

Building Trust & Practicing Verification

MOOC Week 1

Building trust

Overview

- Boasts and slogans about accuracy were common as early as 17th century.
- Over time trust has been built with familiarity, frequency, branding.
- Concrete efforts: ethics policies, corrections, ombudsmen, showing our work.

Boasts

“In one thing I yield not to anyone—in the search for truth.”

—Gazette de France (17cen)

“You must grant my claim concerning this book—that it is a book of facts. There are no mistakes in it, no guesses, no surmises; there are no lapses of memory, no inaccuracies. There are only facts.”

–The Brass Check: A Study of American Journalism (1919)

Frequency

“[Publishers] started producing weekly or biweekly newssheets on sale from a public office where people could come back and say ‘That report doesn’t jibe with reality. They had to try and retain the reader’s confidence.’”

—Stephen Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics*

Familiarity/Presence

Kapiti News

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Wednesday, October 16, 2013

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Colourful touch

P10



MAYOR ELECT: Ross Church, pictured in his Auto Classics business, with two of his favourite cars, a Jaguar Mark 1 and a Jaguar Mark 2, is Kapiti's new mayor.

PHOTO: DAVID HAXTON / KAP141013DHR055

Church is open, friendly

DAVID HAXTON

Ross Church was a commanding winner in the race for the Kapiti mayoralty. In preliminary results under the single transferable voting system, Mr Church got 7833 votes, followed by K Gurunathan with 6779 votes, Jenny Rowan 4543 votes, Gavin Welsh 3675 votes, Jackie Elliott 1974 votes, David Scott 1501 votes and Ivan Sage 463 votes.

The five district wide councillors elected were, in order, Gavin Welsh, Mike Cardiff, Diane Amundsen, Jackie Elliott and David Scott. Notable casualties were Roger Booth, who has been deputy mayor, and Peter Ellis, a long time councillor.

Two councillors elected for the Paraparaumu ward were K Gurunathan and Murray Bell. Notable casualty was Tony Lester, who has helped spearhead a number of council projects.

Tony Lloyd is the Waikanae ward councillor again — but only just. He won by two votes over Quentin Poole, so he'll be keeping a close eye on the special vote count. A final vote count is expected today.

Penny Gaylor remains the Otaki ward councillor, and Janet Holborow took the Paekakariki-Raumati ward councillor position unopposed.

Mr Church, who has been a councillor for three years, said becoming mayor was very exciting.

"It's very cool."

He was looking forward getting on with the job and forming a strong council team.

"We will be fine."

"I'm looking forward to it."

Mr Church said his leadership style would be "open and friendly, but determined at the same time".

"If something needs to be argued strongly for then I'll argue for it, if I believe in it, but at the same time hopefully be nice and friendly and form a team atmosphere — that's my plan."

Ms Rowan, who has been mayor for six years, accepted the will of the district.

"The election result shows that in spite of our considerable achievements, we've not managed to take some sections of the community with us — particularly on water issues and coastal hazards."

She was proud of "her council achievements and legacy and believed she had represented the district honourably and effectively emerging with the respect of her peers in local government."

"We have worked hard and have acted with integrity and courage to deal with some very big issues — even now I know I can look back on this period of my life with great pride."

She wished Mr Church and the new council "every success".

Paraparaumu Raumati Community Board is Fiona Vining, Kathy Spiers, Deborah Morris-Travers and Jonny Best.

Waikanae Community Board is Eric Gregory, Michael Scott, Jocelyn Prvanov and James Westbury.

Otaki Community Board is James Cootes, Colin Pearce, Rob Koford and Christine Papps.

Paekakariki Community Board is Jack McDonald, Steve Eckett, Sam Buchanan and Philip Edwards.

Nigel Wilson remains Kapiti's representative on the Wellington Regional Council defeating Chris Turver by a mere 263 votes.

Wilson got 8718 votes and Turver 8451 votes.

Warwick calls it a day

P3

Cosie lady

P24

Kids discover mural

P54

Corrections

- 1690: “Nothing shall be entered, but what we have reason to believe is true, repairing to the best fountains for our Information. And when there appears any material mistake in anything that is collected, it shall be corrected in the next.”
- 1972 — New York Times place them on A2.

