

paid news

Here are 10 ways of defining paid news if we expand the concept...

1. Suitcase journalism: This is a straightforward way of accepting a suitcase of cash in exchange of good media coverage. Very difficult to prove. Tens of thousands of crores of rupees in bribes exchange hands in India and it is curious that very rarely does anyone get caught.

Sure there are a few stings here and there but most bribes go unnoticed. Journalists who accept money very rarely have been caught.

2. P&P journalism: P&P stands for perks and privileges. This is done in broad daylight but somehow nobody can do anything. Like so many Lutyens' bungalows land up with senior editors.

A prominent business daily had brought this to light and had promised to release the names of such editors but unsurprisingly did not do so.

Then there are chairmanships, committee memberships and many other government posts which may be offered to the journalist or to his family in exchange for positive coverage.

3. Access journalism: What if a reporter is very good friends with a minister. No money or perks are exchanged, but they reach an understanding.

The reporter will show the minister only in good light while the minister will regularly leak plum stories to the reporter and also set up things like putting him on the Prime Minister's plane during a foreign trip where he has a luxurious time and interacts with bureaucrats with even more stories.

The minister and reporter regularly wine and dine together with the former always footing the bill.

4. "Relative" journalism: Here the journalist's parent/spouse/relative is in a political party. The journalist strongly espouses the cause of the political party and his relative gets all the benefits.

paid news cont...

5. Exchange journalism: A large corporate buys large stakes in a large media house. The media house shows the government in good light all the time and in return the government gives concessions, benefits and land at cheap rates to the corporate house.

A media house may also get the shares of a company it shows in good light.

6. Ad-based journalism: The amount of ads that the central and State governments give to newspapers and TV news channels is not funny.

It can any time threaten to pull the ad plug. The same applies to large corporates giving ads too. Since both money (paid for the ads) and favourable coverage is involved, it also is a form of paid news.

7. Blackmail journalism: Imagine if a business reporter does a really negative story against a large corporate house. He shows it to them and says that he will withhold publication if he gets shares at low prices for his parent/spouse.

How do you prove this peculiar case when no story was published in the first place and the reporter didn't directly take money?

8. Junket journalism: Companies spend large amounts of money flying journalists all across the world and putting them up at five star hotels.

In return journalists right favourable reports. Is this not a form of paid news?

9. Campaign journalism: Elections in India see a huge amount of black money being spent. Candidates give money for articles/news items for favourable coverage.

The reader cannot distinguish between actual and paid news. Somehow this is the only form of paid news that is discussed and it is not even the tip of the iceberg.

10. Subsidy journalism: Did you know that the newspaper you read every day actually costs Rs 50-60 and most of it is paid for by the government in the form of newsprint subsidy.

Many newspapers were given land/buildings at throwaway prices in terms of long-term leases. The reason why newspapers all across the world are collapsing but not in India is because of this.

agenda setting

Agenda setting theory (Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw)

The influence of media affects the presentation of the reports and issues made in the news that affects the public mind. The news reports make it in a way that when a particular news report is given importance and attention than other news the audience will automatically perceive it as the most important news and information are given to them. The priorities of which news comes first and then the next are set by the media according to how people think and how much influence will it have among the audience. Agenda setting occurs through a cognitive process known as "accessibility". Media provides information which is the most relevant food for thought, portrays the major issues of the society and reflects people minds.

These are the levels of agenda setting theory:

First Level:

The first level is usually used by the researchers to study media uses and its objectives or the influences that media creates on people and the most proximal thought that people will have on the exposure to the information given by media house.

Second level:

At the second level, the media focuses on how people should think about the nature of the issues. Thus, sensationalization of news reports may happen to bring in the interest of the audience. In fact, media wants to grab attention and implant thoughts in people minds about some serious issues. That's why media turn certain issues viral.

Agenda setting theory is used in a political ad, campaigns, business news, PR (public relation) etc. The main concept associated with the theory is gatekeeping. Gatekeeping is in charge of and has control of the selection of content discussed in the media. It is assumed that the public cares mostly about the product of a media gatekeeping. Editors are the main gatekeepers of media itself. The news media decides 'what' events to broadcast and show through the media 'gates' on the basis of 'newsworthiness'.

For e.g.: News Comes from various sources, editors choose what should appear and what should not that's why they are called as gatekeepers.

Gatekeepers are the powerful authority who ensure the right material is disseminated to mass. Because some issues are important to media but not to masses. Also they are much concern on not to distort peace and public stability.

Priming

The responsibility of the media in proposing the values and standards through which the objects gain a certain amount of attention can be judged. The media's content will provide a sufficient amount of time and space to certain issues, making it more vivid.

