

# media Production 2012

## Who influences who?

“If you as an individual are smart enough to get to the point where you understand how the news is generated and how inaccurate it is, you can no longer believe the reality they construct for you. You are now media literate. With this skill in place, you can begin the process of dissolving the false illusions presented to you and glimpse the emperor with no clothes.”

Joseph Couture

# Contents

What is the media?.....	2
Setting up a blog.....	3
What is the news?.....	4
What is a good story?.....	5
Reporting the News.....	6
All journalists are born equal.....	7

# What is the media?

“The media is everything you see on tv, hear on the radio, everything you read and everything on the internet.”

Jamie Marinos - 2011



Most of us don't think about the media. We enjoy watching movies, tv shows, internet browsing, reading magazine articles and playing video games. On average we consume over 20 hours of media each week. Yet how often do we evaluate the media product, the techniques used in its production and how it gets delivered to us?

Does it matter what studio or production company made 'Toy Story,' 'World of Warcraft,' 'Two and a Half Men' and 'A Current Affair?' Who cares that there are media owners called Rupert Murdoch, Fairfax or Jamie Packer. Is this going to make any difference to my life or the way I consume media?

Surprisingly the answer is yes. *It matters a lot.*

The more you know about where your media comes from the more you realise how constructed, manipulated and downright inaccurate the media can be.

The news that you watch on television is produced in such a way that it is entertaining. It follows a very basic format. Much of the news and entertainment you watch is manufactured for a particular audience and to

sell a specific message. The message can be government, private or social interest but it is a message that positions the audience (you) in a way that you might not even realise you are being manipulated?

Think about some of the things you do on the weekend or after school. What do you wear? Does it have a brand name associated with it. What kind of phone do you have. What shoes do you wear? What do you eat?

If I watch a show like 'Today Tonight' or 'A Current Affair' I might believe that I am watching a real stories about real people and events. However, if I delve a little deeper into who creates these shows, who owns the television stations, who makes the advertising that slots between the commercial breaks and the content of the stories on the show I might begin to realise that they are all intertwined.

In Australia, wealthy media barons like James Packer, Kerry Stokes and Rupert Murdoch own most of the channels and newspaper/magazines that you enjoy. The remainder is either owned by the Government or an independent source.

Whoever owns the media that I watch will put their own agenda first. For example, just imagine that a big company like Coca Cola were found to be ruining teenagers health by promoting fruit drinks that were full of sugar. The ABC and SBS would probably cover the story in their current affair shows. However, it is unlikely that any commercial tv station like Channel 9, 7 or 10 would run the story. The reason is advertising.

Commercial television makes its money from selling advertising space between their programs. The more popular a show the more advertising dollars can be charged. This advertising money makes media barons very wealthy. If a story about Coca Cola upsets the company because there has been an investigation by 'Today Tonight', the company might pull out its advertising. This would cost the commercial stations a lot of money. They are not going to risk offending advertisers when they rely on them for their wealth. It is more likely the story would never run and the only chance you would get to hear about it is on the internet or Government channels like the ABC and SBS.

This story is one small example of how intertwined the media really is and we are influenced by whoever has control of the media. Whether it is Government funded or wealthy independent media barons, somebody is always filtering the information that we read and hear. Discovering how the media works is exciting and once you know how false much of the media can be it becomes even more exciting unraveling the lies.

## Activity 1.0

Watch a news broadcast on Channel 7, 9 or 10 and compare to SBS or ABC news.

- How do they present their stories?
- What were the main items of the day?
- How was it divided into sections?
- How long was spent on each news story?

