

Newsworthiness

Cornerstone of democracy

- As a journalist, you will be engaged in an enterprise that is fundamental to a free society.

“The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.”

– **Thomas Jefferson**

The journalistic difference

- Journalism occupies a much smaller space than the talk, entertainment, opinion, assertion, advertising and propaganda that dominate the media universe, but it is nevertheless perceived as being more valuable than most of the “stuff out there.”

SOURCE: AMERICAN PRESS INSTITUTE

<http://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/>

The journalistic difference

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- Its value flows from:
 - its purpose – providing people with verified information they can use to make better decisions
 - its practices – the most important of which is a systematic discipline of verification that journalists use to find not just the facts, but also the “truth about the facts.”

SOURCE: AMERICAN PRESS INSTITUTE

<http://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/>

Journalist as 'committed observer'

- People understand and accept that doctors serve a Hippocratic Oath that requires they try to save people they may hate, whether the enemy soldier in war or the wounded gunman who just shot a police officer.
- They know that lawyers are required to provide a zealous defense for even the worst people in society.

SOURCE: "[The Elements of Journalism](#)," by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel

Journalist as ‘committed observer’

- Journalists need to be equally clear about their role, both to themselves and to the public. A journalist is not aloof from society. They are citizens. Journalists express their commitment and duty by performing the prescribed role of observer to provide their fellow citizens with the information they need to make judgments and decisions.

The Journalist's Job

- **Report the news** | rough draft of history
- **Monitor power** | watchdog over government, business, etc.
- **Uncover injustice** | shine a light on social ills
- **Tell stories** | delight and amaze
- **Help sustain communities** | spark conversations

Applying news judgment

- Deciding which stories to cover
- Deciding which angle to take
- Persuading superiors/colleagues to highlight your story
- Exploring alternatives such as multimedia
- Selecting the most important material for the lead, and organizing the other content.

Elements of good journalism:

- Journalism's first obligation is to the truth
- Its first loyalty is to citizens
- Its essence is a discipline of verification
- Its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover
- It must serve as an independent monitor of power
- It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise
- It must strive to keep the significant interesting and relevant
- It must keep the news comprehensive and proportional
- Its practitioners must be allowed to exercise their personal conscience

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Appendix

What Makes Something Newsworthy?

1. Impact (Magnitude)
2. Timeliness (Immediacy)
3. Proximity (Physical and Emotional)
4. Prominence (Public figures, Celebrities)
5. Novelty (The Unusual)
6. Conflict (Drama)
7. Emotions (Human Interest)
8. Helpfulness (News You Can Use)
9. Entertainment (Humor)
10. Trends (Often in Long Form)

What Makes Something Newsworthy?

- Impact (Magnitude)



What Makes Something Newsworthy?

- Timeliness (Immediacy)

News Online Seems to Have Long Shelf Life

By NOAM COHEN
The New York Times

A new research paper seeks to answer a riddle for publishers, editors and even readers: When does new news become old news?