In simple words, the media gives the utmost importance to a certain event such that it gives people the impression that that particular news is the most important one. This is done on a daily basis. The selected news report is carried on as a heading or covered regularly for months. For example, terms such as headlines, special news features, discussions, expert opinions are used. Media primes news by repeating the news and giving it more importance like, for example, Nuclear Deal.

agenda setting cont..

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Framing

Framing is a process of selective control. It has two meanings.

The way in which news content is typically shaped and contextualized within the same frame of reference.

Audience adopts the frames of reference and to see the world in a similar way. This is how people attach importance to a piece of news and perceive its context within which an issue is viewed.

Framing deals with how people attach importance to certain news. For example, in the case of an attack, defeat, win and loss, the media frames the news in such a way that people perceive from a different angle.

We can take the Kargil War between India and Pakistan as an example. In both the countries, the news reports were framed in such a way they show their own country in a positive light and the other in the negative. So depending on which media people have access to, their perception will differ.

Factors affecting Agenda setting

Gatekeepers, editors and managers and other external influences.

Non-media sources like government officials and influential personnel.

For example "if the media has close relationship with the elite society, that class will probably affect the media agenda and the public agenda in turn".

Criticisms of Agenda setting theory is

Media users are not ideal. The people may not pay attention to details.

The effect is weakened for people who have made up their mind.

Media cannot create problems. They can only alter the level of awareness, priorities, importance, etc

Gatekeeping

Gatekeeping Theory

Kurt Zadek Lewin (1890-1947), was born in German. He was a great Psychologist and pioneer in Social Psychology. He developed the concept in the field of psychology called psychological "field" and "life space" in order to understand the human behavior and its important consideration of total life space. His studies are more based on to understand a person's own world, physical, mental and social through frequent conversation between his pre-memories, desire and his goals. And also his works help to understand the relationship between attitudes and behavior in the group or individuals.

Kurt Lewin coins the word called "Gate keeping". It's nothing but to block unwanted or useless things by using a gate. Here the person who make a decision is called "Gatekeeper". At first it is widely used in the field of psychology and later it occupies the field of communication. Now it's one of the essential theories in communication studies.

Concept:

The Gatekeeper decides what information should move to group or individual and what information should not. Here, the gatekeeper are the decision makers who letting the whole social system. The gatekeeper is having its own influence like social, cultural, ethical and political. Based on personal or social influences they let the information to the group. Through this process the unwanted, sensible and controversial information's are removed by the gate keeper which helps to control the society or a group and letting them in a right path. In home mother plays the vital role and she has to decide what their kid's needs and what should avoid.

In news medium editor play vital role. He has to decide what kind of news items will publish and what should not. Every day the news channel receives various news items from all over the world. The channel have its own ethics and policies through this the editor decide the news items for publish or aired. In some cases few news items are rejected by the editor due the organizations policy or the news items which are not suitable for publish.

Example:

An international news channel receives numbers of news items within day like international terror issues, UN discussions, Texas bull fighting and religious abuse on international community.

A news channel can't show all those news items to audience because it may affect the channel reputation in public and organizations policy. Here, editor decides the news items especially he can't show the Texas bull fighting because it is not internationally popular story. But the same time the news channel can't show the religious abuses also because it may hurt audience directly and it may affect organizations policy also. But international terror issues and UN discussions are universal common news that won't affect the channel reputation in public and organizations policy.

Gatekeeper: Chief Editor

objectivity cont..

The lost meaning of 'objectivity'

of the great confusions about journalism, write Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel in *The Elements of Journalism*, is the concept of objectivity. When the concept originally evolved, it was not meant to imply that journalists were free of bias. Quite the contrary.

The term began to appear as part of journalism after the turn of the 20th century, particularly in the 1920s, out of a growing recognition that journalists were full of bias, often unconsciously. Objectivity called for journalists to develop a consistent method of testing information – a transparent approach to evidence – precisely so that personal and cultural biases would not undermine the accuracy of their work.

In the latter part of the 19th century, journalists talked about something called “realism” rather than objectivity. This was the idea that if reporters simply dug out the facts and ordered them together, truth would reveal itself rather naturally.

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Realism emerged at a time when journalism was separating from political party affiliations and becoming more accurate. It coincided with the invention of what journalists call the inverted pyramid, in which a journalist lines the facts up from the most important to the least important, thinking it helps audiences understand things naturally.

At the beginning of the 20th century, however, some journalists began to worry about the naïveté of realism. In part, reporters and editors were becoming more aware of the rise of propaganda and the role of press agents.

At a time when Freud was developing his theories of the unconscious and painters like Picasso were experimenting with Cubism, journalists were also developing a greater recognition of human subjectivity.

The method is objective, not the journalist.

In 1919, Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz, an associate editor for the *New York World*, wrote an influential and scathing account of how cultural blinders had distorted the *New York Times* coverage of the Russian Revolution. “In the large, the news about Russia is a case of seeing not what was, but what men wished to see,” they wrote. Lippmann and others began to look for ways for the individual journalist “to remain clear and free of his irrational, his unexamined, his unacknowledged prejudgments in observing, understanding and presenting the news.”