# Creating a Blog

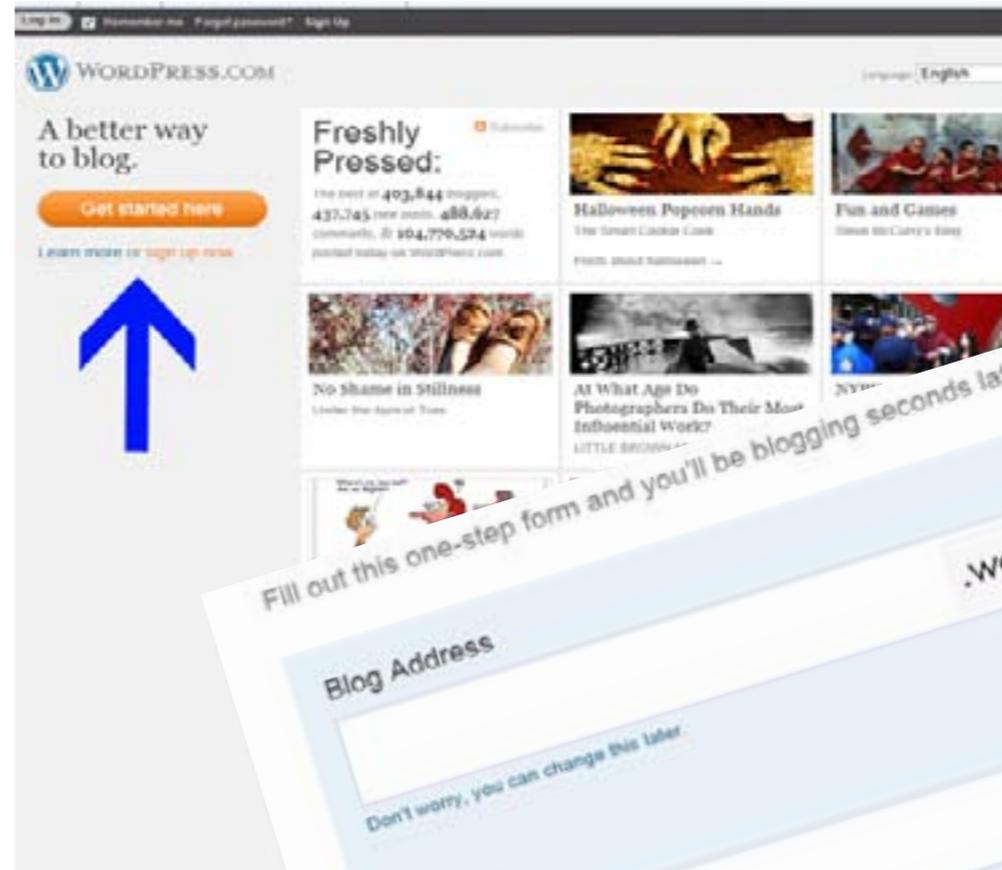
The media production course combines theoretical and practical work. By creating media content you get a better understanding of how the professional media works. Social media has become increasingly important in obtaining information. Social media includes blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Wikipedia, Flickr, YouTube and many other sites.

Social media allows us to consume and produce media. One of the best ways to communicate our message is through a blog.

Our blogs will contain a variety of social media links and updates to relevant topics and you will be expected to write in them every week and upload digital images. Setting up a blog is really easy.

Go to <http://www.wordpress.com>

- 1 Click on the orange button that says 'Get Started Here'
- 2 Give your blog a name like maristmedia\_yourname
- 3 Create a username and a password.
- 4 Write it down so you don't forget it.
- 5 Keep following the prompts
- 6 Check your email and click on the wordpress link
- 7 Create a new post
- 8 Publish



You can find the media blog at:  
<http://maristmedia.wordpress.com>



**“Read Ms Bells blog as it has work and information you may have missed.”  
Hope Turner, 2011 Media**

# What is the news?

If we compare news broadcasts between commercial television and government stations there is often little difference between the various news stories. They tend to follow the same format.

- An overview of the leading stories.
- The lead story
- Stories happening in the city the news is presented i.e. Sydney, Melbourne, Perth etc...
- International News
- Sport
- Stock Market
- Weather
- A good news story to end the bulletin and/or a roundup of the top stories.

