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Century of truth: transparency and engagement



OUTLINE



What is transparency in journalism?



Why transparency is important?



How is transparency achieved?



Examples of transparent newsrooms.



Outcomes of transparency and engagement.

What is transparency in journalism?

Two types of transparency.

Media transparency deals with the openness and accountability of the media outlet.

Transparency has so far been understood in two sometimes connected strands:

- The first strand of transparency implies that news producers can explain and be open about the way news is selected and produced. It is a disclosure transparency.
- The second strand concerns users being invited to participate in different stages in the news production process. It is a participatory transparency.

(Karlsson, 2010)



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Disclosure transparency

Openness about how news is selected and produced.

- Disclosure transparency is a form of transparency that involves disclosing information about the news production process to the audience. This can include information about sources, funding, ownership, and editorial policies.
- Disclosure transparency is important because it allows the audience to make informed judgments about the reliability and credibility of the news they consume.
- By providing information about the news production process, journalists can help to build trust and credibility with their audience, as well as promote accountability and ethical standards.
- Disclosure transparency can take many forms, from simply providing a list of sources or funding information to more in-depth explanations of editorial policies and decision-making processes.

(Karlsson, 2010)



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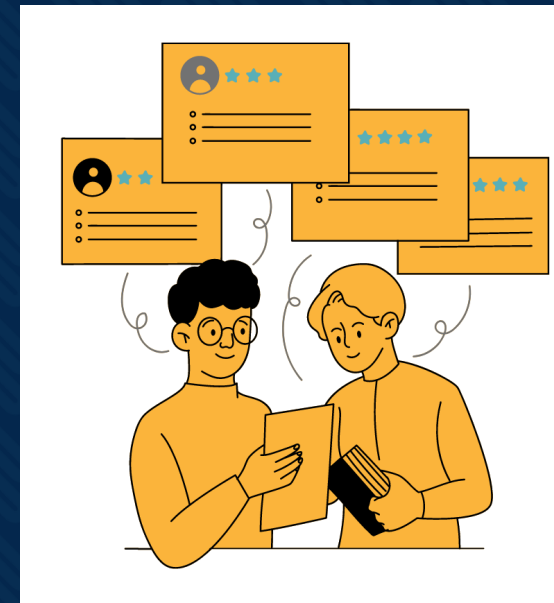
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Participatory transparency

Involving audience in news-making process.

- Participatory transparency is not just about providing information or making it available, but about actively involving the audience in the process of creating and disseminating news.
- This type of transparency can help to build trust, foster a sense of shared responsibility, and encourage greater engagement and participation from the audience.
- Participatory transparency is essential for the news media to remain relevant and trustworthy in the digital age.

(Karlsson, 2010)



Why transparency is important?

More transparency – more trust.

Research has shown that the public believes more transparency in the news would be beneficial in building trust.

For example, a study conducted by the Queensland University of Technology in 2020 found that declarations of conflicts of interest and openness about biases were ranked among the top five ways to improve trust in news among Australian news consumers.

- The survey, which included 1,619 respondents from across Australia, found that 85% of participants believed that it was important for news outlets to declare conflicts of interest, while 78% believed that news outlets should be open about their biases.
- The survey also found that other transparency practices, such as publishing corrections and updates and providing access to sources and data, were also important for building trust in the news media.

A survey from the Gallup Foundation of 1218 adults in the United States in 2021 explored their attitudes towards the news media and the factors that influence their trust in news outlets. One of the key findings of the survey was that commitment to transparency was ranked among the top determining factors in whether a news organization was deemed trustworthy.

- Specifically, the survey found that 84% of respondents said that their trust in a news organization was influenced by its commitment to transparency, with 62% saying it was a major factor and 22% saying it was a minor factor. This placed transparency ahead of other factors such as accuracy, depth of coverage, and political bias.
- The survey also found that transparency practices such as clearly labeling opinion and analysis pieces, correcting errors promptly, and providing detailed sourcing information were viewed as important for building trust in the news media.



