

# How to build trust & understanding with your audience

SNPA News Industry Summit  
Oct. 11, 2018

Slides: [bit.ly/snpa18trust](https://bit.ly/snpa18trust)

AMERICANPRESS  
*institute*

# AMERICANPRESS

*institute*



The American Press Institute advances an innovative and sustainable news industry by helping publishers understand and engage audiences, grow revenue, improve public-service journalism, and succeed at organizational change.



**Jeff Sonderman**

Deputy Executive Director

[jeff.sonderman@pressinstitute.org](mailto:jeff.sonderman@pressinstitute.org)

**We had questions...**

**How much of the  
trust problem is  
caused by confusion?**

**How much of the  
trust problem is  
caused by bad  
experiences?**

**Do journalists  
and the public  
agree on solutions?**

# We asked...



## 2,019 American adults

- Web + telephone
- English + Spanish
- Nationally representative
- Margin +/- 3%



## 1,127 journalists

- 94% local, 6% national
- Outlets:
  - 31% local newspapers
  - 20% local TV
  - 11% digital only
  - 11% magazines
  - 14% radio
  - 8% public radio
  - 5% other
- Margin +/- 3.5%



## ... questions about:

- What people want / expect from the press
- Knowledge of journalism terms / concepts
- Recognizing news vs. opinion
- Experiences with journalists, classes, student media
- News consumption behavior
- What “fake news” means
- What journalists should do differently

**The big picture**

**The public doesn't  
understand how  
journalists work...**

**...and journalism  
doesn't make itself  
understandable to  
much of the public**

# **10 takeaways from 'Americans and the News Media'**

# **1. We agree on ideals**

# 63%

of Americans say the most useful news is  
“mostly facts, with some analysis”