The news reader always sits behind the desk and reads the from the teleprompter. They will introduce the story and then some footage of the news item. A reporter is usually seen standing in front of where the event is happening. Generally the footage is of the actual event or near where the even is currently taking place or had taken place. After the journalist finishes their report they then say 'back to you.' Sometimes the news reader also adds that further details will be available in a later bulletin.

The segment generally is no longer than three minutes often shorter depending on the importance or relevance to the audience. The main stories are followed by sport and entertainment stories and then finally the weather. The news is a very slick formulae and can vary in length from 30 minutes to a one hour broadcast.

The news, depending on the channel, is a form of entertainment. Only stories that appear relevant to the target market will be aired. It is important for tv stations to localise and personalise the news so that they maintain a loyal audience. This audience generally stays with the tv station after the news is broadcast. Usually a popular sitcom or drama show follows the news.

It is very important for the news to act as a lead in for the rest of the programs that are going to follow during the evening. The networks take the news very seriously and will spend quite a lot of money to make sure that their news program draws in the maximum audience. The news then should be considered part of popular entertainment.



## What's in a Face?

### *The Anchor Person*

When you look at the news you will notice that the anchor person, the person who reads the news, fits into one or two categories. In the past news broadcasts were presented by older men. An older man was considered to have more authority than a woman and it was believed that the audience responded better to the tone and appearance of older men and were considered trustworthy. Whilst there may have been female reporters and the weather girl on the news, the top job was taken by males.

Around 30 years ago this began to change and more women were seen reading news broadcasts. Currently there is little difference between the tv stations as to who reads the news.

A good newsreader will attract a loyal following. How you look and sound is essential to the success of a news program. Sometimes a news presenter will have their own way of starting or finishing the news. Brian Naylor, a news reader in Melbourne for many years used to farewell the audience with, "I'm Brian Naylor for Channel Seven News and may your news be good news and goodnight."

A good anchor person can be enormously beneficial because news, like everything else on commercial television is for entertainment.



*The anchor person is carefully groomed and selected. After all, the news brand will be associated with them. Whilst the two news readers above differ in gender, they are neat and dressed professionally and give the news a sense of authority.*

## ACTIVITY

Is there a difference in the look and feel of news on different stations.

- Is there a difference in age?
- How are the presenters groomed?
- Are they young/old
- Who presents the sport?
- Who presents the weather?

# What is a good story?

## QUIRKY FACT

Did you know that someone tried to start a good news paper? It soon went out of business because nobody wants to read good news, they only want the bad news!

Every single day the newspapers, television stations, online papers, radio and social media sites need news. They can't survive as viable businesses if their business does not provide the goods. The goods in this case is a news story. However, what makes a news story? Who decides what should or should not be news?

Generally the editor is responsible for what gets to be news regardless of the medium. Like most workplaces though, the media is hierarchical and the editor whilst overseeing the look and feel of the news would assign different sub editors or program managers to each section. They in turn would assign a story to a journalist.

The editor also has a large pool of stories coming in from overseas papers, tv and the internet. There are special news collection agencies like Reuters whose purpose is to report news and then sell it to whatever company wants to use it. The editor/content manager then has to choose a mixture of local, national and international stories to report whilst also catering for the growing sport and entertainment sections.

At all times a news organisation must remember who their target audience is and to cater for them. A newspaper like The Advocate needs to appeal to a small community whilst a paper like The Age has a much broader audience and generally more educated consumers of media. The success of a news organisation not only depends on getting the mixture of stories right but also drawing a large audience so they can earn advertising dollars(unless they are Government funded like the ABC or SBS).

## Activity 2.1

Imagine you are working on a newspaper and need to create 5 headlines for the top stories of the day.  
*Remember:* It helps to make them slightly obscure so people are keen to read the story.

All news organisations are competing to not only break the big news stories but to attract a large audience. This competition can sometimes be unhealthy because with 24 hour news services and so much for audiences to choose from the stories can become more intrusive and sensationalist to get attention.