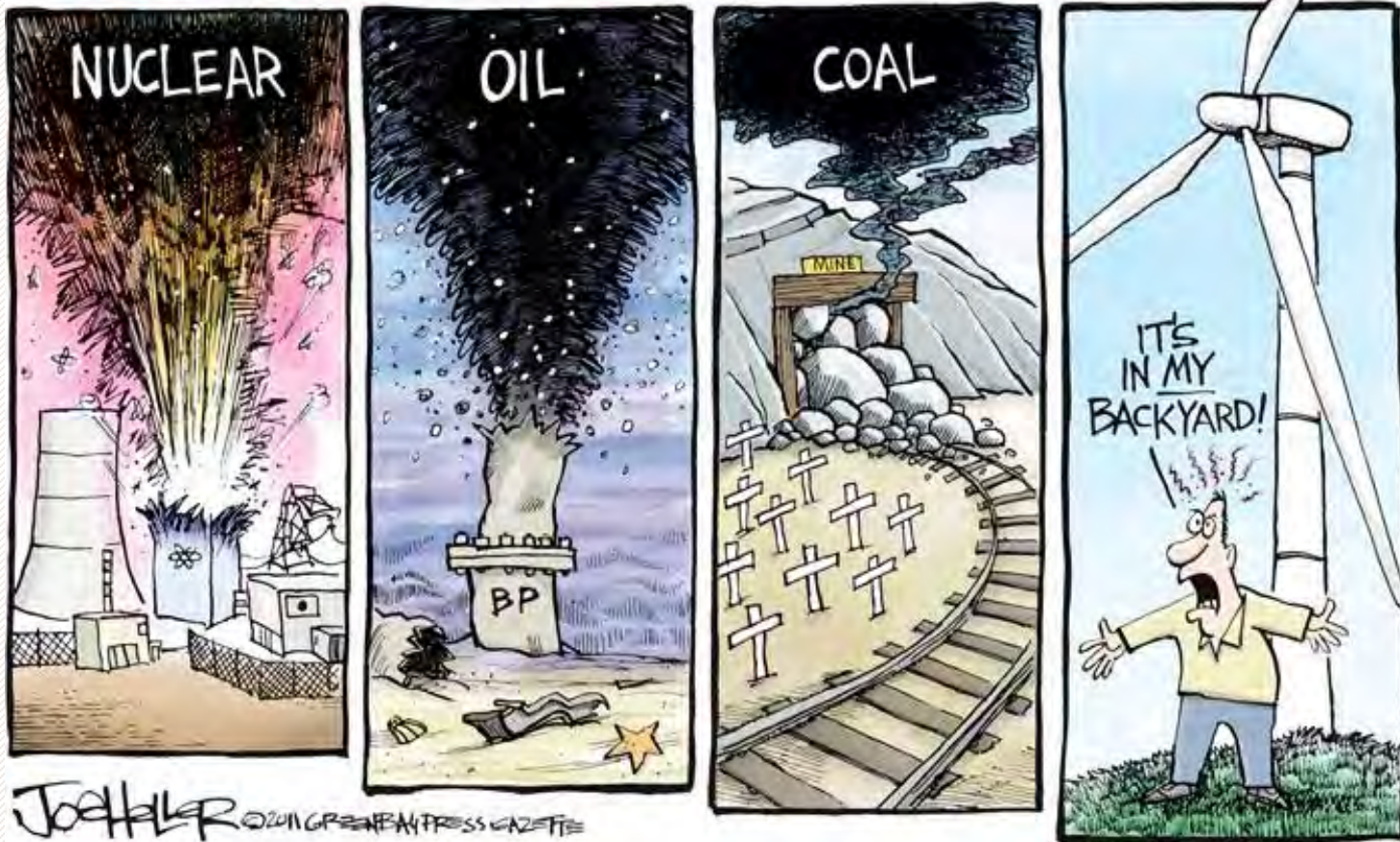
In the case of a news article on the Internet, the answer is surprisingly long: 36 hours on average, according to the paper, “The Dynamics of Information Access on the Web,” which appeared in the June issue of Physical Review E, the journal of the American Physical Society.

More precisely, 36 hours is the amount of time it takes for half of the total readership of an article to have read it, the paper found. ... Traditional ideas about the way people use the Internet would have led researchers to expect a much shorter half-life, more like two to four hours.

What Makes Something Newsworthy?