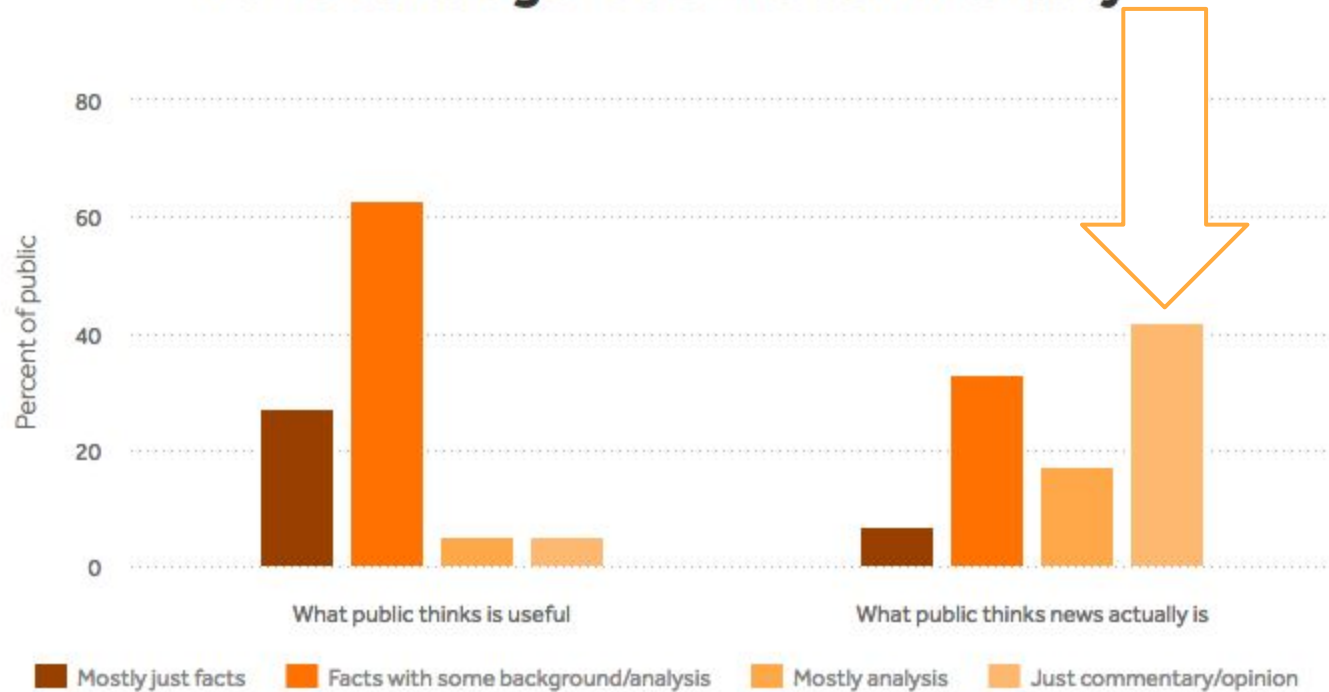
# 66%

of journalists anticipated this is  
what people would want



## **2. Opinion is overdone**

## While people want analysis, they think too much news coverage feels like commentary



# 55%

say it's easy to recognize news vs. opinion  
in the **general news media**

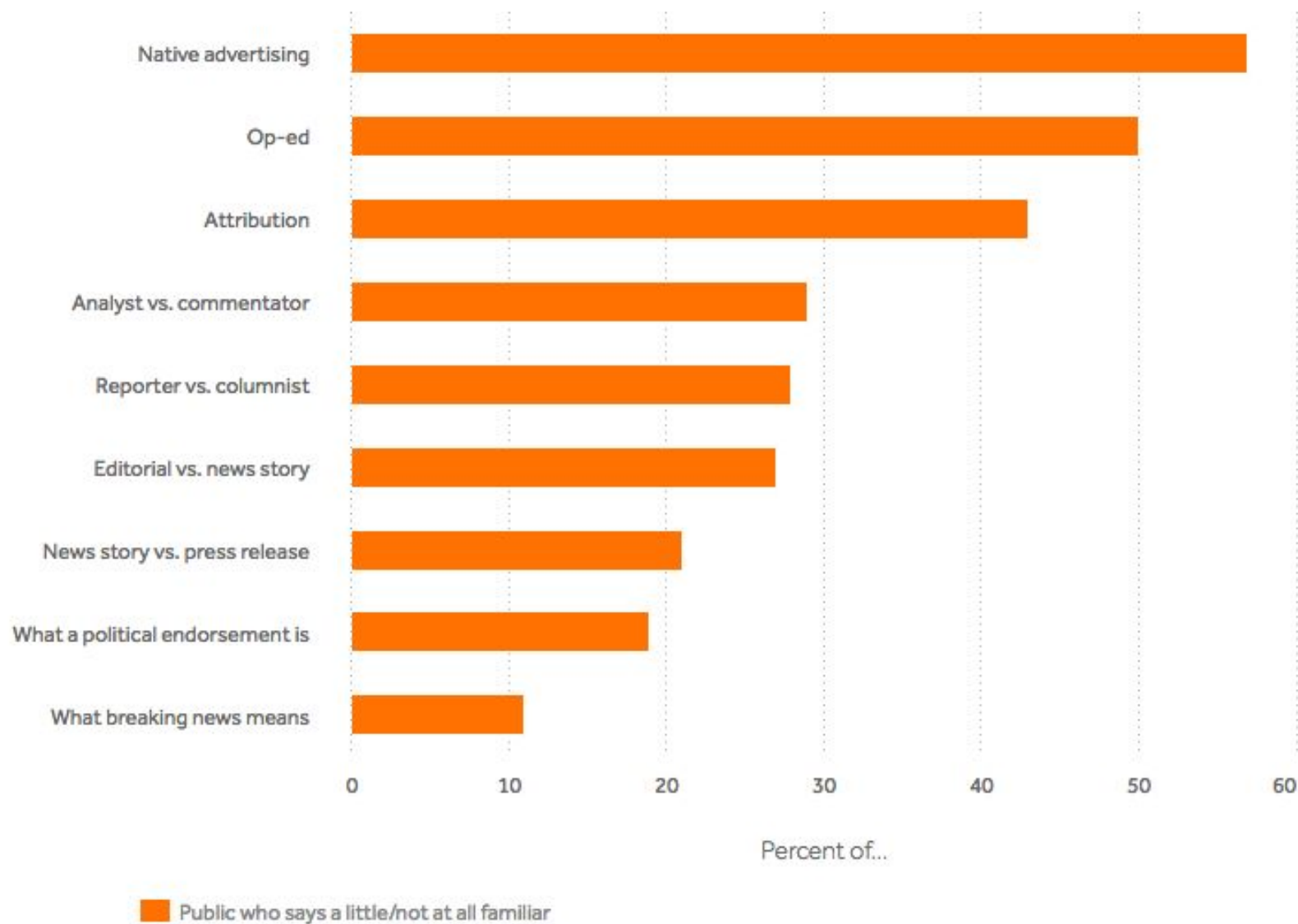
# 43%

Recognize news vs. opinion  
in **social media or news websites**

**The press clearly  
needs to do more to  
clarify what is news,  
opinion, and analysis**

**3. Our terms and concepts  
are confusing**

# Many do not understand key journalism terms



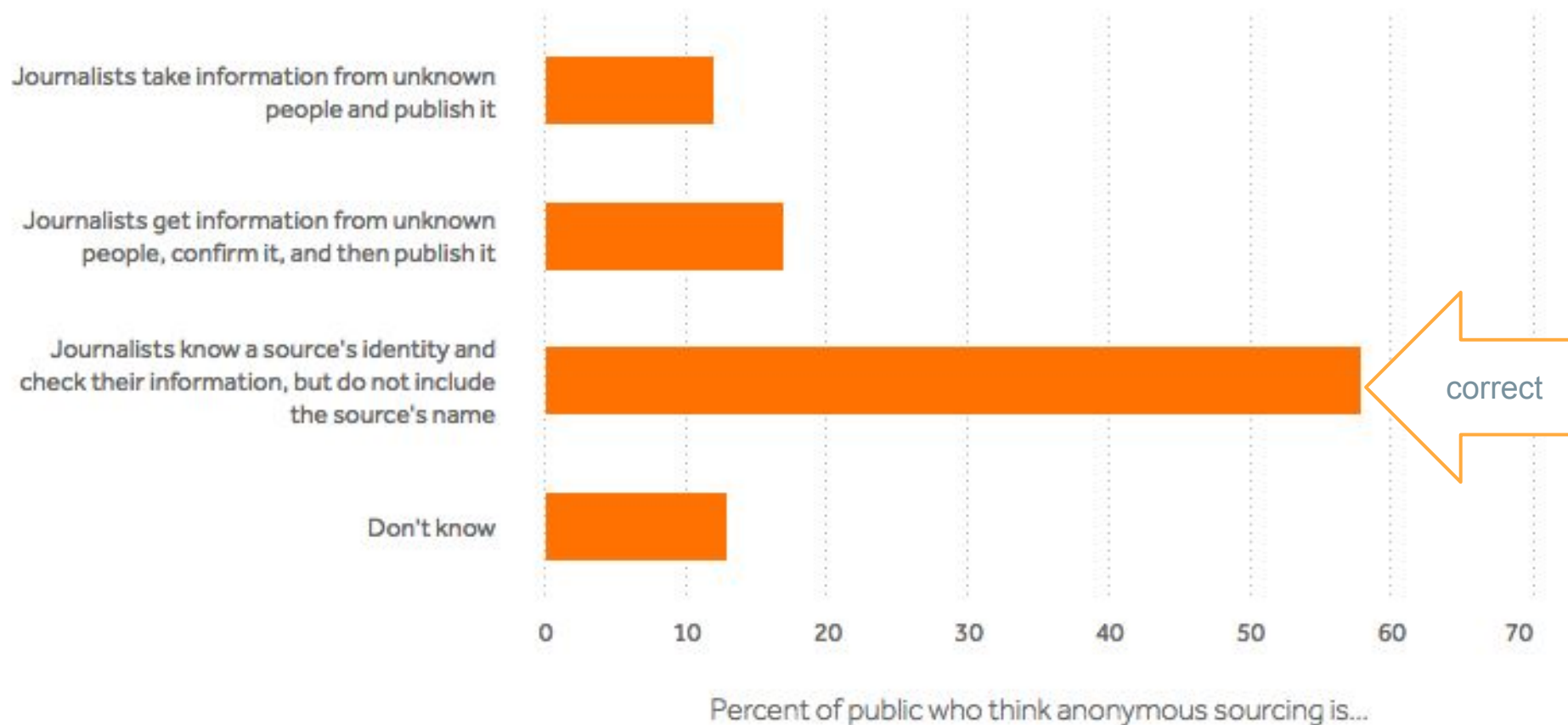
**News orgs should  
explain or avoid  
insider jargon**



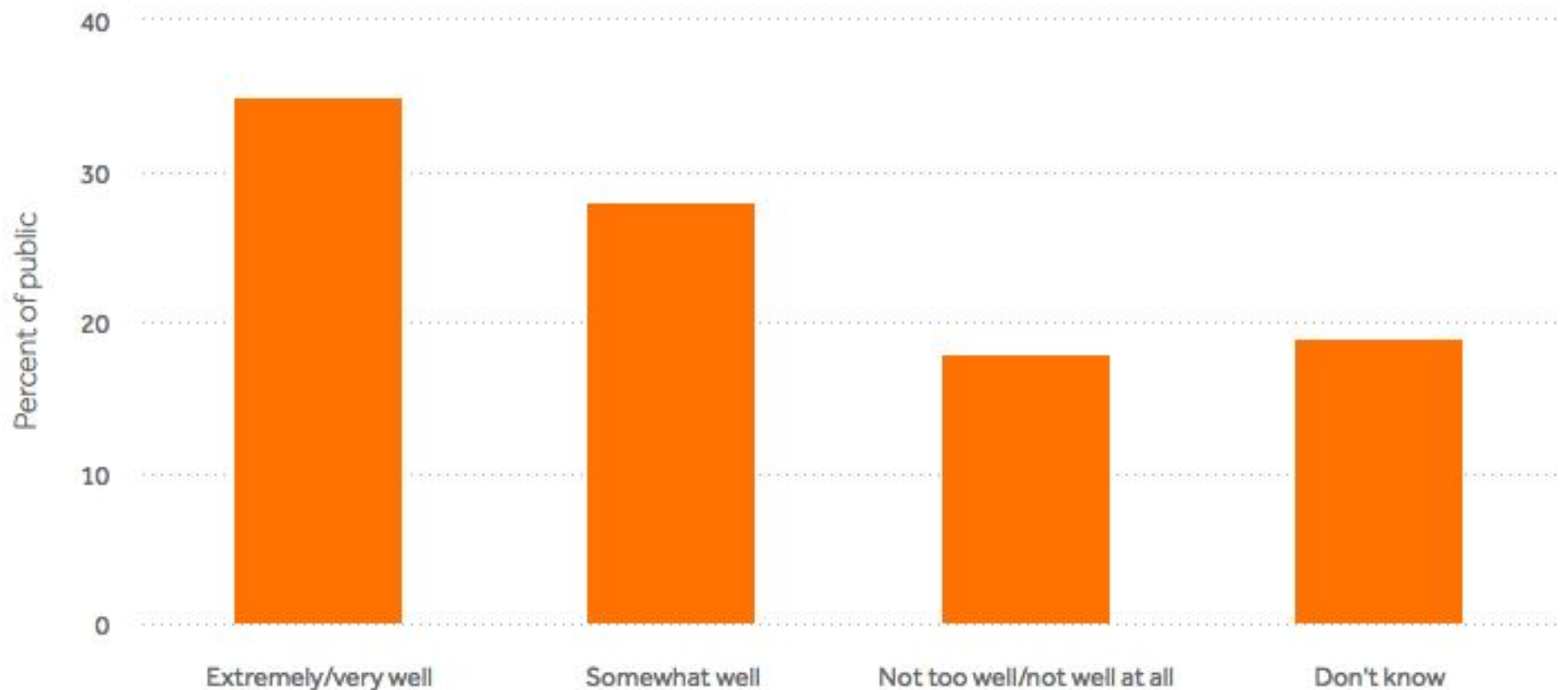
**4. “sources say...”  
is not good enough**