Previously respectable newspapers are now putting stories of celebrities and sport stars on their front pages. This was not considered news in the past and was confined to sections within the paper.

Now, with the audience having an insatiable appetite for the rich and famous, these stories have gradually intruded into the front news sections of the paper.

Have a look at the prominence of this AFL story in The Age.

The journalist reports the story and the sub editor/program manager will edit the story to fit the broadcast/newspaper/radio or online paper/social media site.

Many stories do not make it into the news. The editors are the gatekeepers of the news and decide what will appeal to an audience.

## Activity 2.2

You are the editor of a news program and must choose the stories to appear in your paper/tv broadcast.

- Only include 10 stories from this list.
- List them in order of importance and explain why you chose them.
- Upload to your blog

Queen abdicates in favour of Prince William  
Obama loses Presidency  
Computers proven to give radiation sickness  
Singer found dead by drug overdose  
Julia Gillard loses to Rudd  
Abbot wears new Speedos  
Premier in car speed chase  
Bridge collapses in Sydney Harbour  
Ten killed on Highway  
Albino bear born with two heads  
Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie split  
Eminem Show Cancelled  
Cyclist killed by motorcycle  
Death by public transport  
Girl kidnapped by estranged father  
Allergies on the rise  
Children the victims in education system  
Facebook used for money smuggling  
Crocodile kills mother of four  
Iran and Israel start War

# Reporting the news

There is always lots of news to choose from and many of the stories that cross a journalists desk is discarded. We know that the editors decide what will be included in the news bulletins of their broadcasts. Print editors of major newspapers have more opportunity to present indepth stories and a greater range, particularly as they can update breaking news online.

But how do you write a news story? What sort of language do you use to make it exciting and something people want to view and read?

## The 5 Ws and an H:

Who  
What  
Where  
When  
Why/How

You should be able to provide all the information required in a news story in the first paragraph if you follow the 5ws (and one H).

## The Whitney Story

Whitney Hosten is a story with legs. This story can just keep on running and newspapers, tv and online media can take all sorts of angles on the death of the singer to keep the story going.

The main story or when the story broke covered the five Ws. Who, What, Where, When and Why/How

The story starts with a Headline

Whitney Dead at 48

- Who – Whitney Hosten (winner of 5 grammy awards died today)
- What – She Died at midday or early evening american time
- Where – A body guard tried to wake Ms Hosten who was in the bath tub, but apparently already dead.
- When – On Sunday 12th Feb mid afternoon in downtown Los Angeles
- Why/How – Former Husband bobbi brown relationship spiralled into Drug Overdose – Her career has been plagued by a failure to reestablish herself as a singer.

## QUIRKY FACT

News organisations love a story that can run and run. This is called *a story with legs* A royal family wedding, death of a celebrity, political scandals, a gruesome murder will all keep people wanting more.

A Tabloid Heading would read something like this:

- Drug Fuelled in Sleazy Bath Tub Death
- Distressed Whitney Ends Life
- Houston Parties Life Away
- Troubled Whitney drugged to death

