



## Trusting News project

Journalists know that trust in their work is decreasing, but they too often don't know what to do about it. They don't have the strategies they need to combat misinformation, to share the value of their work and to communicate their own credibility. They also don't understand enough about the nature of the distrust and therefore can't address it properly.

The Trusting News project, funded by the Reynolds Journalism Institute, is bridging the gap between journalists and news consumers. We are learning how users decide what to trust and studying how they interact with news, then helping journalists act on that knowledge. We're demystifying news credibility and using actionable strategies to empower journalists.



Our work has already involved hundreds of journalists in 44 newsrooms. Those newsrooms have helped test strategies while getting training and support along the way. Phase one of the Trusting News project, beginning in 2016, explored social media strategies for building trust. Results are at [TrustingNews.org](http://TrustingNews.org). Phase two, beginning in January 2017, involved 8,728 user questionnaires ([bit.ly/trustquestionnaires](http://bit.ly/trustquestionnaires)) 81 in-depth interviews ([bit.ly/trustinterviewguide](http://bit.ly/trustinterviewguide)) conducted by journalists, focusing on how news consumers decide what to trust.

Phase three is just beginning. We are recruiting newsrooms interested in helping us test the next round of strategies, and we're developing a training program to get the insights into newsrooms. Let us know if you'd like information about participating at [bit.ly/testingtrust](http://bit.ly/testingtrust).

### What we want newsrooms to try:

From among these strategies, our newsroom partners will choose the ones that best align with their goals, mission and audience priorities. Which would make the most sense for your organization?

1. **Show how you are distinct from “the media”:** Differentiate yourself from the impersonal, generic, misunderstood cultural phenomenon. Look for chances to explain who you are, what you do and why you're here — your motivations and purpose.
2. **Describe your ethics and funding:** People assume journalists are controlled by corporate interests and are most focused on clicks and ratings. What are you doing to combat that perception?
3. **Explain your reporting process:** People say they want to see evidence of thoughtful, fair, deep reporting. Give it to them.
4. **Label your stories:** Users want specific types of journalism, but they don't always know they're getting it. Differentiate fact from opinion. Let people know when you've gone deep.
5. **Demonstrate balance:** Users overwhelmingly say they want to see multiple sides of a story, but they don't always realize they're getting it. Point it out to them.
6. **Show who you are:** Invite users to know the people producing the news.
7. **Be accessible:** Look for specific (not general) ways to invite feedback and conversation, and be responsive to what you hear.