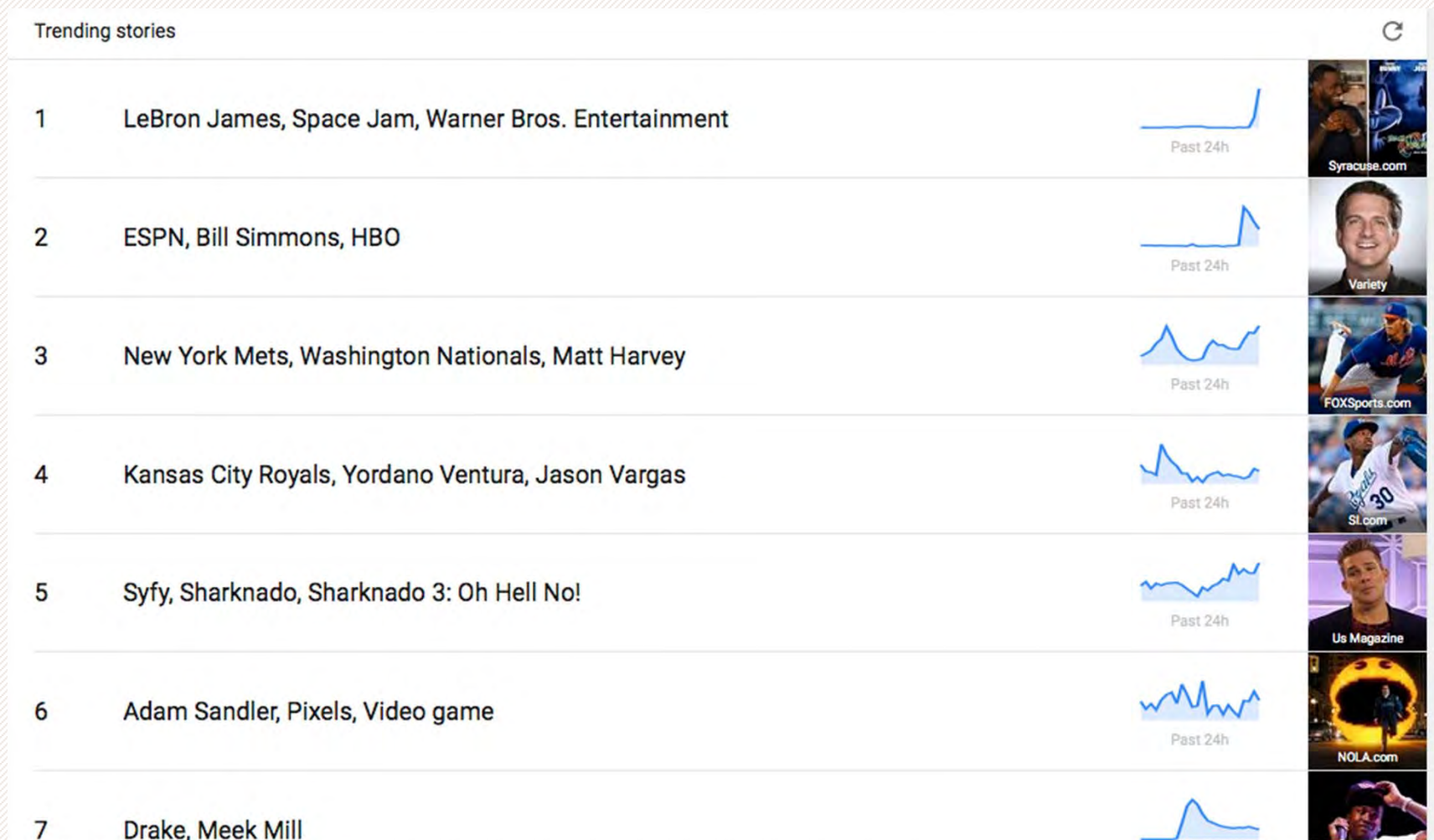
- Proximity (Physical and Emotional)

ARGUMENTS AGAINST-



What Makes Something Newsworthy?

- Prominence (Public figures, Celebrities)



What Makes Something Newsworthy?

- Novelty (The Unusual)



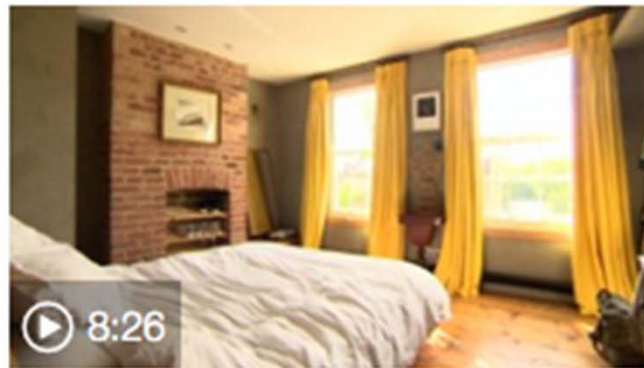
Review: Eiffel Tower overrated, ugly from up close



Polaroids show iconic artists in New York



These are the most demanding tourists



How Airbnb changed the way we see the world



The Unusual (Can get you in trouble... exercise care):

A young Mexican man died Friday in Mexico City after accidentally shooting himself in the head while posing for a “selfie” with a loaded gun.

Police said Oscar Otero Aguilar, who worked in a pet shop, had been drinking with friends in Medero, in the north of the capital, when the accident happened.

A follower of the “selfie” craze – in which people pose for photographs they take of themselves – Otero Aguilar frequently posted pictures of himself on social media sites, officials said.

What Makes Something Newsworthy?

- Conflict (Drama)

Trump attacks McCain: 'I like people who weren't captured'

He takes his feud with the Arizona senator to a new level.
By BEN SCHRECKINGER | 7/18/15 12:22 PM EDT | Updated 7/19/15 9:39 AM EDT



What Makes Something Newsworthy?

