

Everyone is Not a Journalist – Think Before You Hit Print



Wendy Glavin, Founder & CEO, Wendy Glavin Agency

After watching, “The Post,” Spielberg’s account of the *Washington Post*’s decision to publish the Pentagon Papers, I was reminded of my childhood when my attorney father, a prosecutor, taught me about the constitution as we watched legal movies together.

I used to think all reporting was factually-based, and there were no inherent biases. We watched the Sunday morning news shows, “Meet the Press,” “Face the Nation,” and “Firing Line,” along with movies, such as, “Inherit the Wind,” “To Kill a Mockingbird,” “12 Angry Men,” “Good Night. And, Good Luck” and, “All the President’s Men.” We spoke about ethics, standing up for what we believe in, and to always do the right thing,

Purposely, “The Post” was released in limited theaters in 2017, and will open widely in mid-January, 2018. “This is a film about an administration feeding lies to the American public and attempting to censor journalists reporting on those lies, and it comes from the biggest names in modern film history. The message is clear, and is pointed.” – The Mary Sue, November 2017:

<https://www.themarysue.com/the-post-free-press/>

Human bias has always existed, but today it’s even harder to

remain neutral because of our political leanings, gender, stereotypes, the massive amount of content and distribution channels, and the speed of social media which is often lacking in detailed fact-checking.

Having worked at *The New York Times* when the Pentagon Papers were published Robert Rosenthal, Executive Director of the Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR) recently said, "There's great reporting being done, and yet, the basic journalistic model is broken. Whether you want to call it fake news, propaganda, distortion, these are all very dangerous tools that really are accelerated and weaponized in the age of the internet."

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n reported that U.S. journalists are ambivalent about their relationship with PR professionals, and have concerns over the quality of content and reliability of material they receive: <https://www.cision.com/us/resources/white-papers/-2017-sotm/>

"Journalists are expressing concern about the societal impacts of social media on journalism. For example, it's clear that 'fake news' on social media sites and the discourse that

follows might be undermining the overall value of their craft. Brand communicators have an opportunity to help journalists sift through the noise and get reliable information in the process of their reporting,” said Chris Lynch CMO of Cision.

With the massive amount of content and distribution channels, journalism has reached a tipping point: It’s harder to discern facts from fiction, and know what’s undifferentiated news with clickbait headlines.

John Avlon, Editor-in-Chief of The Daily Beast said, “We must insist on a fact-based debate, and to call a lie a lie without flinching. Marketers shouldn’t be afraid of dealing with real news. If you want to meet influential individuals, meet them where they live by dealing with real issues in the world. If you’re afraid, you become part of the problem.”
<https://www.cision.com/us/2017/04/wendy-glavin-and-commpro-report-on-the-livestream-breaking-down-the-state-of-the-media-in-2017/>

For marketers, public relations professionals, the C-suite, advertisers and media outlets, we must focus on the value we’re offering, rather than being attention-seekers. To improve relationships with the media, marketers need to educate their clients about what’s news and what isn’t, eliminate corporate jargon, and speak to consumers honestly, and authentically. The strongest partnerships are based on trust, communication, understanding, and allow for dissenting views.

Richard Edelman, president and CEO of Edelman said, “Mainstream media is accountability journalism. Collaborative journalism can become both an open forum for discussion and a home for subject specialization. Beyond helping companies engage in this kind of collaborative journalism, PR needs to bring ethics and rectitude back to business. Be the client’s conscience. Every company and brand has a responsibility to behave ethically.”

With regulators and legislators involved, Google and Facebook are establishing partnerships with independent fact-checkers and testing new algorithms to gain more trust. Will there be a new mix of models to sustain quality journalism in our increasingly polarized political environment?

The concerns about fake news and threats against a free press have been a major crisis in 2017. Will this transform the state of journalism for the better? It will be interesting to see how 2018 unfolds.

About the Author: Wendy Glavin is Founder and CEO of Wendy Glavin, a NYC full-service agency. Wendy is a 20-year veteran of corporate, agency, consulting and small business ownership. She specializes in B2B marketing communications, PR, social and digital media. Her website is: <https://wendyglavin.com/>. Contact her at: wendy@wendyglavin.com.