Trust & Transparency

MOOC Week 4

Principles & Projects

Agenda

- Overview of the principles of trust and transparency.

- The dynamics of trust in today's environment.

- A look at key projects focused on trust and transparency.

Principles

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

"Transparency is telling people how we got the story … reporting why we included what we did. What was left out and why, who our sources are."

–Los Angeles Times editor in "Newsrooms and Transparency in the Digital Age" by Kalyani Chadha & Michael Koliska

"It's a challenge to figure out the veracity of the information, where it came from, what the point of view is, or how it was put together." That creates more of an imperative for news organizations to pull back the curtain to explain to readers how they report and write stories. "It becomes incumbent upon organizations—that are trying to improve our lower-d democracy—to open up a window into how they do the work they do."

–Melody Kramer, Wikimedia Foundation/Poynter Institute

Pros & Cons Today

- Platforms have changed the direct relationship news organizations had with their audience.

- The press is under attack from other institutions, which creates conflict for the public.

- Rise of a new breed of partisan online media can create a "I trust it because I agree with it" scenario.

- Individual journalists can build their own brands and connect directly with the audience.

- The web and online world makes it easier to cite sources, show our work.

- It also makes it easier to collaborate with people and build a connection.

- There are new opportunities to use technology to determine trustworthy content and to elevate it.

The Trust Project

Out of an initial set of 37, the Trust Project collaborators decided on a core set of eight Trust Indicators to implement first. They are:

- **Best Practices:** What are your standards? Who funds the news outlet? What is the outlet's mission? Plus commitments to ethics, diverse voices, accuracy, making corrections and other standards.
- **Author/Reporter Expertise:** Who made this? Details about the journalist, including their expertise and other stories they have worked on.
- **Type of Work:** What is this? Labels to distinguish opinion, analysis and advertiser (or sponsored) content from news reports.
- **Citations and References:** For investigative or in-depth stories, access to the sources behind the facts and assertions.
- **Methods:** Also for in-depth stories, information about why reporters chose to pursue a story and how they went about the process.
- **Locally Sourced?** Lets you know when the story has local origin or expertise. Was the reporting done on the scene, with deep knowledge about the local situation or community?
- **Diverse Voices:** A newsroom's efforts and commitment to bringing in diverse perspectives. Readers noticed when certain voices, ethnicities, or political persuasions were missing.
- **Actionable Feedback:** A newsroom's efforts to engage the public's help in setting coverage priorities, contributing to the reporting process, ensuring accuracy and other areas. Readers want to participate and provide feedback that might alter or expand a story.

Proposed Indicator (based on workshops). HOVER OVER COLOR BAR or CLICK ON BOX FOR DEFINITIONS	Proposed Tools/Features (developed in Trust Project workshops on user needs)
Easily accessible: a) Editorial guidelines b) Company ownership c) Funding sources	User trust rating incorporated into browser extension: 1) User builds a trust profile to define algorithm 2) Surfaces content that likely to appeal 3) Surfaces opposing views 4) Filters by demographic and location information to provide different perspectives
Ombudsperson	Tool to identify new sources/ voices on topic of interest (see SmartNews, Notify)
Corrections policy and practices	Provide new source/topic each day
Mission Statement (Hold power accountable)	GPS location app that shows relevant local stories and friends
Ethics policy/Link to a code of ethics at start of every article	Tool for user curation: Allow users to more easily share news and curate comments, comment herself; package her posts; create news summaries
Diversity policy/Link to diversity policy, including on sourcing (voices)	Social fact-checking tool
Disclosure of conflicts-of-interest	Personalized email to push stories to user based on algorithms, machine learning
Links for users to suggest diverse sources (voices)	Collect international news sources on hot topics
Author bio linked to byline with details of expertise, history, political affiliation, potential conflicts-of-interest	
Describe why author chose this issue to cover	

Credibility Coalition

CREDIBILITY COALITION

News credibility is the challenge of our time.

Can we agree on scientific and systematic ways to assess reliable information, and whether they can be applied at scale? Our community-driven approach explores this question through collaboratively-structured definitions and shared results from tests for content credibility.