# A majority of the public correctly understands anonymous sourcing

*But 4 in 10 do not*



## Most people do not think their preferred news source explains anonymous sourcing very well



**News orgs should be  
much clearer about  
when and why they  
use anonymity**

**5. We should get together  
more often**

34%

of Americans have personally  
known a journalist

# 21%

of Americans have contacted a journalist  
with ideas or feedback

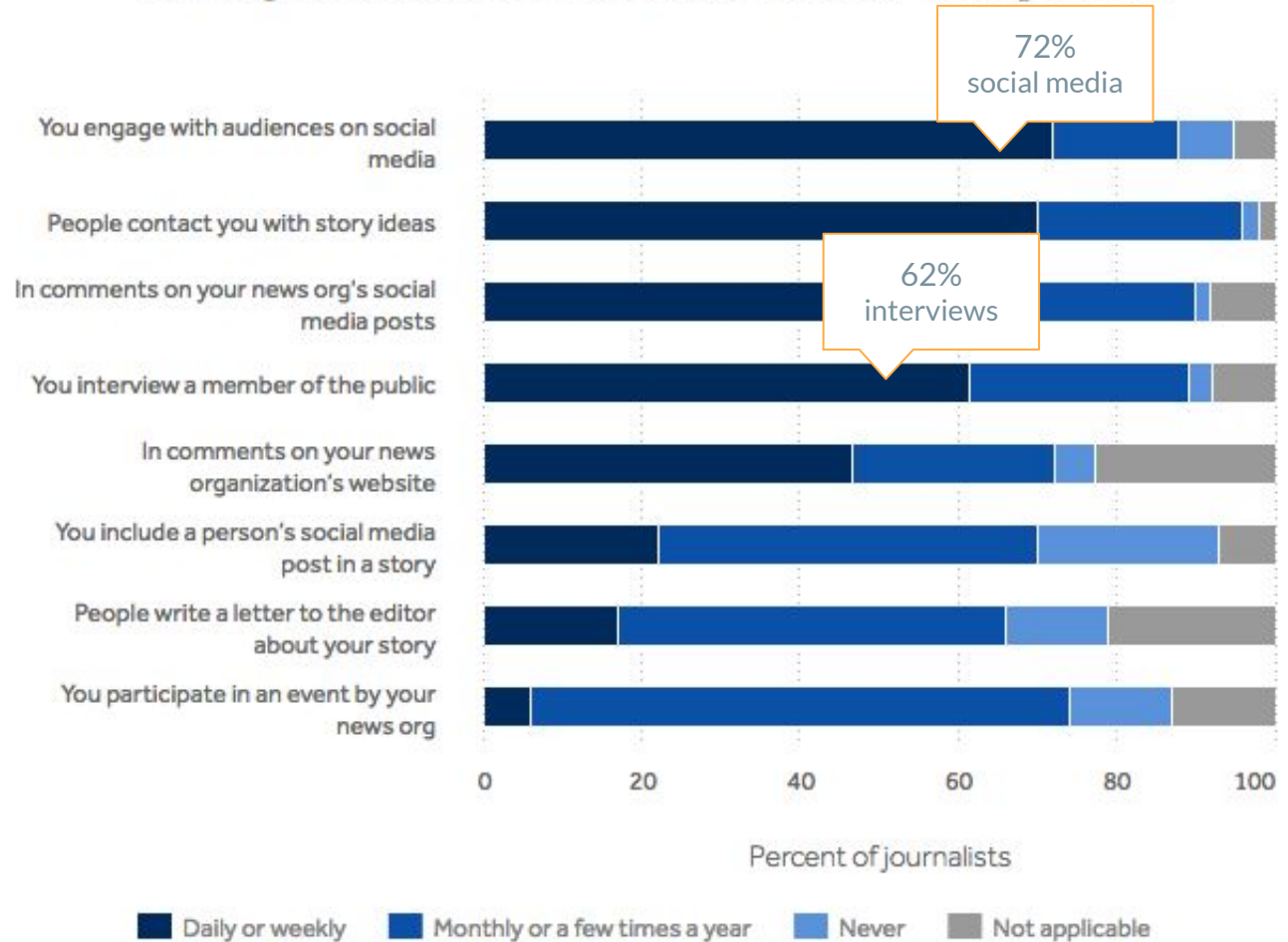
17%

of Americans have conversed with  
a journalist on social media



Journalists  
do more  
social media  
than  
interviews

## How journalists interact with the public



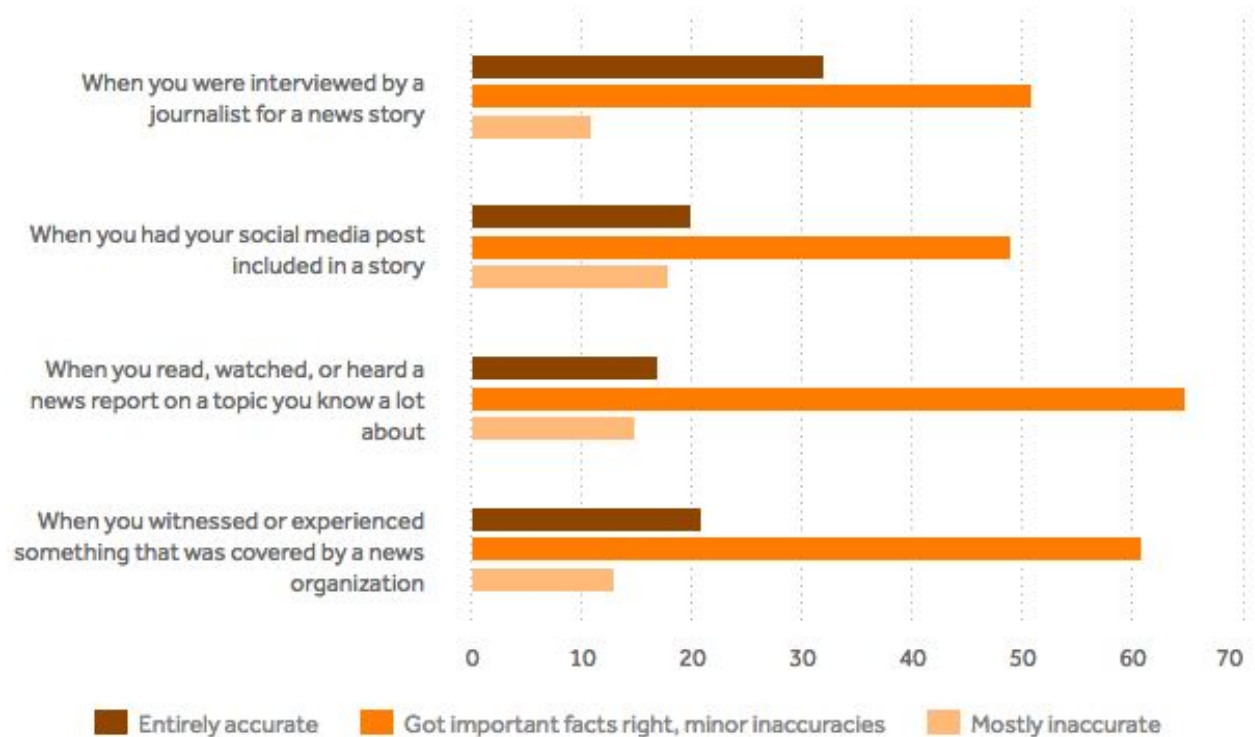
**We need diversity  
and engagement so  
more people know  
and see journalists**

**6. When journalists do interact,  
people are pretty happy**

## Most people who had direct experience with a news story say it got key facts right

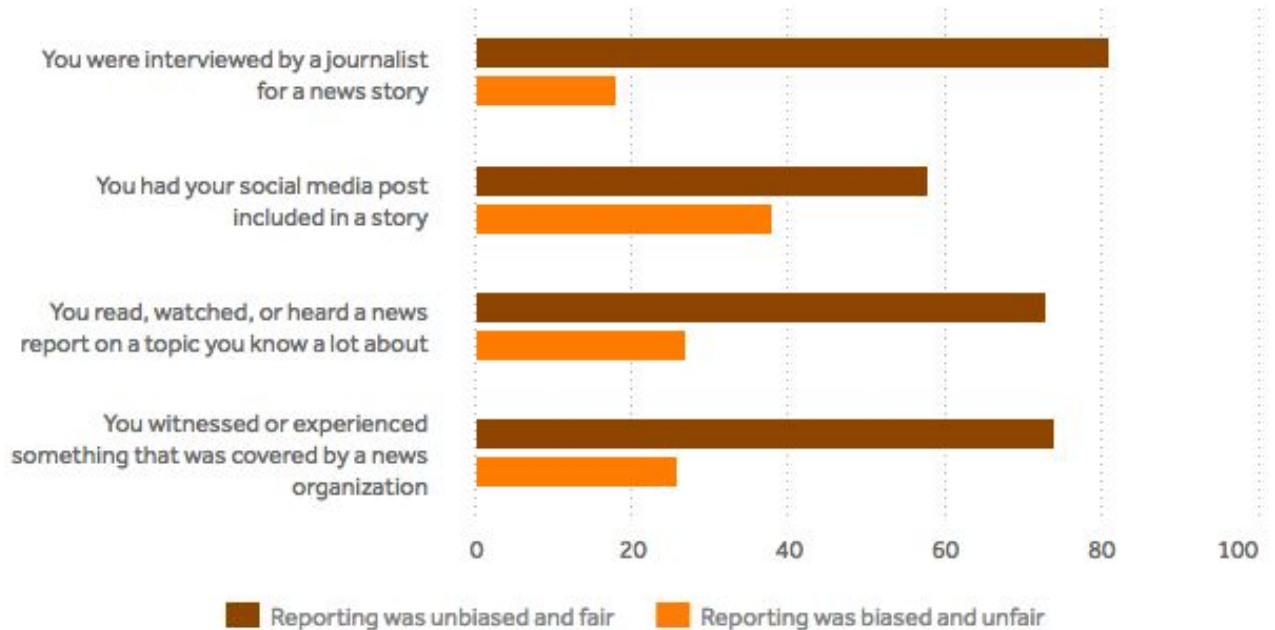
“Got important facts right, with some minor inaccuracies”

