

Module 1.2 - What is the angle? Transcripts

Today we are going to be looking at five steps for you to be able to tell important stories and identify what is the angle.

The most important thing about journalism whether you are creating a podcast, writing for a newspaper, appearing on television is the angle. What is the angle? What is the idea? What is the story that you are trying to tell? This is the most important and often the most difficult task for many young journalists that are breaking into the industry. How do they find an angle on a story? Here's five tips to identify an angle for your mobile journalism story.

Number one. Impact. It means how many people does your story impact? And how badly does it affect their lives. If there is a water contamination in a small village in Malawi. Is that relevant to an audience in New York or Australia? Maybe not. Until you can find the angle that makes it relevant. Maybe that contamination was caused by an international factory that was producing leather shoes that are selling in your country. Now the angle is connected to you.

Number two. Proximity. The closest that an event or a story happens to an audience the more it tends to impact them. If an earthquake is happening right here in London, I'm definitely going to be reading about it more than if it happens all the way in Japan or somewhere far away. So having proximity to your audience is really important when creating that kind of content.

Number three. Timeliness. Is your story idea new? Is it fresh? Is it innovative? If you're going to tell me a story idea that's been told 10 times before and was broken 10 years ago and other news organizations. Why on earth would I watch your story? You've got to have timeliness. You've got to have a reason to say, "Why now?" Why listen to your story right now?

Number four. Conflict. Any good story is built on the idea that there is some sort of a drama, some sort of a juxtaposition, some sort of a conflict. There must be a situation. There must be a problem in any story for there to be an outcome. When we see young woman in the month of January that are doing Jiang Yu a hairy and growing their hair out. What is the conflict? It's a societal pressure that all women must wax and shave every part of their body. That's the conflict and that's what they're fighting against.

And number five. Who is your audience? In order to produce the right kind of angle, the right kind of story you, need to know who's reading this story. If I'm doing a story for a car magazine, I'm going to get really detailed with my angles and I'm going to have an angle which is a particular focus to what we call Motorheads. People that are obsessed with cars. But if I'm doing a car story for Vogue magazine, maybe I'll skew that angle differently because the majority of their audience are older women and I'll find an angle that's relevant to that audience. So once you've come up with your angle, it's about distilling it by answering six important points: the five W's and an H. Who, where, what, when, why and how. Who's involved? What's happened? Where has it happened? Why is it happening? How did this happen?

And when you're pitching the story idea, say it like your saying it to your best friends. Say it like your saying it to your mum. Say the story like it's the first thing that comes out of your mouth when you're trying to explain it to somebody.

If I see a car crash down the road I wouldn't say the automobile was travelling at 70 miles an hour when it collided with another vehicle. I would say something more like an enormous car crash took place right outside my house. That's how you get the angle into a conversational format. That's how you get it into a concise and highly shareable headline.

And of course to find your angle you've got to read. You've got to research. You've got to surf the entire World Wide Web to find things that are happening right now. One of my favorite sources of finding news is newsletters and his three newsletters I recommend. The Skin is written for young female audiences and gives a really good breakdown of what's happening around the world. Five things by CNN gives you the top five stories you need to know about. And Quartz Daily Brief is a really good, slightly longer read about some of the topics that are impacting our world.

I hope that gave you some basic grounding about how to find the right kind of story and tell it in the right kind of way with a few simple tips. Don't forget to go to the student lounge, the forums. Comment in those groups and of course check out the Facebook group.