Journalism, Lippmann declared, was being practiced by “untrained accidental witnesses.” Good intentions, or what some might call “honest efforts” by journalists, were not enough. Faith in the rugged individualism of the tough reporter, what Lippmann called the “cynicism of the trade,”

objectivity cont..

was also not enough. Nor were some of the new innovations of the times, like bylines, or columnists.

The solution, Lippmann argued, was for journalists to acquire more of “the scientific spirit ... There is but one kind of unity possible in a world as diverse as ours. It is unity of method, rather than aim; the unity of disciplined experiment.” Lippmann meant by this that journalism should aspire to “a common intellectual method and a common area of valid fact.”

Some important implications:

One is that the impartial voice employed by many news organizations – that familiar, supposedly neutral style of newswriting – is not a fundamental principle of journalism. Rather, it is an often helpful device news organizations use to highlight that they are trying to produce something obtained by objective methods.

The second implication is that this neutral voice, without a discipline of verification, creates a veneer covering something hollow. Journalists who select sources to express what is really their own point of view, and then use the neutral voice to make it seem objective, are engaged in a form of deception. This damages the credibility of the craft by making it seem unprincipled, dishonest, and biased.

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Reporters have gone on to refine the concept Lippmann had in mind, but usually only privately, and in the name of technique or reporting routines rather than journalism’s larger purpose. The notion of an objective method of reporting exists in pieces, handed down by word of mouth from reporter to reporter.

Developmental psychologist William Damon at Stanford, for instance, has identified various “strategies” journalists have developed to verify reporting. Damon asked his interviewees where they learned these concepts. Overwhelmingly the answer was: by trial and error and on my own or from a friend. Rarely did journalists report learning them in journalism school or from their editors.

Objectivity in the News

No one approaches any story with complete objectivity. As a reporter begins to research, it is likely that she will have a bias toward some aspects of the story. The goal is to set aside those presumptions and move forward with healthy skepticism.

Encouraging Diversity of Views

In many countries, a partisan press is the norm. Readers and viewers in these nations expect that a news organization will approach topics from its point of view and select subjects it covers accordingly. They know that competing news organizations may advocate from different perspectives. Opinion columns should be clearly labeled and should neither distort nor falsify.

Journalists should seek diverse voices and competing views. They should support freedom of speech. News organizations should provide forums for robust debate on issues vital to their communities. Letters to the editor and readers' comments encourage public participation. News organizations also should make every effort to keep discussions civil and discourage falsehoods or attacks on others.

Respect for the Individual

The Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics says, "Minimize harm ... treat sources, subjects and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect." This principle recognizes that a responsible journalist may sometimes harm someone but should make every effort to minimize that damage. The code advises the journalist to show compassion for those who will be affected by news coverage, especially when they get attention through no fault of their own.

Crime victims, relatives of public figures, children and other vulnerable people should be treated with sensitivity.

Intrusive newsgathering can cause harm. Persistence is appropriate, but aggressive tactics cannot always be justified. Although possibly legal, making repeated phone calls, following a person, taking photographs or remaining on private property after being asked to leave may cause distress.

There can be valid reasons to report information that a news subject would prefer to keep secret. A public official may wish to keep secret an extramarital affair. But if public resources are used to support the affair, it becomes a matter of legitimate public interest.

Similarly, crime victims often prefer that their identity remain confidential, particularly in the case of sexual assault. The news media should balance the rights and interests of both victims and criminal defendants with the right of the public to be informed.

In general, the three pressures reporters face the most in covering any story are:

pressure in newsroom

1) Time. Production quotas, explicit or implicit, mean getting a story posted quickly. Competitive pressures are even worse, because there are no news cycles. A dozen or a hundred or a thousand other news organizations may be preparing to publish the same story right this second. None of the above helps accuracy, detail, context or due diligence as to the reliability of sources.

2) Measurability. Until awards season in the spring, journalistic success is mainly measured in clicks. This creates an environment where clickbait headlines, drama, simple narratives, scandal, conventional wisdom and unfounded assumption can – and often do – trump patience, perspective, caution, complexity, sensitivity, accuracy, fairness, depth and basic newsworthiness. A grisly murder may have little impact on the worldm except to the victim and his/her circles, but will get attention while crucial (and often corrupt) decisions are being made by public official with no journo-scrutiny whatsoever.

**pressure in
newsroom**

3) Ignorance. It is really hard to address economic subjects, or scientific ones, or legal ones, or statistical ones if you have no background in these disciplines. Good reporters ask good questions and do their best to get it right, but you don't know what you don't know. This is equally true — maybe especially true — in matters of race.