*How accurate was the reporting when...*



## People who had interactions with news reporting mostly think it was unbiased and fair

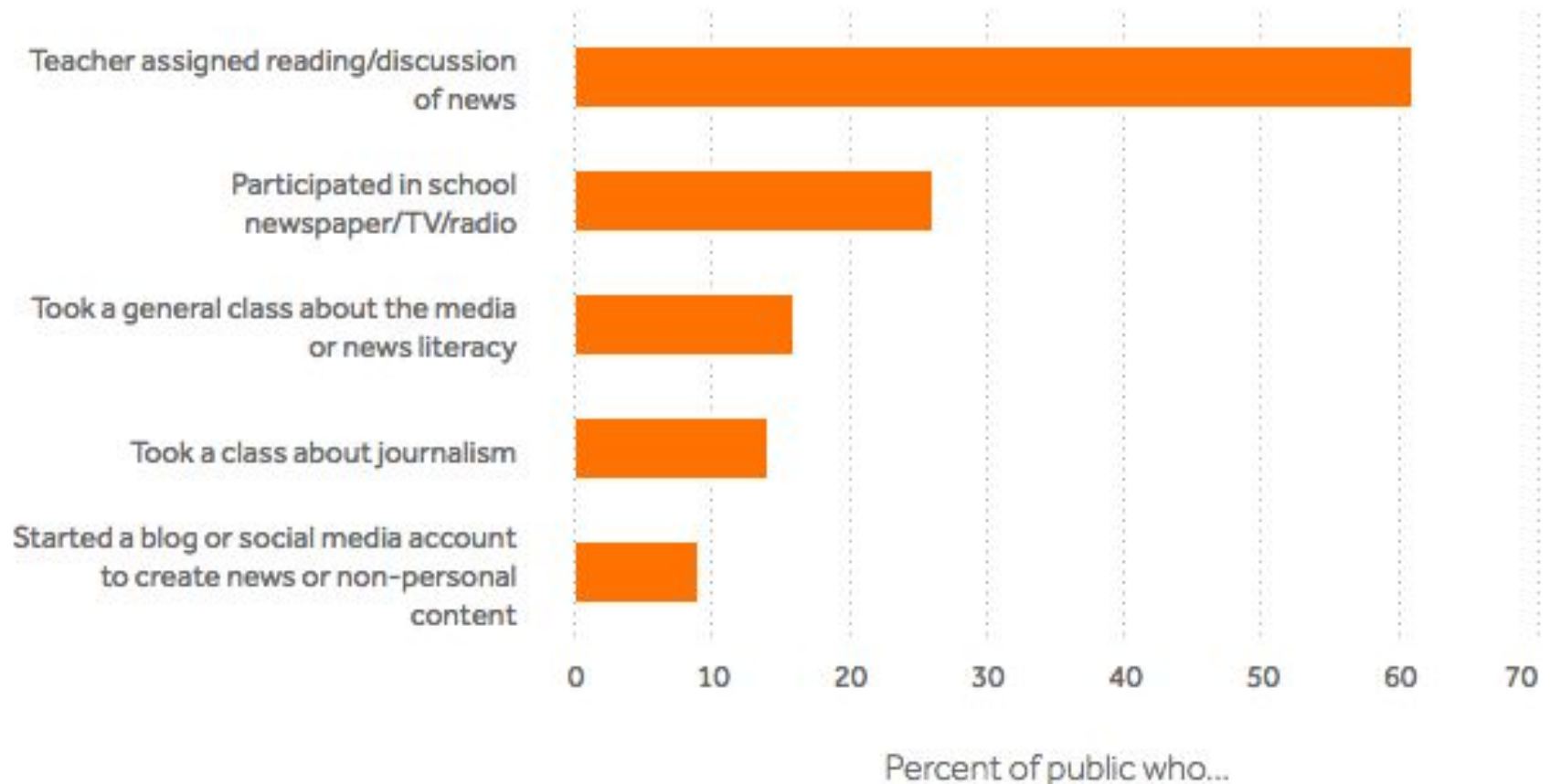
“Reporting was unbiased and fair”



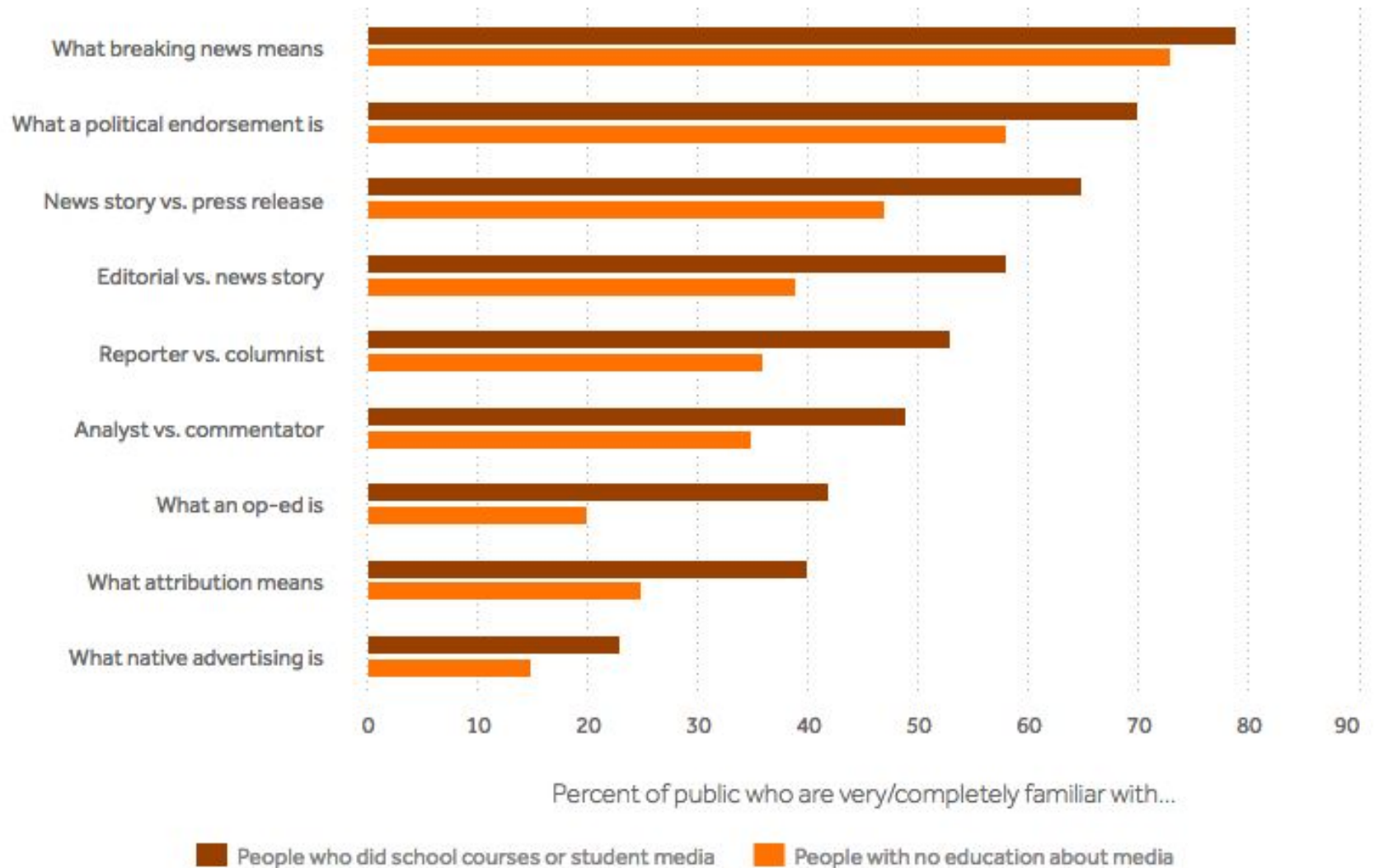
## **7. News education helps, but it is rare**

# Few Americans have taken a course on journalism or news literacy

*1 in 4 have participated in student media*



# School courses or student media experience correlate to more knowledge of news





**8. “Fake news” has  
lost its meaning**

# The public associates multiple meanings with the term "fake news"

Made-up stories from news outlets that don't exist

Media outlets that pass on conspiracy theories and unsubstantiated rumors

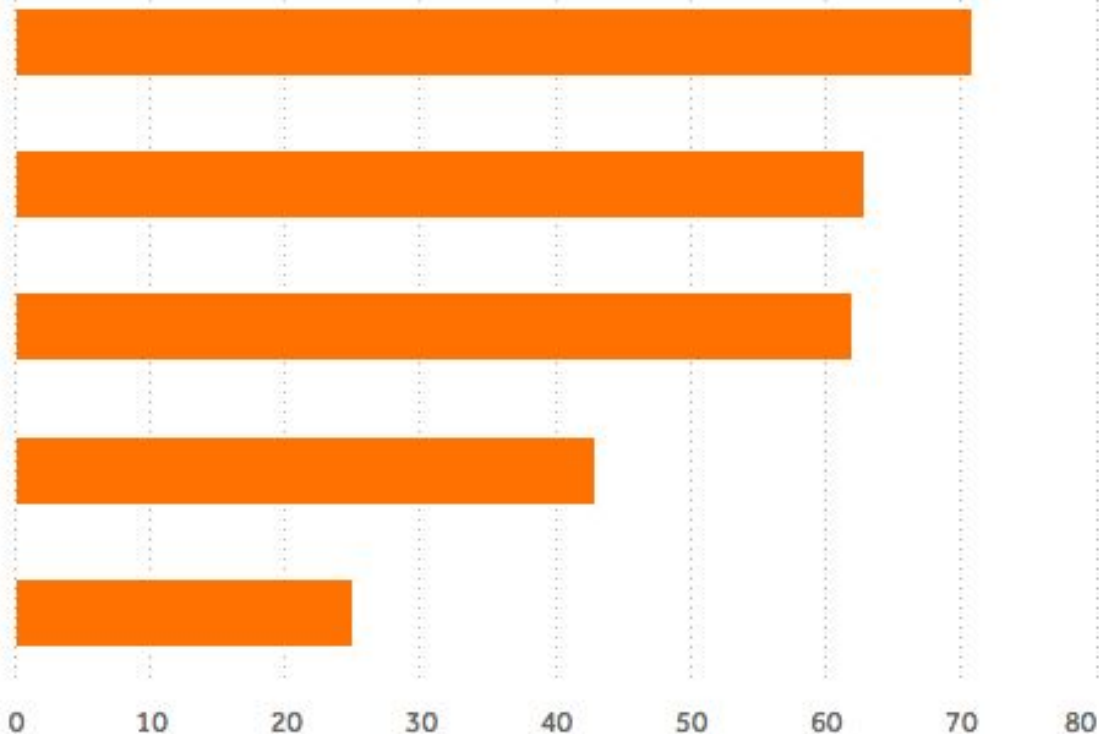
Journalists from real news organizations making stuff up