Trusting News Project

An RJI research project
TRUSTING NEWS

HOME | **WHAT WE LEARNED** | **SEARCH THE POSTS** | **NEWSROOM PARTNERS** | **ABOUT**

Helping journalists earn news consumers' trust

How do people decide what news is trustworthy? And how can journalists influence what users consume and share? This site shares findings from the Trusting News project. Follow our current experiments in real time on our Medium publication.

Journalists are working with our project on ways to stand out in a minefield of misinformation. We want journalists and newsrooms to feel empowered, not hopeless. Our current experiments are based on 8,728 user questionnaires and 81 in-depth interviews, conducted in 2017 by journalists in these newsrooms. We've turned the insights gathered into concrete strategies for newsrooms, and we're testing them now.

FB The Fresno Bee
Published by Kathy Mahan [?] · September 27 · 🌐

You can now smash a car window to set an animal free. That news and much more in today's curated morning newsletter.

California law helps dogs, Fresno State professor honored and Fresno's water troubles illustrated – your Morning Scoop

FRESNOBEE.COM

Tony Montero and shame on the fresno bee for making a bold statement: as to say "you may now break a window" NO... No you may not! it's not that simple! try reading what that law clearly intells. before you mislead the public.
Like · Reply · Storify · September 27 at 12:52pm

> **FB The Fresno Bee** ✔ Yes, you may, Tony. Under the law, the person must contact authorities, but if it's clear law enforcement won't arrive in time to save the animal, and the vehicle is locked, the person will be immune from liability if he or she smashes a window. That's the point. Before, you couldn't bust a window without fear of being sued.
> Like · Reply · Storify · Commented on by Jody Murray [?] · September 27 at 1:14pm

> **Tony Martin** But you may now smash a window to get an animal out. So they are reporting a new story. Stating facts about it all over the article. And a truthful headline. And you upset because you didn't read the whole thing? Or you upset because it's a headline and did what it was supposed to do and get people to read about it?
> Like · Reply · Storify · September 28 at 7:06pm

Takeaway: Make time to fact-check comments. Prevent false statements from going unchallenged.

