporters and readers ask, “What is news?”

- News judgment - ability to determine which stories are most interesting and important to readers
  - Editors decide where stories run and what stories do not run
What is news?
NEWS BY THE NUMBERS

- Percentage of Americans who say they prefer news about serious issues and major events: 63
- Who say they prefer crime and celebrity news: 24
- Percentage who think the media are out of touch with average Americans: 48
- Percentage of stories in a typical newspaper about government or politics: 25
- Percentage of Americans under 30 who have little or no interest in politics: 42
- Percentage of journalists who say they often avoid running stories readers think are important, but dull: 77
NEWS BY THE NUMBERS I

- Who say they sometimes ignore stories because readers might find them too complex: 52

- Percentage of Americans who find the news depressing: 84

- Who find the news negative: 77

- Who find the news sensational: 58
News is the first rough draft of history.

Philip Graham, Washington Post publisher

News is anything that makes a reader say “Gee whiz.”

William Randolph Hearst, American newspaper tycoon

News is what somebody somewhere wants to suppress. All the rest is advertising.

Lord Northcliffe, British newspaper tycoon

News is anything that will make people talk.

Charles Dana, New York Sun editor

News is anything you can find out today that you didn’t know before.

Turner Catledge, New York Times editor

When a dog bites a man, that is not news. But when a man bites a dog, that IS news.

Charles Dana, New York Sun editor

THIS JUST IN:
MAN BITES DOG!

When Olavi Velkanmaa was attacked by a wolf, he bit back.

Velkanmaa, 33, was opening a workshop last week in a small Finnish town north of Helsinki when he came upon a large male wolf. As the beast lunged at his throat, Velkanmaa grabbed its head. They wrestled for about 10 minutes.

“I was fighting for my life,” Velkanmaa said. “I saw its throat and went for it with my teeth, but the wolf’s paw got in the way and I bit it instead.”

The wolf took off, leaving Velkanmaa with cuts, minor bites — and the taste of warm wolf blood in his mouth.

— The Associated Press
Is it news?

- **STORM WARNING**: Dangerous winds and heavy rain are forecast here tonight.
- **COUNTY FAIR**: Pigs! Pies! Polka! The Mudflap County Fair starts this weekend.
- **TUITION HIKE**: Mudflap College will raise classroom fees 10 percent next year.
- **VOLLEYBALL BILL**: Congress passes a bill making Friday National Volleyball Day.
- **FLU SHOTS**: Flu season is coming. Vaccinations now available for senior citizens.
- **BOLIVIA BUS CRASH**: 30 children are killed as a bus plunges off a cliff in La Paz.
- **GIRL SCOUT COOKIES**: A Mudflap girl breaks the state’s cookie sales record.
- **LOTTERY WINNER**: A Mudflap grad student wins $50,000 in the state drawing.
- **JAY-Z SEX CHANGE**: A celebrity-gossip Web site claims the rapper had surgery.
What is news?

What makes a story interesting?

- Impact
- Immediacy
- Proximity
- Prominence
- Novelty
- Conflict
- Emotions
News Elements

- Values that help journalists determine what stories to write about and what people will want to read about
- If an event has one or more of the news elements, it is considered newsworthy
1. Proximity

Location. If the event is happening close by, it will impact your readers more than if it is happening across town, or across the world, all other considerations being equal. A dance at your school, for instance, is more newsworthy than a dance at another school.
2. Prominence

- How well known the people involved in your story are. If the person or persons are well known to your readers, the story will impact your readers more than a similar story involving people they do not know.
3. Timeliness-Immediacy

- If something is happening NOW, it has more impact than something that happened yesterday or last week. Often, the most recent development is the feature of the story.
4. Novelty

If something is unusual, the oddity alone can make it newsworthy, because people want to know why it has happened.
5. Impact

- If the impact of an event on your readers is major, they want to know all about it.

- For instance, they might not care that a particular street is being shut down for repairs, until it is brought to their attention that this will reroute the major portion of the traffic into their residential areas. This will affect them in a significant way, and they will want to know about it.
6. Conflict

- Readers have an interest in disagreements, arguments, fights and rivalries. If an event has conflict attached to it, many readers will be interested on that basis alone.

- Stories about sports, trials, war, politics, and even Congressional debates.
7. Human Interest-Emotions

- If a situation makes you angry, sad, happy or overjoyed, it contains the news element of human interest.
- Some stories are newsworthy on this basis alone.
What readers want

You might write terrific stories, but they’re worthless if nobody reads them.

- Some journalists dismiss “pandering” to readers.
- Smart journalists adjust
  - To tastes.
  - To reading habits.
  - To news appetites.
What readers want

So how do we know what readers read?

- We ask them.
- We watch them.
I’m watching you!

- Focus groups
- Phone, mail, web surveys
- Monitoring devices
- Ethnography
- Sales/web views
- Reader response
- Anecdotal feedback
How to conduct a quick, cheap, semi-scientific reader survey

Step 1: Recruit
Step 2: Read next issue, circle what they read
Step 3: Do this for several issues
Step 4: Evaluate
What readers want

5 Things every reporter needs to remember about readers

- Readers are in a hurry.
- Readers have short attention spans.
- Readers want stories that connect.