News stories from real organizations that are unfair or sloppy

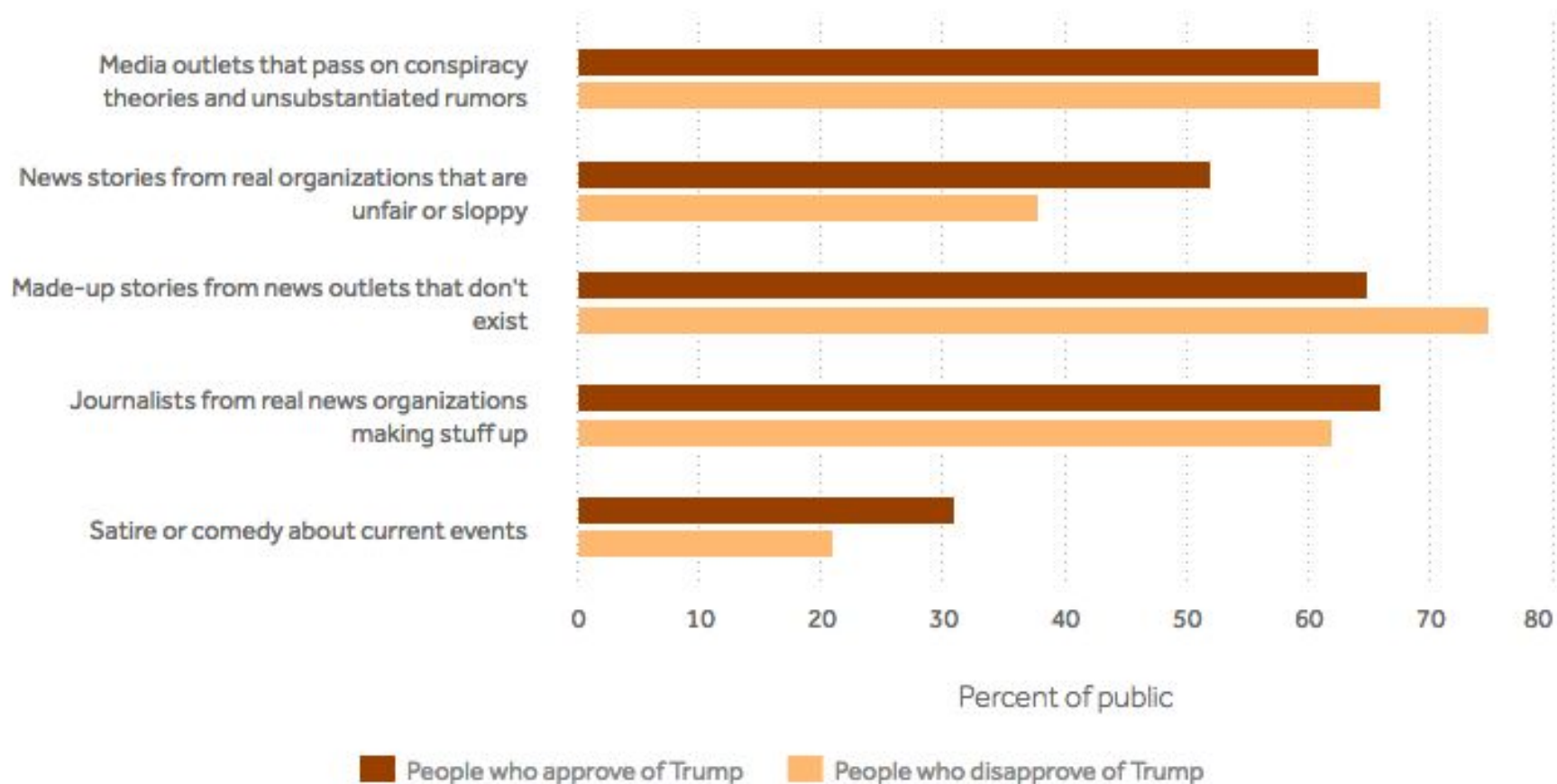
Satire or comedy about current events

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80

Percent of public who selected definition



# Both Trump supporters and opponents label many things "fake news"



**9. Young people are  
very skeptical**

# 53%

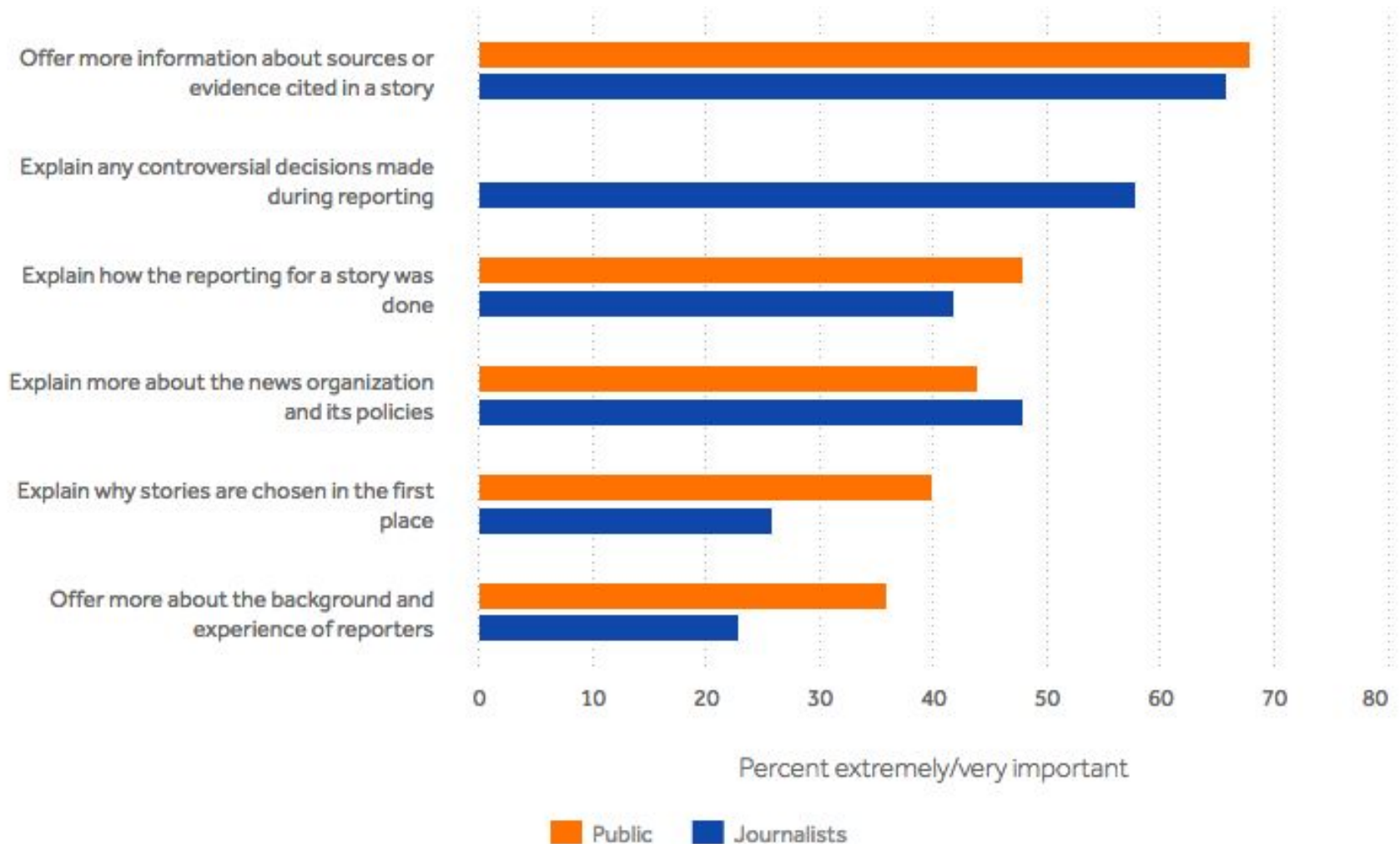
of people under 30 expect  
most news reports to be **fairly inaccurate**

(Republicans = 55%)

## **10. Journalists and the public agree on some solutions**

# Journalists and the public agree more information about sources will increase trust

*What news media should do to build trust*



**Many of us can agree:**  
**Offer sourcing info,**  
**explain reporting,**  
**explain policies**



# Read the full study

[bit.ly/americansandmedia](https://bit.ly/americansandmedia)

Get our newsletter  
for future updates:  
[bit.ly/getapi](https://bit.ly/getapi)

API: Americans and the News Media X

Secure | <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/reports/survey-research/americans-and-the-news-media/>

Jeff - API

**AMERICANPRESS**  
institute

Insights, tools and research to advance journalism


KEY TOPICS ▾ PUBLICATIONS ▾ TRAINING & TOOLS ▾ ABOUT US

SEARCH...

## Americans and the News Media: What they do — and don't — understand about each other

BY THE MEDIA INSIGHT PROJECT  
PUBLISHED 06/11/18 8:00 AM

*This research was conducted by the Media Insight Project — an initiative of the American Press Institute and the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research*



A key factor in the erosion of Americans' trust of their news media is a failure to communicate — we have a public that doesn't fully understand how journalists work, and journalism that doesn't make itself understandable to much of the public.