Link to original post

Newsroom: Fort Collins Coloradoan
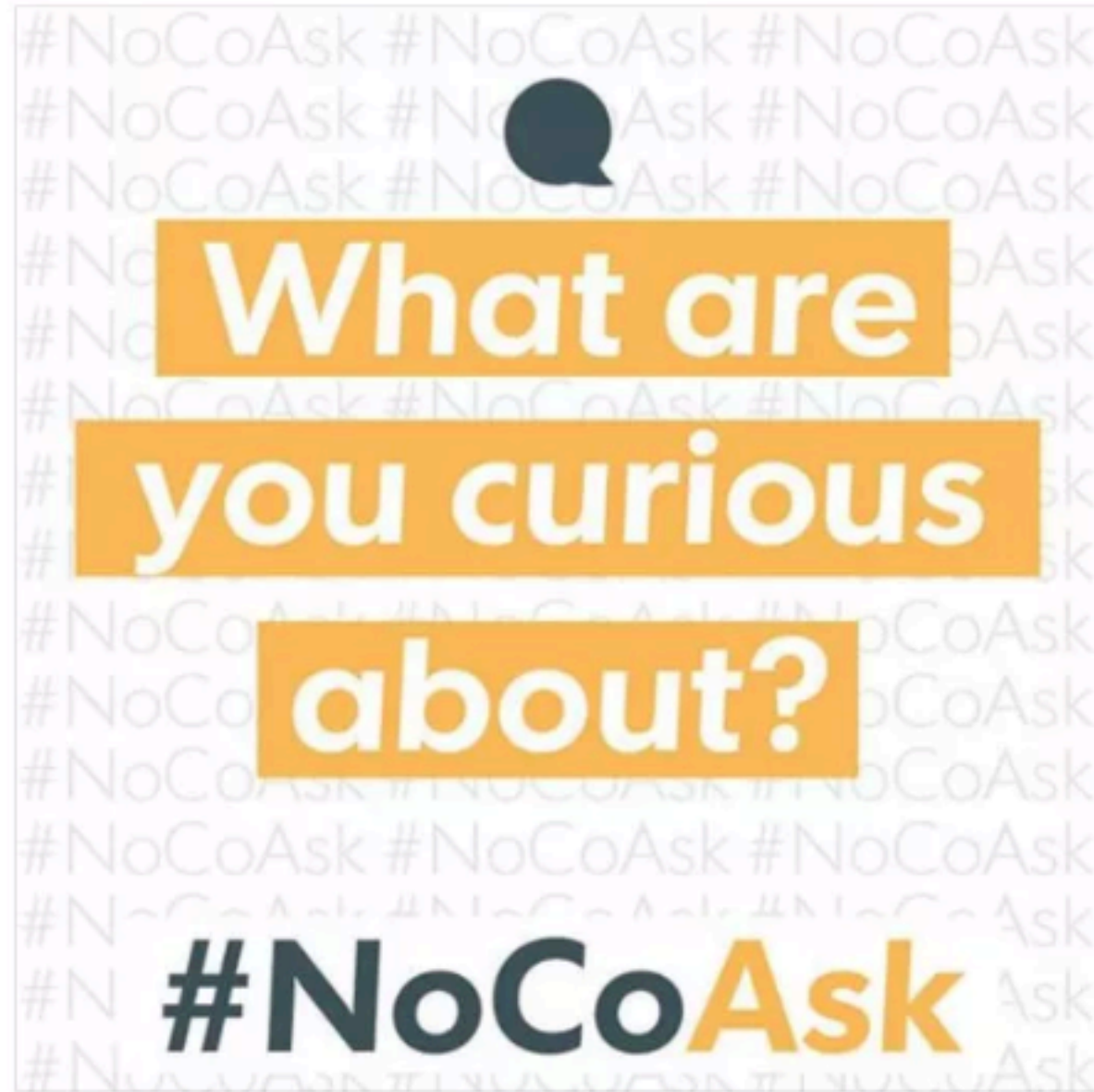
Type of post: Boosted post, Still image

Followers: Less than 50,000

The Coloradoan
Published by Hootsuite [?] · August 25 · 🌐

As journalists, we get to learn something new about our community every day. #NoCoAsk aims to share that passion, to help better understand the world around us, with you. Learn more: http://noconow.co/2bQ80iv

#NoCoAsk #NoCoAsk #NoCoAsk
#NoCoAsk #NoCoAsk #NoCoAsk

What are you curious about?

#NoCoAsk

Takeaway: When you share content, include what about that content provides value to users. Demonstrate your commitment, expertise, values, etc. Also, invite people into your reporting process.

Link to original post

Summary

- The principles remain the same. We are still seeking to build human trust and connection.

- Our new media environment has challenges and opportunities for building trust and being transparent. Journalists must embrace this and work at it.

- New initiatives are working in this area, but journalists must still do the work. There are no shortcuts.

- Confusion and criticism are not reasons to abandon principles.

Best Practices

Agenda

- Showing your work/sharing source material.

- Being transparent about methods and limitations.

- Collaborating with the audience.

Showing Your Work

Investigations

Woman says Roy Moore initiated sexual encounter when she was 14, he was 32

By **Stephanie McCrummen, Beth Reinhard** and **Alice Crites**

November 9, 2017 ✉ Email the author

Corfman described her story consistently in six interviews with The Post. The Post confirmed that her mother attended a hearing at the courthouse in February 1979 through divorce records. Moore's office was down the hall from the courtroom.

Neither Corfman nor any of the other women sought out The Post. While reporting a story in Alabama about supporters of Moore's Senate campaign, a Post reporter heard that Moore allegedly had sought relationships with teenage girls. Over the ensuing three weeks, two Post reporters contacted and interviewed the four women. All were initially reluctant to speak publicly but chose to do so after multiple interviews, saying they thought it was important for people to know about their interactions with Moore. The women say they don't know one another.

"I have prayed over this," Corfman says, explaining why she decided to tell her story now. "All I know is that I can't sit back and let this continue, let him continue without the mask being removed."