• Readers want stories told in a compelling way.
• There’s more than just one type of reader.
What readers want

How a story gets written

• Spend 90% of time chasing a story, and 10% writing it.

• Not everything a reporter hears makes it into the finished story.

• Not everything is as it seems.
How the news comes together

Inside a typical newsroom

- Reporters and editors
- Copy editors and presentation
- Business staff
- Photo and graphics

Major divisions
- Editorial Department
- Advertising department
- Production department
- Circulation department
Who’s who in the newsroom

Clear lines of authority avoid chaos

- At most papers, writers are either:
  - General assignment reporters - cover wide range of stories.
  - Beat reporters - cover a specific topic.
Who’s who in the newsroom

The organization

- **Publisher**
  - Ultimate boss; presides over all departments to ensure profitability.

- **Production Manager**
  - Oversees staff and equipment.

- **Circulation Manager**
  - Supervises distribution of newspaper.

- **Advertising Manager**
  - Coordinates sales and production of classified and display ads.
Who’s who in the newsroom

The organization

- **Editor**
  - Runs the newsroom; has final say in story selection and news philosophy.

- **Managing Editor**
  - Runs day-to-day operation; resolves staffing issues.

- **Photo Editor**
  - Coordinates photo assignments; chooses images.
  - Manages photographers and graphic artists.
Who’s who in the newsroom

The organization

- Online Editor
  - Works with other editors and reporters to develop material for Web site.
  - Manages team of reporters and editors.

- Copy Desk Chief
  - Oversees editing and (many times) layout.
  - Manages copy editors.
Who’s who in the newsroom

The organization

Features Editor
- Assigns and edits stories for features section.
- Manages feature writers and reviewers.

Sports Editor
- Assigns and edits all stories running in the sports section.
- Manages sports reporters.
Who’s who in the newsroom

The organization

- City Editor
  - Assigns and edits most local “hard news” stories.
  - Manages news reporters.
What it’s called

Talk the talk

- **Daily** - printed every day.
- **Weekly** - printed once a week.
- **Newsletter** - printed once a month.

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<tr>
<td>Alternative press</td>
<td>(The Village Voice, The Inlander)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialty publication</td>
<td>(Fur &amp; Feather Magazine)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade publication</td>
<td>(American Candy Industry Monthly)</td>
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What it’s called

Talk the Talk

- **Broadsheet** - large format page
- **Tabloid** - half the size of a broadsheet

Stories can be *spiked* or *killed*. Editors can *trim* or *cut* a few *graphs* and *butcher* or *bury* stories. Photogs, inches, copy, head, subhead
What it’s called

Parts of a story

Headline
Byline
Dateline
Lead
Quote
Attribution

Freeway closed as ornery oinker hogs traffic

A pig named Mama falls from a truck and causes commuter chaos by Susan Paynesen

PORTLAND — Westbound traffic on Interstate 84 was backed up for nearly five miles early Monday when “Mama,” a 600-pound hog on the way to slaughter, fell from the back of a truck.

For two frustrating hours, the sow refused to budge. Fred Michelson told police that he was taking six cows and a hog from his farm in Eagle Creek, Wash., to a slaughterhouse in Corvallis when Mama escaped. “I heard the tailgate fall off, and I looked back and saw her standing in the road,” Michelson said with a sigh. “I thought: ‘Oh, no. We’ve got some real trouble now.’”

Mama was “pretty lively and loud” when she hit the ground. Michelson said, lumbering between cars and causing mayhem on a foggy day.

There were no accidents, police said.

After about an hour of chasing the pig with the help of police, Michelson began mulling over his options, which included having a veterinarian tranquilize the hog.

About 10 a.m., a crew of highway workers arrived and decided to use a front-end loader to pick up the sow and load her back into the truck.

“That pig was in no hurry to move,” said Wally Benson, the highway crew chief. “I think she knew where she was being taken, and she was in no hurry to get there.”

Even the police were sympathetic to the pig’s plight.

“That pig really honked off a lot of commuters,” said trooper Tracy Collins — a vegetarian.

But I was glad to see her go.

See Peggyann covers magpie and transporation issues in Oregon and Washington. She can be reached at peggyann@nn.com.
What it’s called

The parts of a page

- Flag
  - Name of paper set in special type.
  - Never changes.

- Pullout quote
  - A quote from the interview placed in a breakout box for special emphasis.

Infographic (Breakout Box)
- Informational graphics.
- Display key facts.

Deck
- Subhead.
- Written by copy editors.
What it’s called

The parts of a page

- **Text**
  - Story measured in inches.
- **Jump line**
  - Tells readers where story continues, or jumps.

- **Cutline**
  - Caption.
  - Written by copy editors or reporters.

- **Teaser**
  - Promo or skybox.
  - Captures readers’ attention to highlight story in issue.
What it’s called

The parts of a page

- Refer
  - Alerts readers to another story related to topic.

- Wire story
  - Story written by reporter working for another paper or national wire service such as the Associated Press or Reuters.

- Mug shot
  - Closeup photo of someone’s face.
  - Usually small.

- Centerpiece
  - Lead story.