This fundamental pattern emerges from a new study by the Media Insight Project. We conducted twin surveys of both the public and journalists, asking each group parallel questions about the public's understanding of journalistic

**Americans and the News Media**

Overview

What the public expects from the press

What Americans know, and don't, about journalism

People's education and experiences with news

Feelings about fairness, accuracy and trust

News consumption behaviors

Up close: Newspaper subscribers

Up close: Age groups

Up close: Republicans and Democrats

Methodology

Download PDF or topline

View options

# One idea we suggest

Build news literacy education  
into your news content



**ORGANIC  
NEWS FLUENCY**

The graphic features the text "ORGANIC NEWS FLUENCY" in a bold, sans-serif font. "ORGANIC" is in black, while "NEWS FLUENCY" is in orange. The text is overlaid on a light gray background that includes a stylized illustration of three people sitting and looking at a screen, with a hand holding a pen pointing at the screen.

# The nutrition label effect

- Required since 1994
- 77% of consumers use the nutrition label when purchasing a food item (2014 FDA study)
- 49% of consumers changed their mind about a food purchase (2008 FDA study)

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
8 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>2/3 cup (55g)</b>
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 1g	<b>5%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 160mg	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	<b>13%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	<b>14%</b>
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	<b>20%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%
<small>* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.</small>	

**The nutrition label  
didn't just provide  
new answers**

**It raised  
new questions**

**Imagine if Americans  
saw and expected  
news stories that say  
“how this was made”**

# What questions should you answer?

We provide templates for 9 different types of stories

- Story categories
- Standard news stories
- Non-investigative projects
- Investigations
- Fact-Checks
- Explainers
- Breaking News (live/unplanned)
- Live Events (planned)
- Features
- Opinion

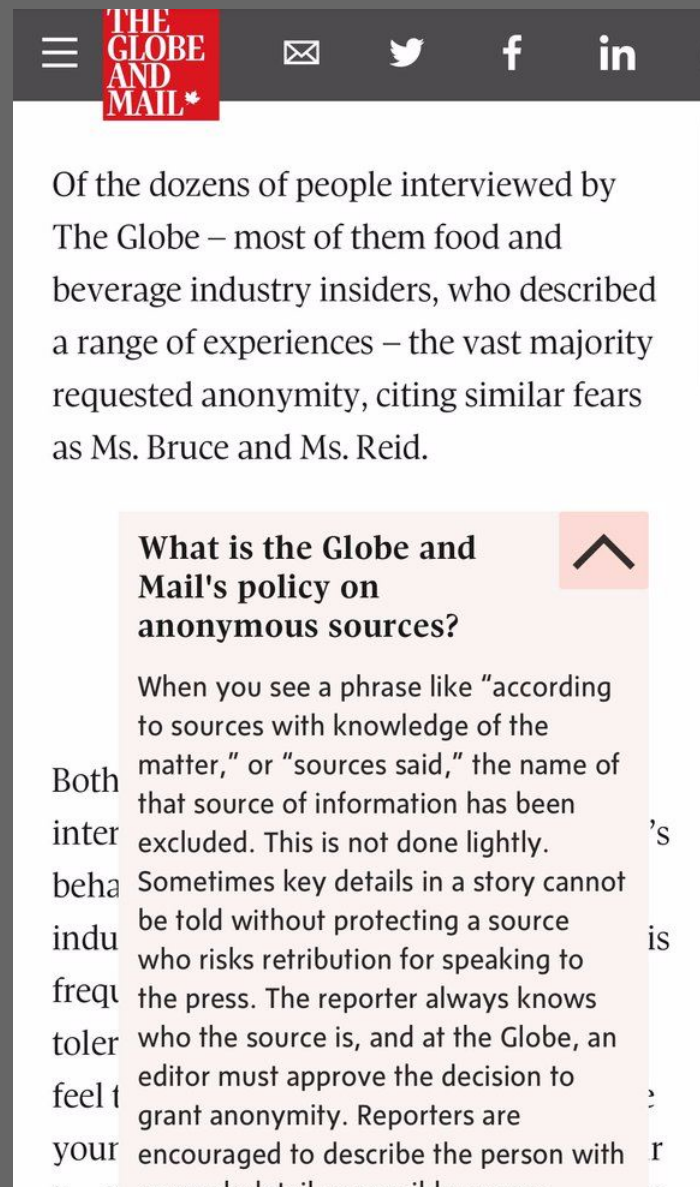
# Questions for an investigation

- Why did we do this story? (Why does this story matter?)
- Who's in this story (the "cast of characters")?
- What do these terms and phrases mean? (Provide glossary of terms.)
- What questions did we set out to answer?
- What do we know now?
- What don't we know?
- What's the evidence?
- Who are the sources and why were they chosen?
- Why are there unnamed sources? What other tough journalism decisions and news-gathering obstacles did we tackle?
- What might happen next, and how and when will we cover it?
- What are the potential solutions?
- How can you respond or get involved?