This account is based on interviews with more than 30 people who said they knew Moore between 1977 and 1982, when he served as an assistant district attorney for Etowah County in northern Alabama, where he grew up.

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Takeaways

- The story anticipated and addressed objections.

- It answers key questions: How did you get this story, what is it based on, what are the motivations of your sources?

- It makes it clear what work was performed to test and verify sources and information.

Sharing Source Material

- Link to sources. Credit other outlets.

- Upload original documents to DocumentCloud and link to them.

- Put code on GitHub.

- Embed social content.

How PolitiFact Shows Its Source Material

BuzzFeed News Example

An Inside Look At The Accounts Twitter Has Censored In Countries Around The World

BuzzFeed News has identified more than 1,700 Twitter accounts that have been blocked in at least one country. The list provides an unprecedented glimpse into Twitter's collaboration with national groups and governments — democratic and authoritarian alike — and provides new details about a surge in blocked accounts in Germany, France, and Turkey.

Posted on January 24, 2018, at 8:01 a.m.

Craig Silverman
BuzzFeed News Media Editor

Jeremy Singer-Vine
BuzzFeed News Reporter

- Gave basic explanation of methodology high in the story, pointed readers to more detailed info at end.

- Admitted the limitations of the data.

- Step by step explanation of the process.

- Invited readers to send us other examples using a Google Form.

How we got the data

Starting in early October, BuzzFeed News tried to identify as many "withheld" accounts as it could. To do so, we used Twitter's search interface, its API (its "application programming interface" provided to developers), the Lumen database of removal requests, and other resources.

So far, we've found 1,714 users who, based on Twitter's own API, have been withheld in at least one country. While this represents the most comprehensive list of withheld accounts ever made public, it's unclear how representative it is of the entire universe of withheld accounts. Twitter at times also withholds specific tweets from certain countries; this data set does not address those.

To start, we seeded a database with users listed in Twitter users' personal blocklists, such as this one published by @NaziBlocker. Many of the users on these lists are not withheld in any country, however. To broaden our database, we also added usernames mentioned in Lumen's database of legal complaints and removal requests, accounts we found through manual research, and users listed on "Cemetery of Free Speech," a website (no longer accessible at the time of publication) that tracks accounts and tweets withheld in Germany.

Then, we fed these lists of users through Twitter's API, which provides data about each account — including, crucially, an attribute named "withheld_in_countries." For accounts that were, indeed, withheld in at least one country, we then used Twitter's API to find all of the users that the account followed, and then checked whether any of those accounts had been withheld.

We continued this process until we could find no more withheld users. In all, we examined nearly 800,000 accounts.

Our database of withheld users is, unavoidably, incomplete. Some withheld accounts, for instance, may have been deactivated (by Twitter or the user) or unwithheld before we could identify them. And our approach to finding accounts likely has its own blind spots.