## RnB Superstar Found Dead at 48

POSTED BY KELLIE HUMPHRIES IN CLASSROOM

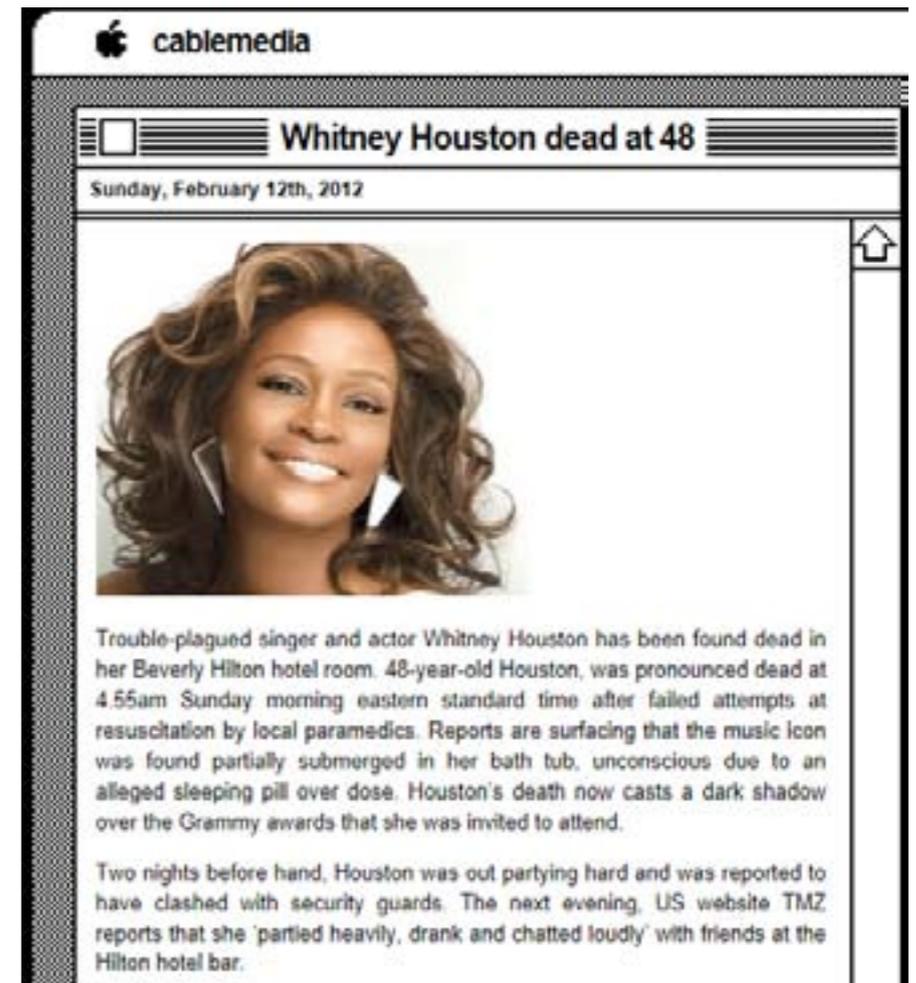
10 3 COMMENT

Just hours before an expected appearance at the pre-Grammy party held by Clive Davis, Pop, soul and RnB superstar Whitney Houston had been found dead at a Beverly Hills hotel in Los Angeles, California – a death suspected to be linked to the drug use that former husband Bobby Brown allegedly involved her with.



Houston was confirmed dead at 3.57pm Los Angeles time on Saturday afternoon, mere hours from attending the traditional and prestigious party held by famous record producer Davis. Reports from Houston's publicist say she was found in the bathroom of the exclusive Beverly Hilton hotel, her death believed to stem from a supposed overdose of sleeping pills that left her unconscious, and subsequently caused her to drown, sources say.

Kellie Humphries Whitney Article



Brads Whitney Article

## ACTIVITY 2.4

Compare the two articles about Whitney Houston's death and then answer the following questions.

- 1/ Does the journalist address the Who, What, Where, When and Why/How in the first paragraph of the article? Underline some of the difficult words.
- 2/ What sort of language is used in The Advocate Article?
- 3/ Compare both articles with the index rating.

Whitney Houston (The Advocate)  
Whitney Houston (The Age)

# all JOURNALISTS ~~are~~ born equal

There is a diverse range of news to choose from and a lot of journalists working in the media. However, not all journalism should be considered good or accurate. Whilst a cadet journalist can hardly be held responsible for poor quality journalism as they are still learning the craft, the sub editor responsible for editing all the journalists work certainly should be accountable.