How is transparency achieved?

Involving audience in news-making process.

Transparency can be achieved through various means:

- **Disclosing conflicts of interest.** Journalists may disclose any potential conflicts of interest that could influence their reporting. For example, if a journalist has a financial interest in a company they are reporting on, they would disclose this information to their audience.
- **Providing sources and data.** Journalists may provide sources and data used in their reporting to show how they arrived at their conclusions. This helps readers to understand the evidence behind the story.
- **Corrections and updates.** If a news organization makes a mistake in its reporting, it may issue a correction or update to ensure accuracy and transparency.
- **Editorial guidelines.** News organizations may publish editorial guidelines that outline their standards and practices for reporting.



How is transparency achieved?

Involving audience in news-making process.

Transparency can be achieved through various means:

- **Public editor/ombudsman.** Some news organizations employ a public editor or ombudsman who acts as a liaison between the newsroom and the public, fielding complaints and concerns and addressing issues of transparency and accountability.
- **Open newsroom.** Some newsrooms have opened their doors to the public, allowing people to observe the editorial process and engage with journalists.
- **Fact-checking.** Some news organizations have dedicated fact-checkers who review stories for accuracy and identify any false or misleading claims.



Transparency and engaged journalism.

Involving audience in news-making process.

- Recently, more and more media organizations have been adopting engaged journalism, a model that prioritizes inclusivity, collaboration with the community, and transparency.
- Engaged journalism involves building relationships with the community and empowering citizens to play a more active role in the news-making process. It requires newsrooms to be more transparent about their methods and processes, and to actively seek out input and feedback from their audiences.
- This approach aims to create a public which is more informed about reporting and more involved in it, and so build trust between journalists and their communities.



Examples of transparency in newsrooms

Involving audience in news-making process.

The Texas Tribune, a nonprofit news organization, publishes detailed information about its funding sources and organizational structure, as well as its editorial guidelines and ethics policies.

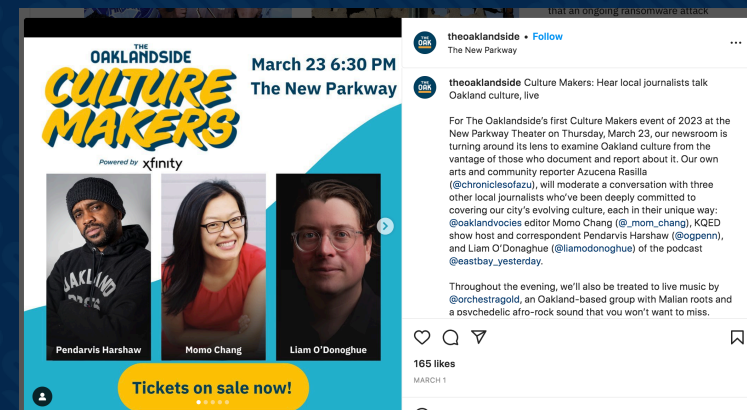
The organization also holds regular events and town halls where its journalists can meet with and gather feedback from their audience.



The Texas Tribune Festival

Mark your calendars: Texas' breakout political event, The Texas Tribune Festival, will take place Sept. 21-23. We can't wait to welcome you back to our multiday celebration of big, bold ideas about politics, public policy and the day's news — all taking place in the heart of downtown Austin.

Sign up to be the first to hear about Festival updates like tickets on sale, new speakers and program announcements as we look forward to TribFest 2023.