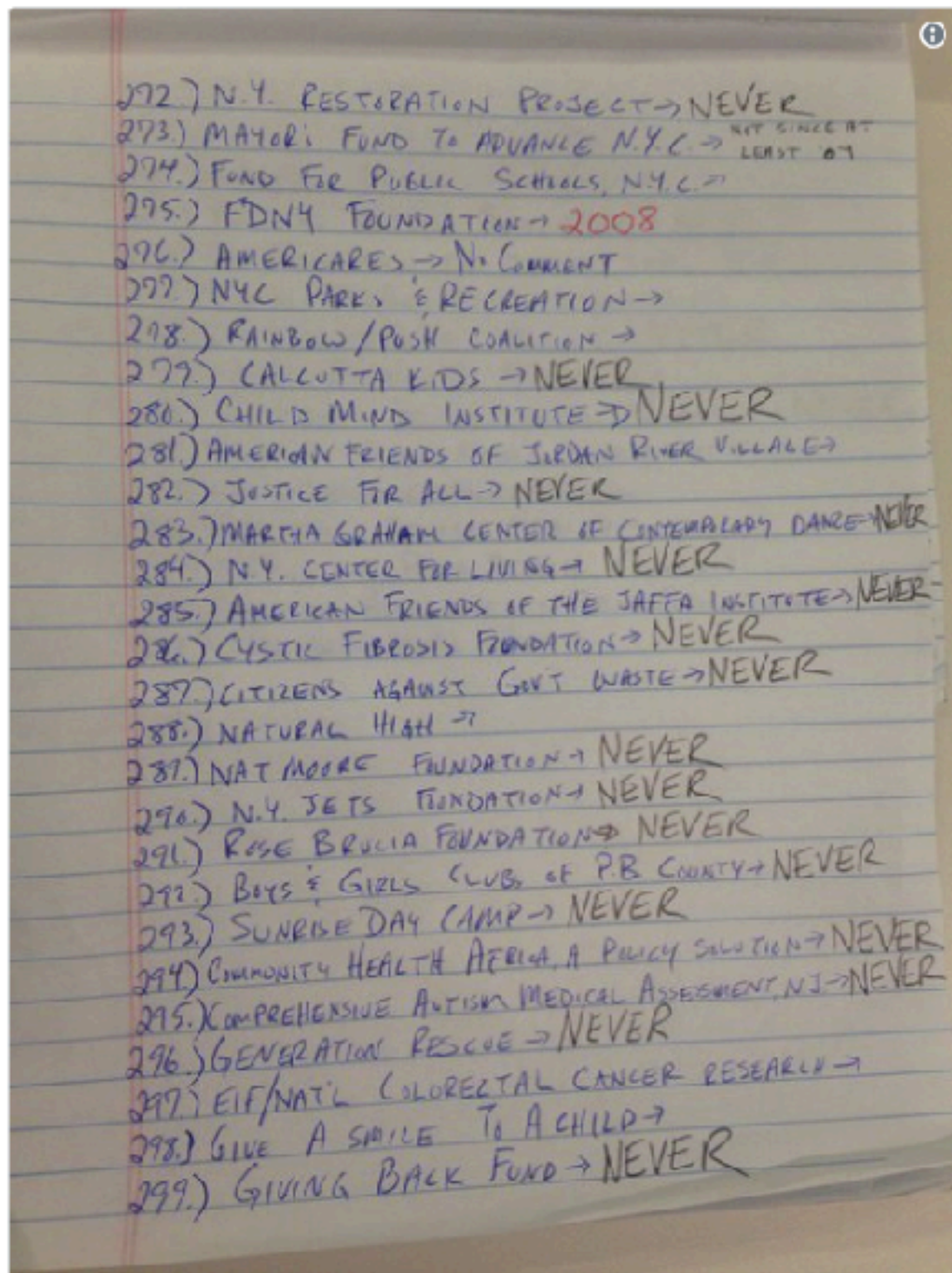We encourage readers to send us examples of users we may have missed. To submit an example, click here. ●

Collaborating With The Audience

Missing from Trump's list of charitable giving: His own personal cash

What Donald Trump is doing on the campaign trail

Left image (handwritten list):

272.) N.Y. RESTORATION PROJECT → NEVER
273.) MAYOR'S FUND To ADVANCE N.Y.C. → NOT SINCE AT LEAST 09
274.) FUND FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS, N.Y.C →
275.) FDNY FOUNDATION → 2008
276.) AMERICARES → N. COMMENT
277.) NYC PARKS & RECREATION →
278.) RAINBOW / PUSH COALITION →
279.) CALCUTTA KIDS → NEVER
280.) CHILD MIND INSTITUTE → NEVER
281.) AMERICAN FRIENDS OF JORDAN RIVER VILLAGE →
282.) JUSTICE FOR ALL → NEVER
283.) MARTHA GRAHAM CENTER OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE → NEVER
284.) N.Y. CENTER FOR LIVING → NEVER
285.) AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE JAFFA INSTITUTE → NEVER
286.) CYSTIC FIBROSIS FOUNDATION → NEVER
287.) CITIZENS AGAINST GOV'T WASTE → NEVER
288.) NATURAL HIGH →
289.) NAT MOORE FOUNDATION → NEVER
290.) N.Y. JETS FOUNDATION → NEVER
291.) ROSE BROLIA FOUNDATION → NEVER
292.) BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF P.B. COUNTY → NEVER
293.) SUNRISE DAY CAMP → NEVER
294.) COMMUNITY HEALTH AFRICA, A POLICY SOLUTION → NEVER
295. COMPREHENSIVE AUTISM MEDICAL ASSESSMENT, NJ → NEVER
296.) GENERATION RESCUE → NEVER
297.) EIF / NAT'L COLORECTAL CANCER RESEARCH →
298.) GIVE A SMILE TO A CHILD →
299.) GIVING BACK FUND → NEVER

