

## TECH1502 Introduction to Community Media Workshop 003 – Being a Community Reporter

### 1 Introduction: Card Game (20 mins)

- Gather in groups with no more than four people.
- Play a couple of hands of rummy or another game.
- Share some gossip about someone famous that you have heard this week.

### 2 Activity - Investigation

“As both process and content, storytelling is central to community media and can jump-start a deliberative process among community members. It combats alienation and isolation by allowing audience members to express their story as well as live in someone else’s shoes. It allows participants and viewers to derive broader meaning from personal experience and provides in-depth coverage of issues on an intimate level.”

<https://benton.org/sites/benton.org/files/CMReport.pdf>

Look at these news sites and identify what main types of stories are covered?

<https://thebristolcable.org/>

<http://thebedfordclanger.com/>

<http://walthamforestecho.co.uk/>

### 3 Discussion – What is News

“The principal starting point for Community Reporting as we define it is story. And why story rather than news? Well, as Owen Flanagan puts it, “Evidence strongly suggests that humans in all cultures come to cast their own identity in some sort of narrative form. We are inveterate storytellers.”

<http://peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk/communityreporting-citizen-journalism-paper>

Based on the three examples that have just been viewed, discuss:

- What’s the news?
- What’s the story?
- What’s the image?
- How are the headlines formed?
- So what?

### 4 Activity - News Impact

Return to looking at the three examples, and rate a selection of the stories for the following:

- **Impact:** Impact is determined by the number of people affected. The more people affected the bigger the story.
- **Proximity:** The closer your audience is to the event, the greater the news value.
- **Timeliness:** ‘New’ is a big part of the news. If it happened just before the deadline, it is bigger news than if it happened last week.
- **Prominence:** If it happens to someone who is well known, then it is bigger news than someone with no public profile.
- **Novelty:** Is the event unusual, bizarre, the first, the last, or once-in-a-lifetime? Novelty has more news value than something that happens all the time.
- **Conflict:** War, politics and crime are the most common news events of all. If everyone got along there would be no news.
- **Relevance:** How does the story effect the listener? If there is no effect maybe there is no news?
- **Usefulness:** How can I use this information? Home, business and leisure news sections give more specialist accounts of news.
- **Human Interest:** A story may be weak on the other news values, but may be interesting from a human point of view. If people are talking about it then it is news, even if it doesn’t have much in terms of the other categories.

## 5 Discussion - Stories and Features

### 5.1 Charlie Brooker - Newswipe

Watch the clip from Charlie Brooker and note how television news stories are constructed.

<https://youtu.be/aHun58mz3vl>

“Whatever the format of the scripted report, the nature of the communication is essentially the same – a speaker is telling a story by relating the facts (who said what? Who did what?) objectively, dispassionately but with a sense of drama and immediacy” (Wilby & Conroy 1994 p.144).

“‘Feature’ is a more useful term than ‘documentary’, which is just one kind of feature. Long or short, a feature need not be non-fiction, and it can be pure journalism – a simple audio record of an event – or a testimony; it can be conversation without mediation or intervention by an announcer” (Ahern 2006, p.181).

“Features will involve you spending more time in the preparation and production. Unlike a package, it will not necessarily conform to an accepted formula. The finished product will be longer and contain more elements. The format should allow you to explore ideas in more depth, and perhaps in a more iconoclastic way as creativity and imagination come into play” (Beaman, J. 2000 p.113).

“Before you write a story from your notes or a news release, ask yourself:

- ‘What is this story really about?’
- ‘What is it about this story that will really interest my listener?’” (Chantler & Stewart, p.51).

### 5.2 What Gives a Story Shape?

- Narrative Structure
- People
- Facts
- Relevance
- Discussion
- The Five W’s

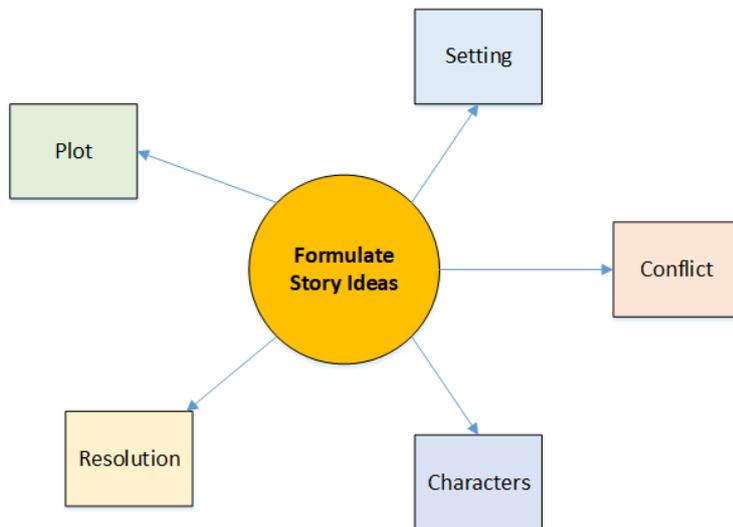
### 5.3 Description

“Description, description, description. You are the eyes and ears of your listeners. If you are out on a story, especially if you are reporting back ‘live’ to the station, you have to convey what is going on in front of you to the listener. You must start to do this from the very beginning of your career” (Gover 2008, p.36).