A poorly worded, misspelt, inaccurate piece of journalism only displays the lack of professionalism of the newspaper. If too many badly phrased or poorly written stories appear in the paper then audiences will soon stop buying it and advertisers will not bother to spend money to keep advertising. It is important that whatever writing appears in the paper, whether it be news, opinion, editorial, letters to the editor or magazine inserts it should be proof read and edited.

Remember how important it is to know your target audience. Therefore, if your newspaper is generally read by a local audience without a high level of education you would expect a fairly easy to read article. A well educated audience would expect a high standard of writing. All writing should follow the basic principles of being:

Concise, Accurate, Informative

## Gunning Fog Index

There is a way of testing the readability of an article and that is called the Gunning Fog Index. Basically it assesses the amount of difficult words in a sentence and returns a score on readability.

The Harvard Law Review has received the highest score on the scale of difficulty than other writing.

1/Why do you think the Harvard Law Review is so difficult?  
2/What sort of audience is the review written for?

Generally, people have an average reading level and understand the stories written in newspapers. However, people who would read or want to read the Harvard Law Review are very highly educated. However, this is not the reason why it is considered one of the most difficult pieces of writing in the English language.

Professions have their own terminology and if you read academic papers and texts then you will notice they have a very sophisticated language. The language is directed to a target audience of peers within the academic community. Therefore, the language is exclusive.

“Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.”

Albert Einstein believed that everything should be reduced to its simplicity. He would have hated the Harvard Law Review!



## Phantom Male Staff Member Misses the Mark



Library technician Barb Simpson surveys the mess left daily in the unisex toilets opposite the library

By Kelli Humphries

“Hit him.” They are the words used by one female library staff member to describe the current situation they face on a daily basis in the staff toilet opposite the library entrance.

**“You have to sort of hitch your pants up and then try and do your business like that...”**

Some library technicians are becoming increasingly frustrated with the cleanliness of the toilet after discovering the state of the unisex bathrooms. It appears as though one unknown member of male staff has issues with leaving the toilet seat up and not always ‘hitting the target’. Of the library technicians interviewed who use the facility every day, it is easy to see the frustration on most of their faces.

One library staff member explains that there is a real technique to using the facilities as, “You have to sort of hitch your pants up and then try and do your business like that.”

However, the issue doesn't seem to faze everyone. Technician Jade Anderson, who works alongside the bathroom, said she hadn't even noticed the problem, but would just like for the toilet to be cleaned more often as they are used quite frequently by many members of staff.

She said, “To be honest, I haven't even noticed it. It'd just like for it to be cleaned everyday instead of just once or twice a week.”

The bathroom has been there for many years but the female staff members see this as an issue why their male counterpart can't treat it as they would their own bathroom at home.

It causes further frustration because there are other staff toilets not far from the one opposite the library. While these toilets are not unisex, it is presumed that the main toilet in the main staff bathroom is kept in much better condition.

While the cleaners of the school were not available for comment, it has been mentioned that they are already run off their feet trying to keep the rest of the school clean for classes each day. The cleaning schedule around the college is very strict, with workers alternating between the junior and senior school. The cleaners can often be seen sweeping and waxing the corridors of the school, and given the amount of staff and students, it is unlikely that they can spare any time to clean the toilet more often.

Fortunately for the female staff, the mystery could soon be solved as library technicians Susan Drachen and Barb Simpson have their suspicions as to who is the unidentified offender. While not wanting to publicly name and shame the suspected wrongdoer, Simpson said, “Er, we think we know who it is. But I'll be telling you [names] in private.”

Kelli Humphries 2012

## Activity 2.3

Go to the following link and to understand more about the Gunning Fog Index.

<http://www.readabilityformulas.com/gunning-fog-readability-formula.php>

Select several articles from the following sources and write down the Gunning Fog score.

- 1/ Harvard Law Review
- 2/ The Quick Brown Fox jumps over the lazy dog
- 3/ An article from The Advocate and one from The Age
- 4/ Your news article

Use the index below to score your article.  
<http://gunning-fog-index.com/>