The Paradox of Trust

**The more willing we are to
admit our mistakes and flaws,
the more trustworthy we
become.**

Codes

- “Bureau of Accuracy and Fair Play” at the New York World in 1913.
- 1914: "I have no thought of saying The Associated Press is perfect. The frailties of human nature attach to it...the thing it is striving for is a truthful, unbiased report of the world's happenings ... ethical in the highest degree."
- 1922: American Society of Newspaper Editors first adopts “Canons of Journalism.”
- Emergence of ombudsmen.

Practices

1. Never add anything that was not there.
2. Never deceive the audience.
3. Be transparent about your methods and motives.
4. Rely on your own original reporting.
5. Exercise humility.

Source: The Elements of Journalism

Summary

- Trust has traditionally been built through combination of presence, frequency, practices, etc.
- Barriers to entry in media helped distinguish those able to publish.
- The professionalization of journalism in the 20th century saw a high point of trust, and the creation of standards.

Verification

Overview

- The ritual of verification.
- What it looked like in practice.
- The origins of fact checking.

COMPLETELY UPDATED AND REVISED

BILL KOVACH
& TOM ROSENSTIEL

— THE —
ELEMENTS
OF
JOURNALISM

What Newspeople Should Know
and the Public Should Expect

**Journalism's "essence is a
discipline of verification."**

—The Elements of Journalism



- Verification is venerated as a cornerstone of journalism.
- “If your mother tells you she loves you, check it out.”
- But it was not taught systematically.

Verification as a Strategic Ritual

How journalists retrospectively describe processes for ensuring accuracy

Ivor Shapiro , Colette Brin , Isabelle Bédard-Brûlé  & Kasia Mychajlowycz 

Pages 657-673 | Published online: 05 Feb 2013

 Download citation  <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2013.765638>

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Abstract

While a concerted quest for accuracy is seen by many journalists as central to their professional identity, informal rules of practice for achieving news accuracy are elusive and highly nuanced. We conducted *post hoc* qualitative interviews with 28 semi-randomly selected Canadian journalists working for French- and English-language newspapers; each journalist reconstructed in detail the process of verification used in reporting a single newspaper story. Findings suggest considerable diversity in verification strategies, at times mirroring social scientific methods (source triangulation, analysis of primary data sources or official documents, semi-participant observation), and different degrees of reflexivity or critical awareness of journalists' own blind spots and limitations. Most interviewees expressed passionate support for the norm of verification, but described a range of

“Verification might be seen as a 'strategic ritual', as Tuchman (1972) said of the aforementioned (and perhaps now rather old-fashioned) idea of 'objectivity' -- something that legitimizes a journalist's social role as being demonstrably different from other communicators.”

“Seeking out multiple witnesses, disclosing as much as possible about sources, or asking various sides for comment, all signal such standards. This discipline of verification is what separates journalism from other forms of communication such as propaganda, advertising, fiction, or entertainment.”

–The Elements of Journalism

Fact Checking

- Time magazine started checking in 1923.
- New Yorker in 1927. Soon spread to other big (mostly American) magazines.
- Checkers identified every fact, stat, proper name in an article and reconfirmed it. Contacted all sources quoted.
- Closed system.

“Any bright girl who really applies herself to the handling of the checking problem can have a very pleasant time with it and fill the week with happy moments and memorable occasions”

— Edward Kennedy, Time (1920s)

unter und in die Gebäude

ss „Biosphäre 2“ wieder so

rd, wie es einmal war.

Wüste von Arizona, in einem Tal

Tucson und Phoenix, liegt ein

ewächshaus, 30 Meter hoch zwei

ätze groß, eine Konstruktion aus

Stahl. Es sieht aus wie die Mars-

aus einem Science-Fiction-Film.

„Biosphäre 2“, erschaffen Anfang

er Jahre, weil ein Milliardär eine

Erde bauen wollte.

1991 schlossen sich acht Menschen unter

Glaskuppel ein, sie nannten sich die

„Astronauten“, es waren Wissenschaftler

einer Mission. Biosphäre 1, das war

☉ 4 davor dann

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Prospect 4 S. 2
N 2 572000 ✓

✓ Google Earth

31 feet 3.87

+ www.b2science.nj

3,14 acre

= 1,27 Hektar

= 12707 m²

Tafel 105 x 70

= 1,7x ✓

den Glas dachern

Biosphären

Prospect

Regenwald

Summary

- Verification is a cornerstone of journalism. It helps distinguish journalists from other actors.
- It is venerated but is often not taught in a systematic way.
- Magazine fact checking was the most systematic practice, but it was not widespread.