“Good news writing is the hallmark of good journalism. You can have the best story ever, but if you cannot put it over in a way your listener understands the first time they hear it, then you might as well not bother” (Chantler & Stewart, p.50).

## 6 Discussion – Formulate a Story Idea

- What is involved in telling a story?
- Can you identify the plot of a book/movie/game that has these elements?
- How are these elements arranged and how do they relate?



### 6.1 Discussion

To what extent does your story include or provoke discussion and debate?

When she worked on BBC Five Live Victoria Derbyshire combined strong original journalism and headline-generating interviews. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007v5cz>



"A listener from Ridgeway asks, 'When visiting a friend, is it improper to drink out of the toilet unless asked first?' Good question..."



### 6.2 Keep it Simple

- **Keep it Short:** Shorter is more effective.
- **Keep it Simple:** Be economical when explaining a story... less is more...
- **Keep it Happening Now:** This is news, not history?
- **Keep Adjectives to a Minimum:** Avoid gimmicks and fancy word
- **Talk to Yourself:** Speak to yourself as you write

## 7 Activity - Story Construction

Can you relate your experience of joining your university course as a story? Use the following storytelling techniques to identify how you will relate your experience in the form of an accessible community report.

“The simplest way of telling a story is to:

1. Explain the situation.
2. Introduce ‘conflict’
3. Develop the action.
4. Resolve the conflict.

Of course, there may be intriguing complications, mystery and subplots, twists and surprises at several levels” (Mcleish, 2005 p.245)

### 7.1 Shaping a Story – The Five W’s

- When?
- Where?
- What?
- Who?
- How?

### 7.2 Facts

A reporter’s job is to find out what is going on, then write a story that’s interesting and informative. Accuracy always comes first.

- A story can be compelling and creative, but if it contains errors, it is worthless.
- A false story undercuts public trust.
- Always check numbers, spellings of names, who said what, and the other basic facts of any story.

### 7.3 Good Writing

Watch the short video from Alan Little about what makes a good story.

Narrative Form:

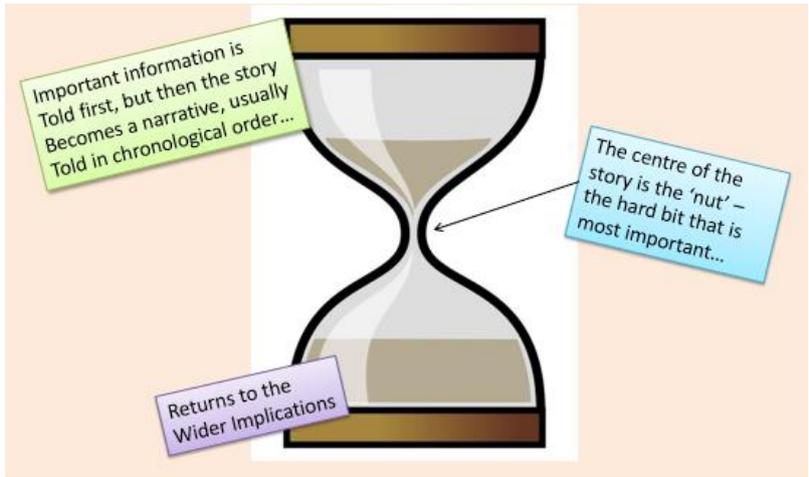
- Divide into scenes
- Description of settings
- Characters
- Rhetorical/Sound/Visual Effects

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/journalism/article/art20130702112133594>

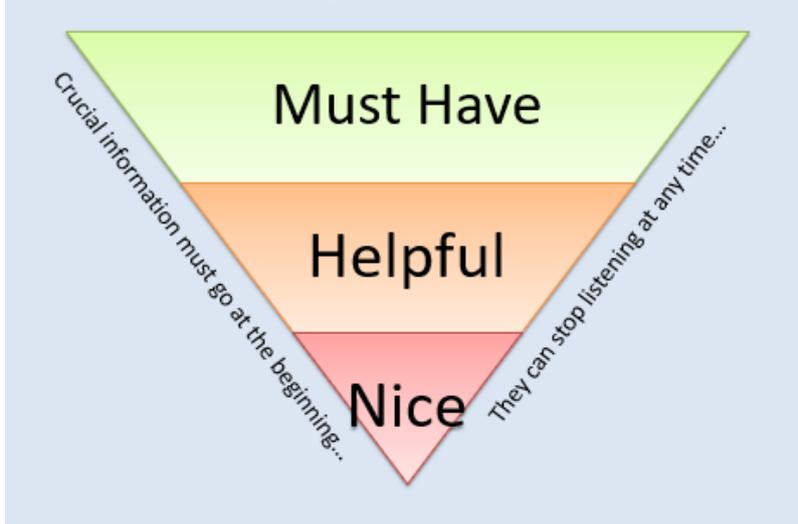
“Know what you want to say and say it conversationally in everyday language, but do not use slang or be slapdash. It takes skill and effort to write concise, lively copy on what may seem like a complicated or detailed story” (Chantler & Stewart, p.51).