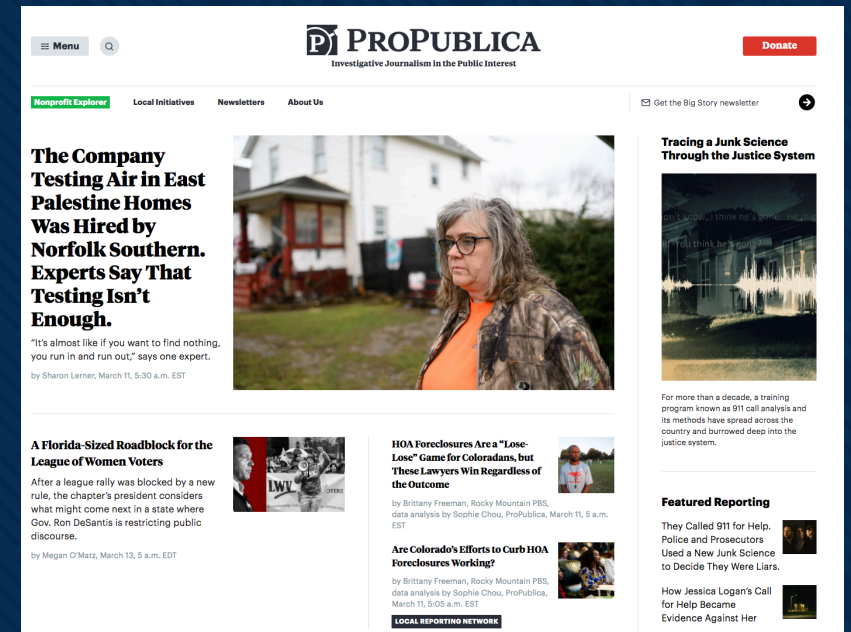


Examples of transparency in newsrooms

Involving audience in news-making process.

ProPublica, a nonprofit newsroom that specializes in investigative journalism. ProPublica regularly publishes “reporting recipes,” which are detailed explanations of how its journalists conduct investigations and report stories.

These recipes provide transparency into the reporting process and allow readers to better understand how investigative journalism works.



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Examples of transparency in newsrooms

Involving audience in news-making process.

Here you can find a few **Pro Publica's** reporting recipes:

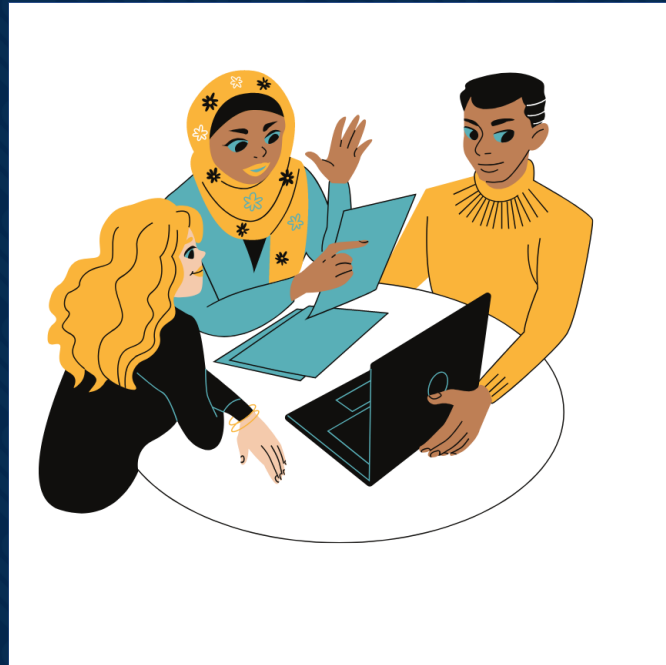
1. [Reporting Recipe: How to Report on Voting by Mail](#)
2. [Reporting Recipe: How to Investigate Racial Disparities at Your School](#)



Outcomes of transparency and engagement



Transparency and engagement can lead to more effective and impactful journalism.



By prioritizing these principles, news organizations can build trust with their audiences, foster more meaningful relationships, and ultimately produce journalism that better serves the public interest.



In the newsroom, transparency can help to build trust and credibility with audiences.

References:

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**Thanks for learning about
transparency and engagement!**