**Rule of thumb #1:**

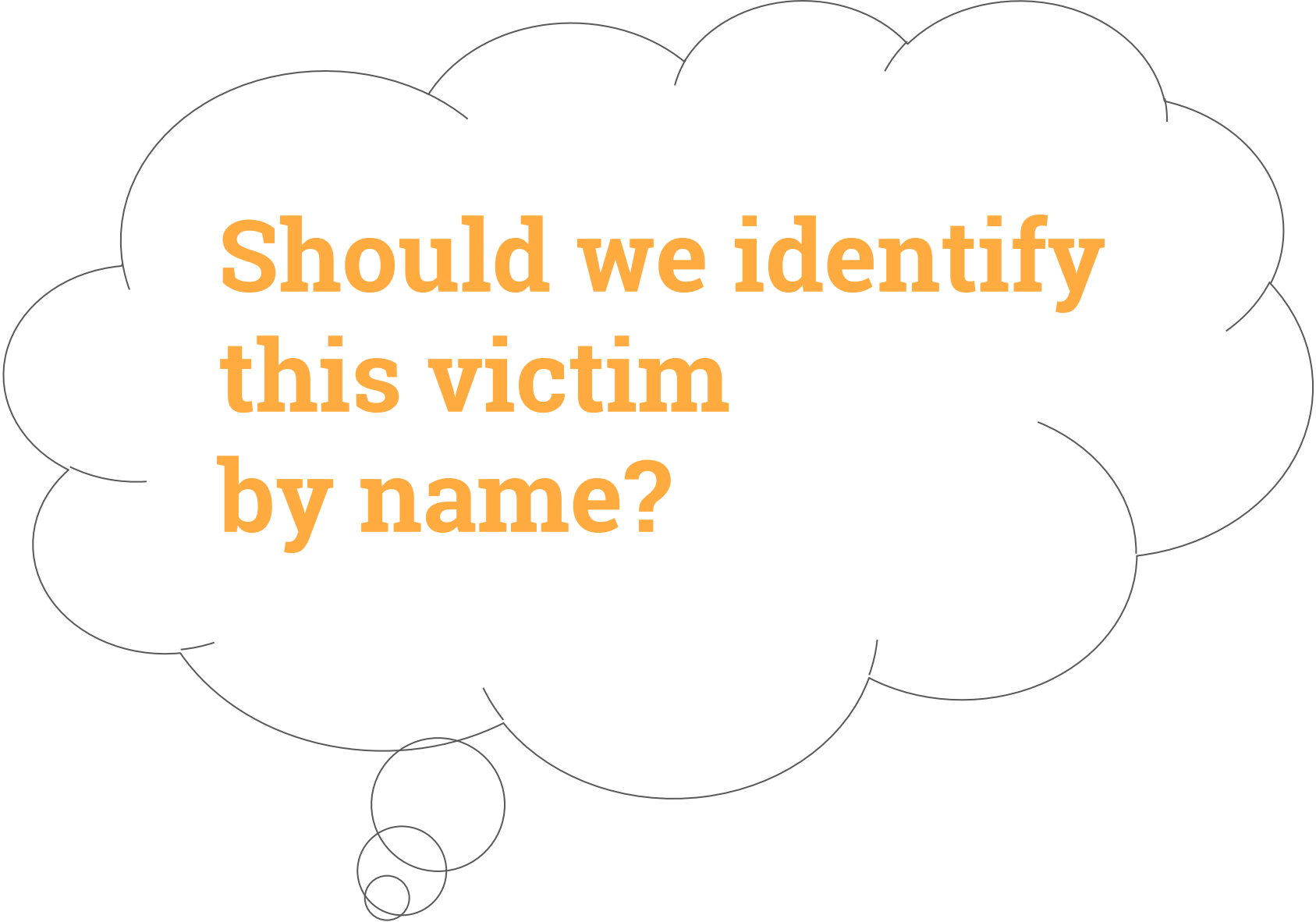
**“Call it out,  
don’t bake it in”**



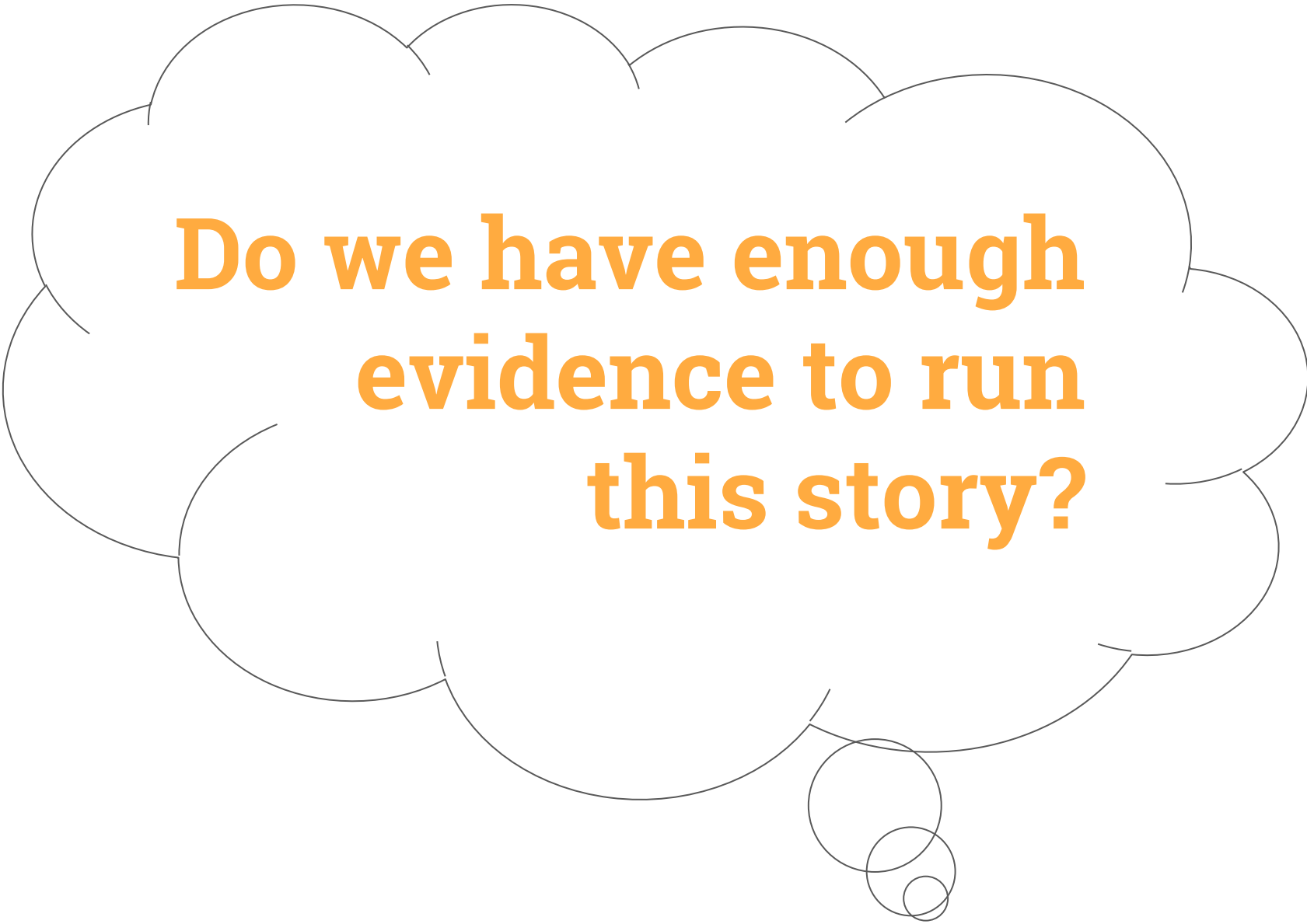
Toronto Globe and Mail  
Expandable in-article explainers called “Globe Primers”

**Rule of thumb #2:**

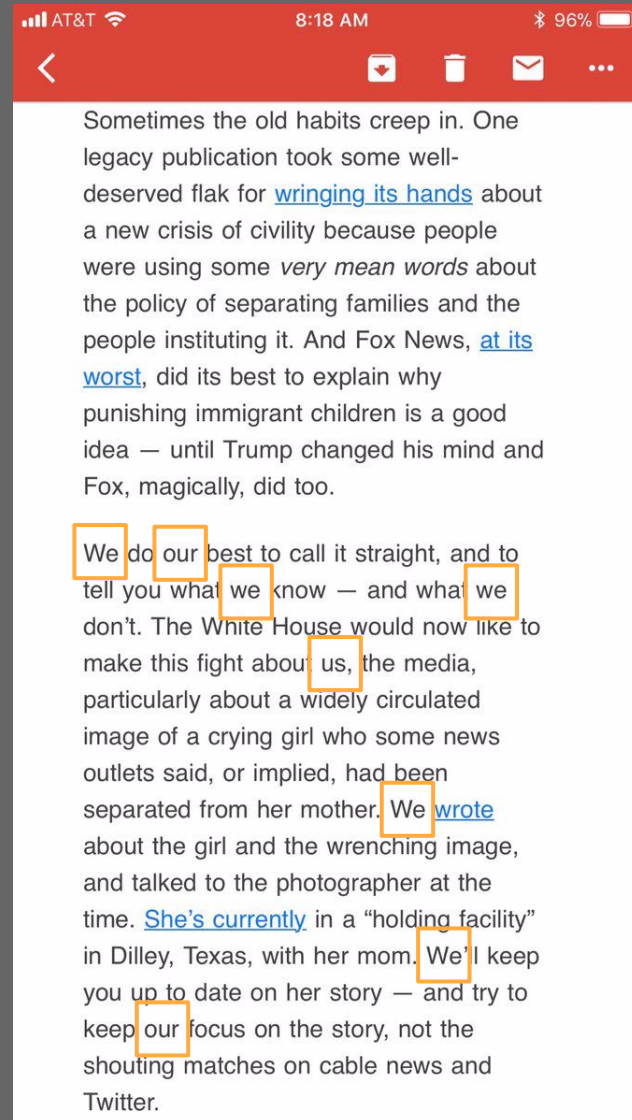
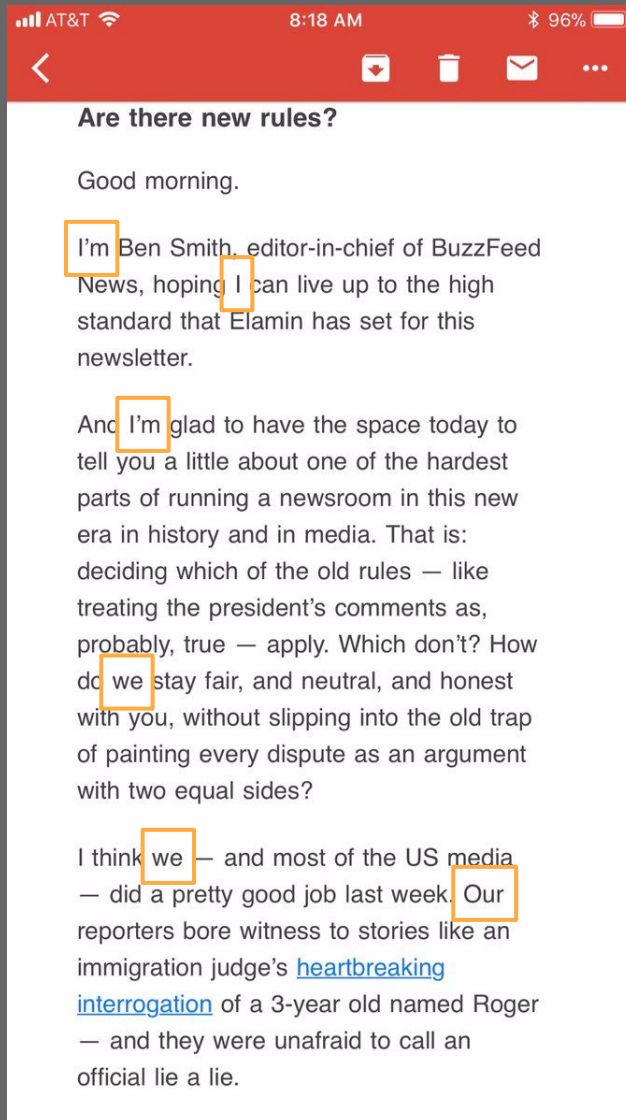
**“If you discussed it,  
disclose it”**



**Should we identify  
this victim  
by name?**



**Do we have enough  
evidence to run  
this story?**



Ben Smith BuzzFeed newsletter takeover

**Rule of thumb #3:**

**“Make it a dialogue,  
not a monologue”**

Ask ProPublica Illinois — ProPublica

Pro Publica, Inc. [US] | <https://www.propublica.org/series/ask-propublica-illinois-journalism-questions>

ProPublica Electionland ProPublica Illinois Local Reporting Network Data Store

Facebook Twitter Donate

**PROPUBLICA ILLINOIS** ABOUT STAFF

**SIGN UP**

**Our stories are powered by readers. Stand up for independent journalism and make a donation before our Fall Campaign ends on Friday!**

# ASK PROPUBLICA ILLINOIS

How Does Journalism Work? Ask Us Questions. We Can Explain.

At ProPublica Illinois, we strive to be transparent about how our journalism gets done. But we can't predict what you will find useful about it. So, [tell us](#) and we'll try to explain. Send any questions to [illinois@propublica.org](mailto:illinois@propublica.org).