- Emotions (Human Interest)

DROUGHT IMPERILS A DREAM

Barber-turned-farmer Fred Lujan was ready to see his pistachio trees bear their first full crop. Then he lost his water supply.

By Diana Marcum

REPORTING FROM TERRA BELLA

At first they called Fred Lujan a gentleman farmer. The retired barber washed his tractor every night and parked it in the garage, a source of gentle amusement to the veteran growers around him. He called his pistachio trees his babies, his girls, and

the tree wouldn't make it. But he wrapped the trunk in mud and water and tape the way his grandfather, born on an Indian reservation, had taught him.

He named the tree Survivor.

Eight years later, Survivor and the other trees were ready to give their first mature

What Makes Something Newsworthy?

- Helpfulness
(News You Can Use or Risks You Face)

El Niño is back, and global temperature records are in danger

[PRI's The World](#)

May 13, 2015 · 12:00 PM EDT Updated: July 04, 2015 · 11:30 AM EDT

By Peter Thomson ([follow](#))

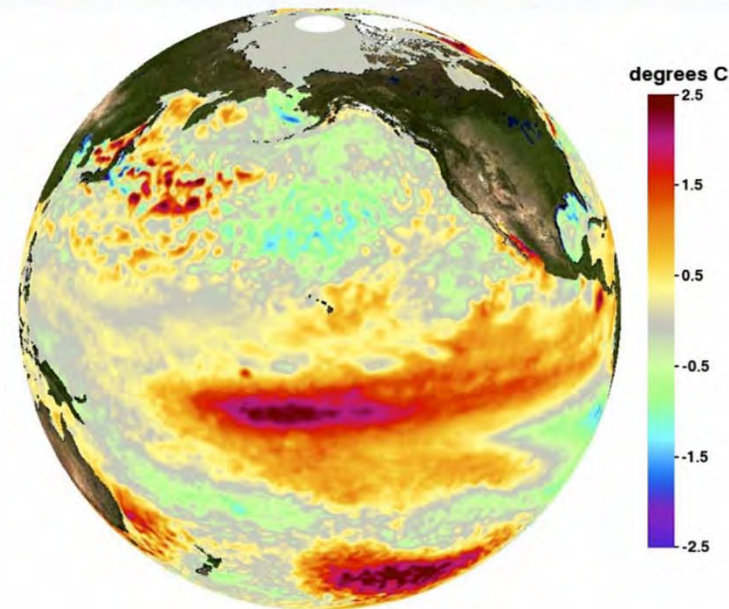
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A sea surface temperature anomaly in the tropical Pacific Ocean during the peak of the 2009-10 El Niño.

Credit: NASA/Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Drought in Australia; an *end* to drought in Brazil; poor crops across Asia; record global temperatures. If you start hearing about these in the next year, remember this news from the week:

El Niño is back.

What Makes Something Newsworthy?

- Entertainment (Humor)

July 22, 2015
HUFFPOST WEIRD NEWS

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5:15 PM, 07/16/2015
12 Reasons To Love Nudity And Celebrate NYC Bodypainting Day (NSFW)

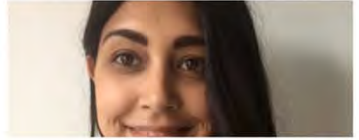
5:10 AM, 07/10/2015
Beauty Queen Nela Zisser Can't Stop Eating

12:55 PM, 07/ 2/2015
Roswell's Unanswered UFO Questions

Bojangles' Customer Gets \$4,500 Cash Instead Of His Food (VIDEO)



I Tried A Korean Beauty Regimen For A Month, And Here's What Happened To My Skin



Officials Deny That Sandra Bland Dashcam Video Was Edited

Entertainment (Badly needed humor)

At least officers didn't have to issue a speeding ticket Saturday when they spotted a giant tortoise ambling down a street in suburban Los Angeles.

The Alhambra Police Department joked on its Facebook page that the 150-pound reptile was captured Saturday afternoon after a brief pursuit.

"The tortoise did try to make a run for it; but, our officers are pretty fast," the post said.