David Fahrenthold ✓
@Fahrenthold

I've now called 313 charities in my search for proof
@realDonaldTrump gives his own money away. Not much luck lately
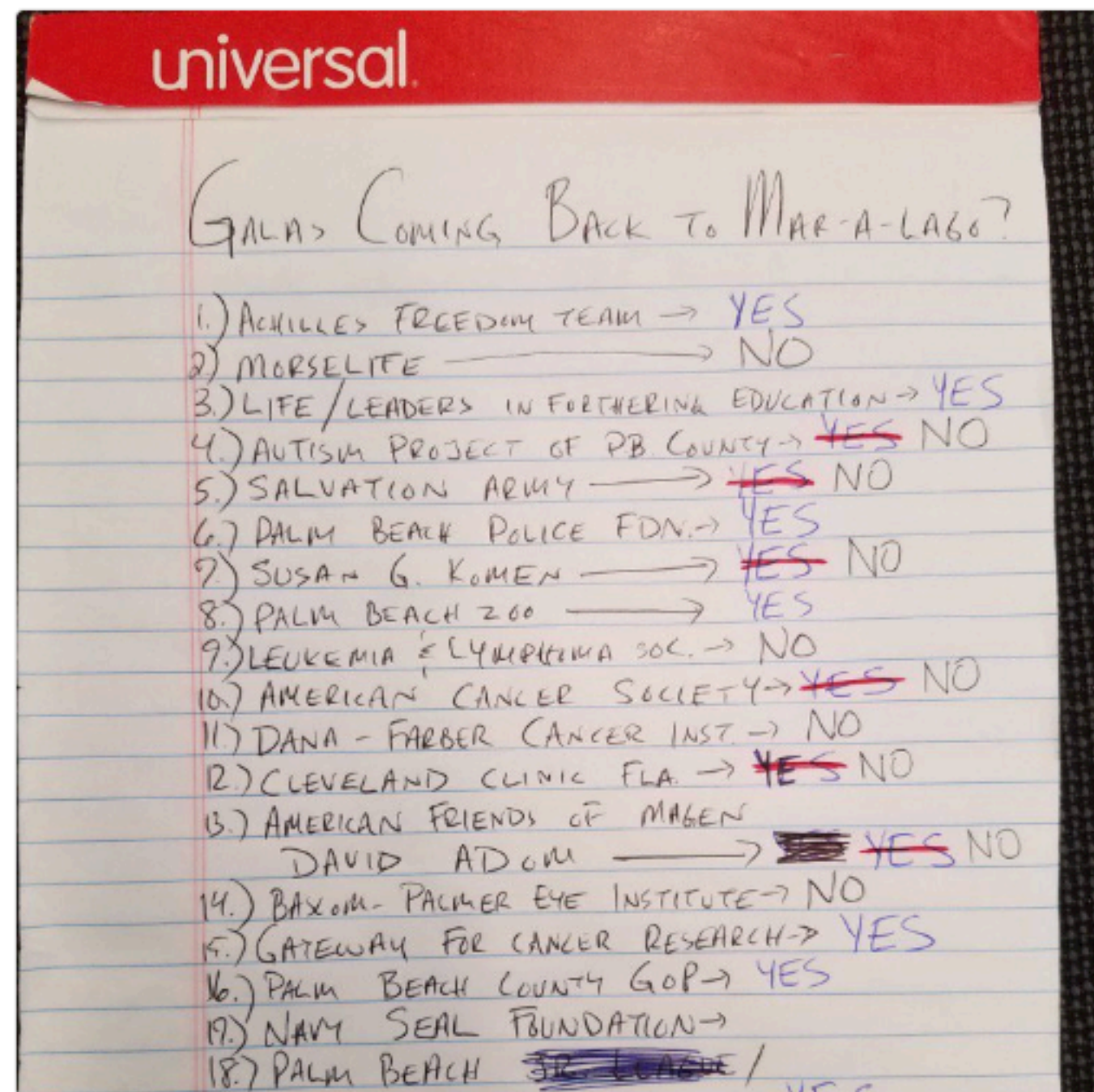
5:36 PM - Sep 2, 2016