## Has the Internet Changed Fact-Checking? Well, It Depends.

The sources haven't changed much, but accessing them nowadays involves just a few clicks. And no, we don't use Wikipedia.

by Duane Eldeib, Sept. 26, 4 a.m. CDT

## How Do We Verify Anonymous Sources?

Very, very carefully, and only after making sure they merit anonymity.

by Jason Grotto, Aug. 28, 4 a.m. CDT

## How to Find Out About Hot Dogs, Puppy Names and Parking Tickets

FOIA is the all-purpose journalism weapon of choice.

by Sandhya Kambhampati, July 12, 4 a.m. CDT

## When Do Reporters Collaborate, and When Do They Compete?

Increasingly, we work together to produce stronger journalism.

by David Eads, June 19, 4 a.m. CDT

## How Do We Prevent Typos and Other Errors From Appearing in Our Stories?

We don't always, but we sure try. A lot of eyes on a story helps.

by Steve Mills, May 21, 4 a.m. CDT

## Those Questions You've Been Asking About Journalism? We Ask Them, Too.

A recap of your questions — and answers from our newsroom — about how journalists do their jobs. P.S. Keep sending them.

by Logan Jaffe, May 4, 4 a.m. CDT

## Defining the Delicate and Often Difficult Relationship Between Reporters and Sources

## How Do You Identify Fake News?

Solid sources and some healthy skepticism can help.

**FOLLOW PROPUBLICA ILLINOIS**

Twitter Facebook

YouTube RSS

Get our stories by email.

Email

Subscribe

**MOST POPULAR STORIES**

Most Read Most Emailed

[A Surgeon So Bad It Was Criminal](#)

[In Montana, a Tough Negotiator Proved Employers Don't Have to Pay So Much for Health Care](#)

[Four Men Arrested Over Unrest During 2017 "Unite the Right" Rally](#)

[Racist, Violent, Unpunished: A White Hate Group's Campaign of Menace](#)

[These Professors Make More Than a Thousand Bucks an Hour Peddling Mega-Mergers](#)

[A Day After Report, Violent White Supremacist Loses Job With Defense Contractor](#)

[propublica.org/series/ask-propublica-illinois-journalism-questions](https://www.propublica.org/series/ask-propublica-illinois-journalism-questions)



## **Has the Internet Changed Fact-Checking? Well, It Depends.**

The sources haven't changed much, but accessing them nowadays involves just a few clicks. And no, we don't use Wikipedia.

by Duaa Eldeib, Sept. 26, 4 a.m. CDT



## **How Do We Verify Anonymous Sources?**

Very, very carefully, and only after making sure they merit anonymity.

by Jason Grotto, Aug. 28, 4 a.m. CDT



## **How to Find Out About Hot Dogs, Puppy Names and Parking Tickets**

FOIA is the all-purpose journalism weapon of choice.

by Sandhya Kambhampati, July 12, 4 a.m. CDT



## **When Do Reporters Collaborate, and When Do They Compete?**

Increasingly, we work together to produce stronger journalism.

by David Eads, June 19, 4 a.m. CDT



## **How Do We Prevent Typos and Other Errors From Appearing in Our Stories?**

We don't always, but we sure try. A lot of eyes on a story helps.

by Steve Mills, May 21, 4 a.m. CDT



## **Those Questions You've Been Asking About Journalism? We Ask Them, Too.**

A recap of your questions — and answers from our newsroom — about how journalists do their jobs. P.S. Keep sending them.

by Logan Jaffe, May 4, 4 a.m. CDT



## **Defining the Delicate and Often Difficult Relationship Between Reporters and Sources**

Journalists stay in touch with the people who give them information and might even meet them for lunch or a drink. But there are boundaries.



## **How Do You Identify Fake News?**

Solid sources and some healthy skepticism can help.

by Vignesh Ramachandran, April 4, 4 a.m. CDT

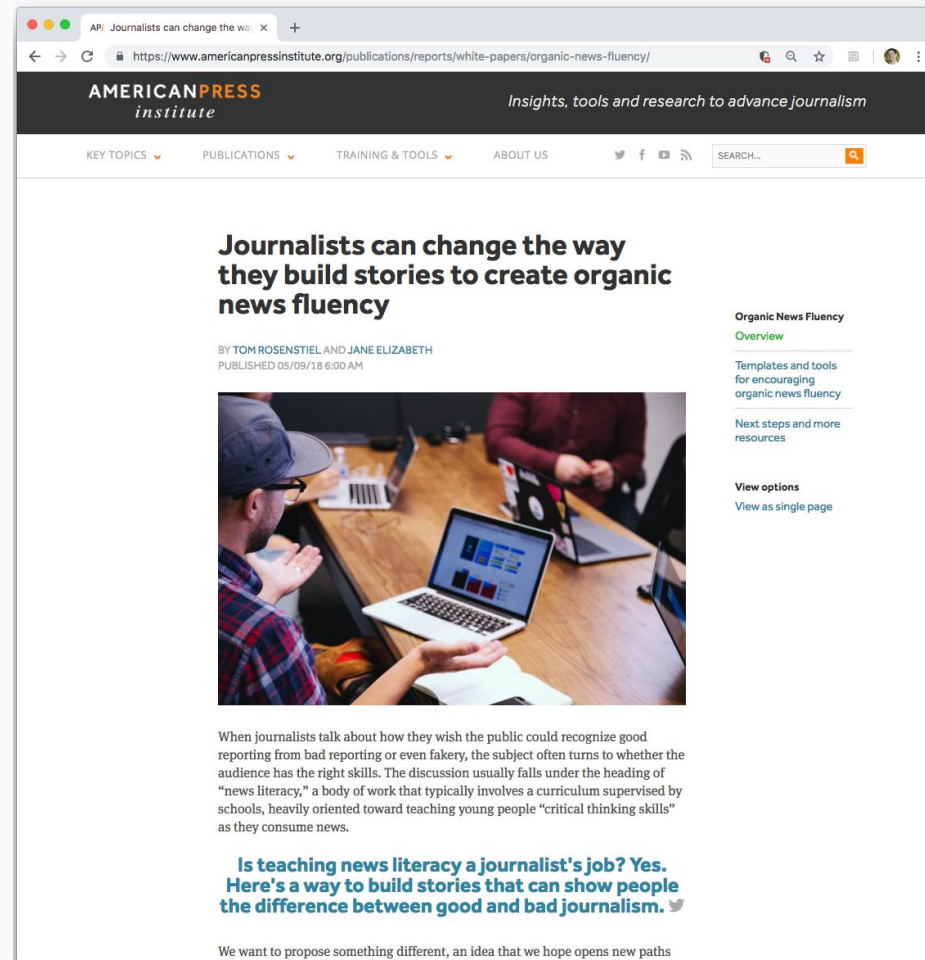


**Bottom line:**

**Write like people  
have never read a  
newspaper before**

# Read the full study


bit.ly/organicnewsfluency



The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the American Press Institute website. The URL in the address bar is <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/reports/white-papers/organic-news-fluency/>. The website header features the American Press Institute logo and the tagline "Insights, tools and research to advance journalism". Navigation links include KEY TOPICS, PUBLICATIONS, TRAINING & TOOLS, and ABOUT US. A search bar is located on the right. The main content area displays the article title "Journalists can change the way they build stories to create organic news fluency" by Tom Rosenstiel and Jane Elizabeth, published on 05/09/18 at 6:00 AM. Below the title is a photograph of two people working at a desk with laptops. To the right of the article is a sidebar with links for "Organic News Fluency Overview", "Templates and tools for encouraging organic news fluency", "Next steps and more resources", and "View options" (including "View as single page"). The article text begins with a paragraph about the challenges of reporting and the importance of audience skills. A bolded section header reads: "Is teaching news literacy a journalist's job? Yes. Here's a way to build stories that can show people the difference between good and bad journalism." The text continues with a proposal for new paths.

Journalists can change the way they build stories to create organic news fluency

BY TOM ROSENSTIEL AND JANE ELIZABETH  
PUBLISHED 05/09/18 6:00 AM



When journalists talk about how they wish the public could recognize good reporting from bad reporting or even fakery, the subject often turns to whether the audience has the right skills. The discussion usually falls under the heading of "news literacy," a body of work that typically involves a curriculum supervised by schools, heavily oriented toward teaching young people "critical thinking skills" as they consume news.

**Is teaching news literacy a journalist's job? Yes. Here's a way to build stories that can show people the difference between good and bad journalism.** [🐦](#)

We want to propose something different, an idea that we hope opens new paths

**Organic News Fluency**  
[Overview](#)

[Templates and tools for encouraging organic news fluency](#)

[Next steps and more resources](#)

**View options**  
[View as single page](#)

# Discussion

---

Keep the conversation going at  
[americanpressinstitute.org](http://americanpressinstitute.org)

---

# Thanks! Stay in touch with us:

API's Need to Know newsletter:

[bit.ly/getapi](http://bit.ly/getapi)

BetterNews.org update notifications:

[betternews.org/subscribe/](http://betternews.org/subscribe/)

Twitter:

[@AmPress](https://twitter.com/AmPress)

Facebook:

[facebook.com/AmericanPressInstitute](https://facebook.com/AmericanPressInstitute)

Jeff:

[jeff.sonderman@pressinstitute.org](mailto:jeff.sonderman@pressinstitute.org)

[@jeffsonderman](https://twitter.com/jeffsonderman)

These slides:

[bit.ly/snpa18trust](http://bit.ly/snpa18trust)