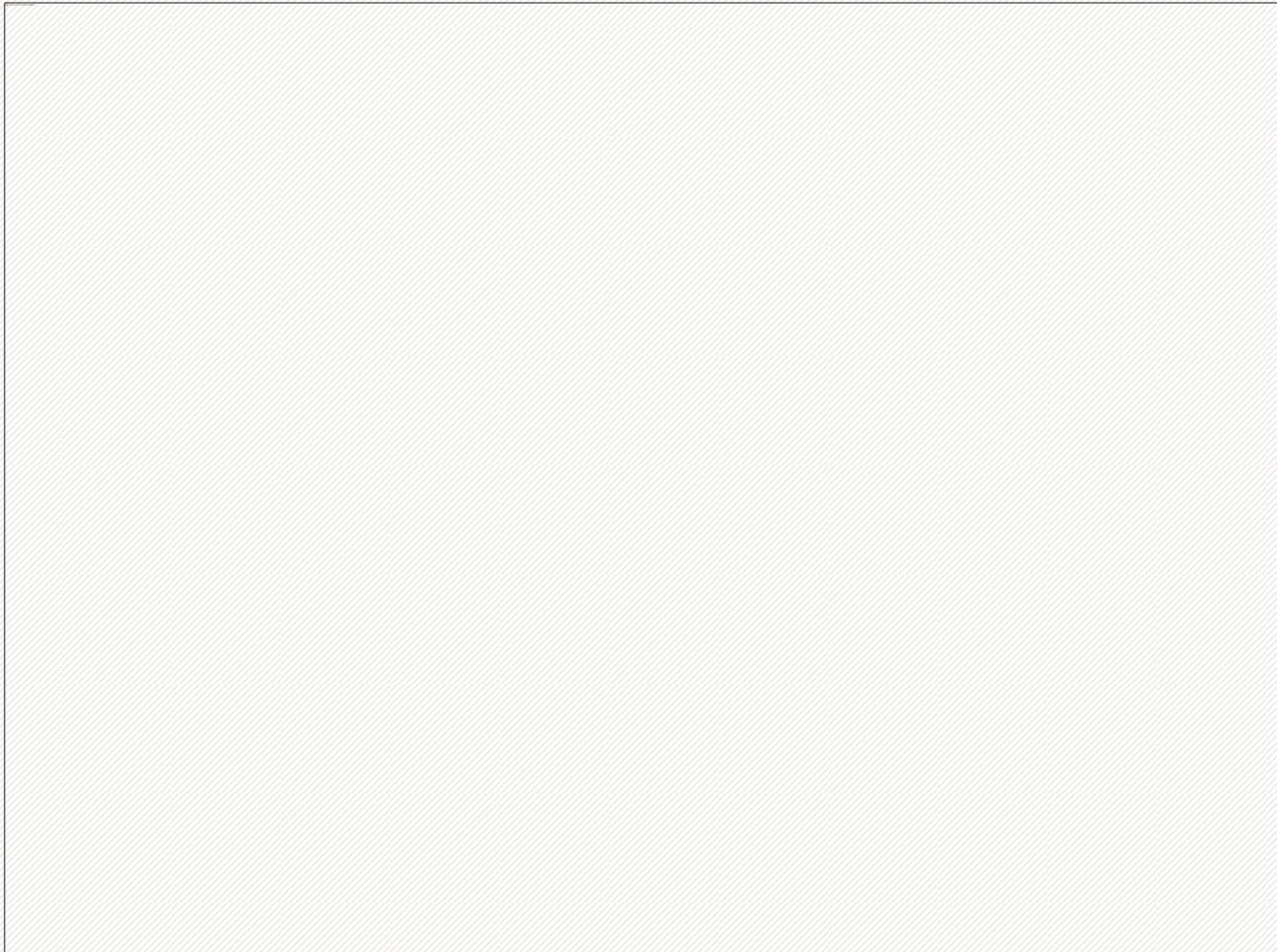
It took two officers to heft the hard-shelled creature into a patrol car. They then took the reptile to the local police station before turning it over to animal control authorities.

Giant tortoises are not indigenous to the Los Angeles area.

Police asked anyone with a big tortoise that went missing to contact them. They weren't sure if it escaped or was abandoned by its owner.

What Makes Something Newsworthy?

- Trends (Often in Long Form)



Summary

- Journalism serves the public good
- Journalists help set a society's agenda
- Journalists focus on the truth
- Journalists are independent
- Journalists are careful with information
- Journalism distinguishes between fact and opinion
- News judgment is essential

Questions?