### 7.4 Structure – Hourglass

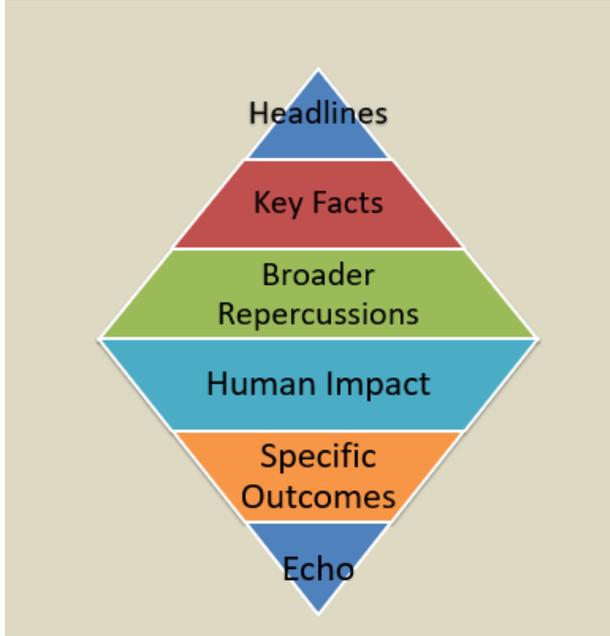
Does the structure of a story make much difference to the way that people understand or connect with the issues being covered?



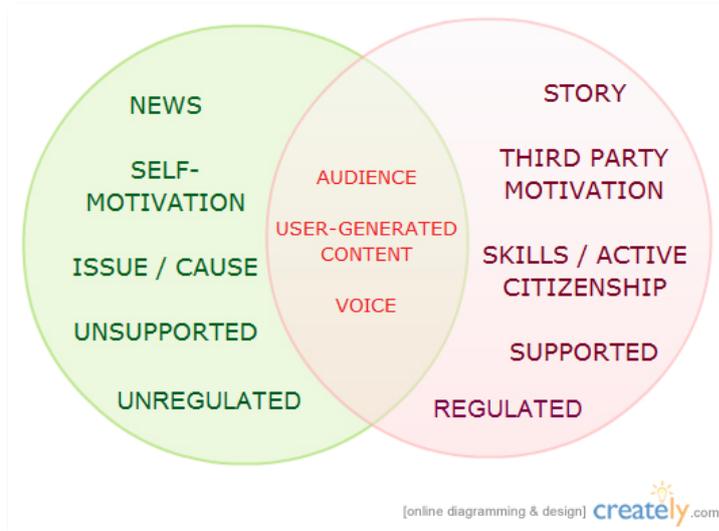
**7.5 Structure – Inverted Pyramid**



**7.6 Structure – Diamond**



## 8 Activity – Blog About Community Reporting



Look at the People’s Voice Media article about community reporting, and plan a blog that explores and explains the differences between **Citizen Journalism and Community Reporters**.

Why is one term used in some situations, and the other term used in different situations?

People’s voice for media argue that community reporting involves a

“Network of people joined together by a common set of goals and values, sharing their successes and frustrations and learning from each other in the process.”

And that they

“Hope to see the network grow and the model continue to support more of the kind of people who wouldn’t traditionally create content for the web into the wonderful world of content creation, where their stories and views count, and where they feel ultimately more connected to the world around them.” <http://peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk/communityreporting-citizen-journalism-paper>

If you are planning to produce a community newspaper, what would you focus on?

## 9 References

- Ahern, S. (2006) Making Radio, 2nd Ed.; A&U, Crows Nest, NSW.
- Beaman, J. (2000) Interviewing for Radio, Routledge, London.
- Chantler, P. & Stewart, P. (2003) Basic Radio Journalism, Focal Press, London.
- Fleming, C. (2010) The Radio Handbook, 3rd Ed., Routledge, London.
- Gover, K. (2008) Creative Radio Journalism, Rockarama Radio Network, London.
- McLeish, R. (2005) Radio Production 5th Ed., Focal Press, Cambridge.
- Wilby, P. & Conroy, A. (1994) The Radio Handbook, Routledge, London.