



RESEARCH AND INTERVIEWING

Chapter 3

“All the News: Writing and Reporting for Convergent Media”

Multimedia Reporting Course

LEARNING HOW TO GATHER NEWS

- ▶ Research is helpful in coming up with story ideas
- ▶ Research also helps you prepare for interviews
- ▶ Conducting interviews is also addressed in this chapter

GOOGLE IT!

- ▶ Google and other online search engines make research, such as finding descriptions and definitions, spellings, someone's background and credentials, quick and easy
- ▶ Going directly to the website of a person, company, agency or organization can be better than just "googling" the name, and the information can be more credible and timely
- ▶ But keep in mind that not all information on the Web is created equal
 - ▶ Who created this information? How credible is the source of this information?
 - ▶ What is the purpose of this information? Is it to inform or persuade? Is it based on facts or does it have an obvious bias?
 - ▶ How current is the information? Has it been recently posted or updated, or might it be out of date?
 - ▶ Cite your online sources: "According to Wikipedia," or "On her Facebook site, Gov. Nikki Haley said..."

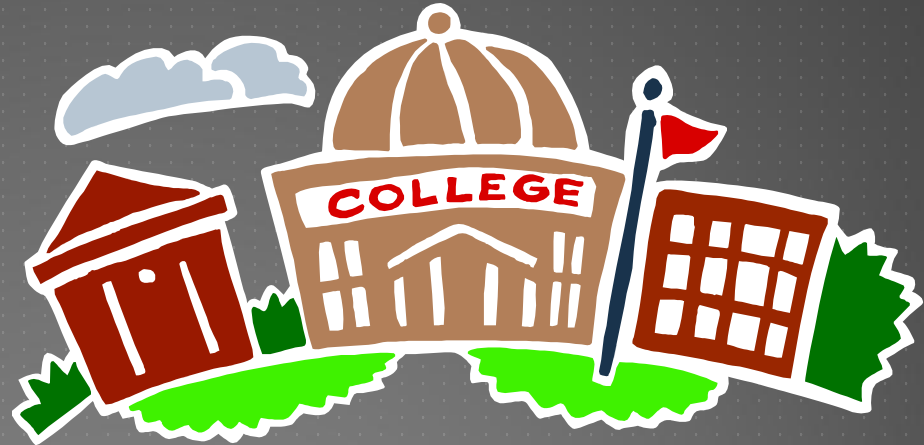
If you cite an online source in your own online report (such as on your blog) make a [link](#) to the source material

MORE RESEARCH AND STORY IDEA SOURCES

- ▶ Social Media and Blogs- journalists use social media and other people's blogs to: find story tips; get a sense of what people think; alert them to stories they otherwise might miss
- ▶ News Releases- journalists should use these as story ideas that need to be checked out further
- ▶ Ideas in Nonlocal Stories- most common way is "localizing" nonlocal stories by asking: "What do local people think about this situation?" or "How does that relate to what's going on in our area?" or "Is there something like that happening here?"
- ▶ Look for Older Story Follow-up/Updating Opportunities- give updates on people/places recovering from disasters/hard times, for example
- ▶ Use Databases to Mine Story Ideas- governments agencies, corporations, nonprofits and many other organizations seek to be more transparent, so lots of "newsy" material/data may be online
- ▶ Review "10 Great Public Records" sources on pages 44-45

C OF C SOURCES FOR NEWS

- ▶ College News Releases [link](#)
- ▶ Experts Guide [link](#)
- ▶ President's Office [link](#)
- ▶ Board of Trustees [link](#)
- ▶ Public Safety [link](#)
- ▶ C of C Publications [link](#)
- ▶ Community Relations [link](#)
- ▶ Marketing and Communications [link](#)
- ▶ Website Index [link](#)
- ▶ Procurement and Supply Services [link](#)



PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

- ▶ Get basic information on the topic and/or person- online searches, company profiles, things written about your subject
- ▶ Check for related news articles- to give you context, perspective, background
- ▶ Find sources who represent a range of views and perspectives- not just “experts” also look for and talk to people who will be affected by an event, decision or announcement
- ▶ Then prepare your list of questions

CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

- ▶ Have both close-ended and open-ended questions- yes or no close-ended questions are used to confirm facts; open-ended questions are to elicit anecdotes and opinions- anecdotes bring stories to life by offering specifics in place or generalizations, and can add color and descriptions
- ▶ Arrange your questions based on how much time you have to interview your subject
- ▶ A good way to end an interview is with a question like this: “Is there anything else I should know or didn’t ask you that you want to bring out or that people should know?”
- ▶ The source may surprise you in answering that question with something new and important that you hadn’t thought of before

INTERVIEW FORMATS

▶ Face-to-Face Interviews

- ▶ Pros- the ideal interview format because back-and-forth real time can lead to illuminating moments; you can see subject's expressions and body language
- ▶ Cons- not always possible to arrange due to schedules, deadlines, travel distances

▶ Telephone Interviews

- ▶ Pros-best alternative to face-to-face; can hear interviewee's voice, sense his/her comfort or discomfort
- ▶ Cons- note-taking can lead to awkward silences

▶ E-mail Interviews

- ▶ Pros- convenience
- ▶ Cons-impersonal, less chance to interact or capture nuances; person responding may not really be the person you seek; easier for subject to be evasive; chance for follow-up may be limited

▶ Instant Messaging

- ▶ Pros- convenience; like email, hard-to- get people may be more inclined to respond this way
- ▶ Cons- impersonal; may not be actual person texting back

Always let subjects know that interviews/comments may or will be published. And let readers know if the responses came via IM, e-mail, phone. Example: "In a text message , company spokesperson so and so said..."

NOTE TAKING DURING INTERVIEWS

- ▶ Face-to-Face Interviews: Many reporters still use the tried-and-true method of taking notes on a notepad, focusing on: major points, good quotes, specific facts (names with verified spellings, dates, places, etc)
- ▶ DONT try to write down every word
- ▶ It's OK in an interview to ask someone to slow down or repeat something. Just say you are taking notes and want to make sure everything is accurate
- ▶ You can bring a laptop to an interview but be aware that it can set up a virtual wall between the interviewee and you
- ▶ You can bring a voice recorder, but make sure your subject is OK with that, and say that it's only for accurate notes and quotes, and won't be put online, unless that's the desire- get permission if so