♡ 4,647   💬 4,324 people are talking about this

Right image:

David Fahrenthold ✓
@Fahrenthold

Following

UPDATED: list of charities holding galas at @realDonaldTrump's Mar-a-Lago next yr. Seven have gone from yes to no.

Handwritten list (universal notepad):

GALAS COMING BACK TO MAR-A-LAGO?

1.) ACHILLES FREEDOM TEAM → YES
2.) MORSELIFE → NO
3.) LIFE / LEADERS IN FURTHERING EDUCATION → YES
4.) AUTISM PROJECT OF P.B. COUNTY → ~~YES~~ NO
5.) SALVATION ARMY → ~~YES~~ NO
6.) PALM BEACH POLICE FDN. → YES
7.) SUSAN G. KOMEN → ~~YES~~ NO
8.) PALM BEACH ZOO → YES
9.) LEUKEMIA & LYMPHOMA SOC. → NO
10.) AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY → ~~YES~~ NO
11.) DANA - FARBER CANCER INST. → NO
12.) CLEVELAND CLINIC FLA. → ~~YES~~ NO
13.) AMERICAN FRIENDS OF MAGEN DAVID ADOM → ~~YES~~ NO
14.) BAXOM - PALMER EYE INSTITUTE → NO
15.) GATEWAY FOR CANCER RESEARCH → YES
16.) PALM BEACH COUNTY GOP → YES
17.) NAVY SEAL FOUNDATION →
18.) PALM BEACH ~~LEAGUE~~ / YES

1:53 PM - 18 Aug 2017

3,179 Retweets   5,938 Likes

FAHRENTHOLD: What I wanted to do with this was give people a way to see what I did. I'm not trying to conceal anything about what I've tried and I'm open to people suggestions. If people write to me and say I'm a hack and you missed this thing, I aways say "tell me more" and I'll put it on my list and I'll call those people. And I've gotten a lot of tips even from people who started out being really hostile. If Trump has a suggestion of where I should look, I'll look. I just want to be transparent about why I called these groups and who I called and what I learned. I'm hoping that people who come in with that degree of distrust see that and appreciate it.

Fahrenthold's prize-winning reporting was a follow-the-money tale that combined dogged reporting — he called 450 charitable organizations to ask them whether Trump had ever donated money — with the creative use of social media, especially Twitter, to "crowdsource" the public's collective knowledge of people and events.

In the process, Post editor Martin Baron said, Fahrenthold, 39, "reimagined" investigative reporting. Traditionally, Baron said, reporters have kept their work "secret and guarded" until they have developed enough information to publish. Fahrenthold instead shared his progress on stories via Twitter and openly asked readers for tips and information that guided his work. Baron noted that this process now has a name: "the Fahrenthold method."

Source: "Washington Post's David Fahrenthold wins Pulitzer Prize for dogged reporting of Trump's philanthropy," Washington Post

Reasons <u>Not</u> To Do A Public Call Out

- It could turn out to be false.

- It could put sources or other people in harm's way.

- It could compromise people's privacy.

- It will undo your work by tipping off people or entities to what's coming.

Credit: Joy Mayer

Summary

- Think about what questions or objections readers/listeners/viewers might have, and work that into your reporting.

- Make it easy for people to see your sources and understand how you got the story.

- Look for places where you can involve the audience by asking for information or sharing your process.