

Poynter.



2023-2024

Impact Report

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One the cover: CNN anchor Sara Sidner, former NBC reporter Kerry Sanders and CNN's Anderson Cooper at Poynter events in 2023.



Photo by Alex Smyntyna, Poynter

Poynter President Neil Brown interviews CNN's Anderson Cooper at the VIP reception during the 2023 Bowtie Ball.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Poynter is ready for the moment

I'll bet that the word most frequently uttered by those of us working in media, politics and culture in 2023 was "2024."

As we toggle between optimism and anxiety over the future of journalism and other democratic institutions, the calendar has been an ever-present character. Our hearts and minds have been strategically preoccupied as we brace for a U.S. election amid unprecedented legal, political, social and technological tensions. For many media organizations, including the Poynter Institute, being relevant and of service to diverse audiences in 2024 has been central to growth and to helping refresh the narrative that journalism matters.

That's not to say 2023 lacked substance of its own. Far from it. At Poynter, we expanded our initiatives to improve the leadership, craft and vitality of journalism, while also identifying opportunities around the corner. This chin-up, eyes-open view is particularly important (albeit, not always easy) for journalists in a world of paradoxes and possibilities.

A "generation" is usually defined as lasting

about two decades, but in the modern media and journalism marketplace, generational change is moving at a speed of five years. Consider the stunning consolidation in just a few years of local news organizations into the hands of a few owners, followed by the market and sprouting new independent local news enterprises. In rapid fashion, journalism jobs vanish with alarm and civic consequence. Now, philanthropy has taken root as the third leg of the revenue stool (along with advertising and subscriptions) to create new products and opportunities.

"News avoidance" — people steering clear of news reports out of fatigue from tense or depressing events — is a frequent theme of studies and conversation. Yet, invariably, it is oversimplified. More than 70 percent of Americans say they still actively access news stories throughout the week. The average user, based on one study, gets more than 60 push notifications a day! Breaking news hits us in the head without ever clicking a button.

Five years ago, TikTok, barely a year old in the U.S., amassed incredible download numbers



Photo by Chris Kozlowski, Poynter

Poynter President Neil Brown also serves as co-chair of the Pulitzer Prize Board.

for its clever content that was largely music and entertainment — and derided for its brevity and viewed by some as a fad. Today, TikTok is one of the world's largest avenues for news consumption. ChatGPT is a virtual household name today in the media world; it is less than 18 months old and is spoken of as either the future or death of journalism.

Poynter has embraced this dynamic landscape. We've expanded and diversified our programming to strengthen the connection between journalists and the audiences they serve. In just a little more than five years, we've doubled revenue and doubled our staff. Poynter embarked on a rolling strategic planning process dubbed Strategy 3-5 — committing to our relevance and market strength by regularly

looking three to five years out. This process, now in its third year, has helped us keep sharp focus serving journalism and democracy four main ways: Teach. Inform. Empower. Convene.

Teach.

Professional development is our core. For nearly 50 years, the Poynter brand has helped journalists improve their craft, their ethics, their leadership, their service to underserved audiences and their connection to their customers. In 2023 — with eyes on 2024 and beyond — we worked with more than 300 news enterprises, most of them journalists and executives working in local news. We helped them cover new beats such as infrastructure and extremism, and long-standing topics including

the latest immigration issues and climate fights, politics (of course!). Our Transforming Crime program is reducing sensationalism and improving how TV and other local newsrooms cover public safety and law enforcement.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting asked Poynter to create a change management program to help leaders at nearly 80 local public radio and TV stations expand their audiences and their influence through digital products and outreach. From early career journalists to news executives with revenue responsibility — we coached and consulted to improve the caliber of journalism that serves communities.

Inform.

Our acclaimed national politics website, PolitiFact, was on the scene throughout the country fact-checking politicians seeking everything from the presidency to the statehouse. As the election approaches, PolitiFact is an essential independent ally for citizens to make their own judgments — including showing all our sources, none anonymous. And beyond the rhetoric of politicians, PolitiFact checks wild claims on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. In 2023, we initiated fact-checking for native Spanish speakers and will launch a Spanish-language website in 2024.

Our media news website, poynter.org, chronicled the labor movement and economic complexities that are defining the local news market, including the ambitious support of major philanthropic foundations. The website, and our newsletters, including The Poynter Report and Local Edition, are the town square for debate on ethics, trust and the ticklish questions around generative artificial intelligence. It's also for celebrating examples of journalism that are making a difference in communities.

Empower.

To foster trust in journalism and increase civic participation, Poynter initiatives worked with citizens and a diverse group of organizations — locally and globally — to improve the health of the information ecosystem. Poynter's MediaWise is a key growth engine in helping people sort out fact from fiction on their own online. With partners including Stanford University, Meta and YouTube, Poynter is trying to level a playing field full of misinformation like deepfakes and conspiracy theories by empowering everyone from middle schoolers to college students to seniors to get comfortable with skepticism.

Our International Fact-Checking Network supports researchers and journalists in more than 150 countries with advocacy and best practices to debunk toxic information and arm their own people against manipulation. The IFCN has been entrusted by Meta, Google and others to make grants to help fact-checking initiatives around the world.

Convene.

Seven hundred ten people joined Poynter in Tampa, Florida, to hear celebrated journalist Anderson Cooper speak of his career and his humane approach to storytelling. Cooper, the legendary CNN and CBS "60 Minutes" broadcaster (and book author and podcaster) spoke of the essential nature of journalism, "I think journalism is as important, if not more important, than ever before. There's so much misinformation out there, there are so many competing narratives... it's almost too much to take in. And I think it's important to have responsible journalists out there looking at things with their own eyes, traveling to places and ... reporting the truth and letting the viewers and the readers make up their own mind.," Cooper said at the gala, where he received the Poynter Medal for Lifetime



Photo by Chris Kozlowski, Poynter

Poynter President Neil Brown welcomes guests at the 2023 Bowtie Ball honoring CNN's Anderson Cooper.

Achievement in journalism.

Five hundred more people attended Poynter's IFCN GlobalFact summit in Seoul, South Korea, to share ideas for fighting repression and misinformation. Two hundred more people came to Poynter's "community conversation" at our St. Petersburg, Florida, headquarters to listen to NBC correspondent Kerry Sanders discuss covering hurricanes and climate. Sara Longwell, the publisher of The Bulwark, and PBS host Hari Sreenivasan joined our United Facts of America online festival and talked about civil discourse. On Zoom calls coaching media executives or with community leaders attending writing programs, Poynter is a convener. We bring people who care about journalism and the media together.

The Crossroads.

At Poynter, we often dub these four areas of focus — teach, inform, empower, convene — our "crossroads" strategy. We strive to be an institute that is a crossroads — where

journalists can connect with audiences, where our respected brand gives us access to experts from all disciplines, where we are trusted to stoke genuine conversation and meaningful brainstorming. On the pages that follow, you'll see a sampling of all that we've accomplished, and a glimpse of where we're heading.

In the fast-changing journalism market, we are all susceptible to fear (it's a volatile economy), we are too quick to fawn (sometimes we love our own work more than we should) and we often flail (so many options, so little consensus). Poynter tries to elevate journalism above all that — to a creative and credible place of value and integrity.

We'd love to hear how you think we might help.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil Brown".

Neil Brown

One mission. Many ways



“Poynter is a place of many missions. We support local news. We train journalists to do their job better. We are the home of PolitiFact, the nation’s largest political fact-checking website, and the home of the International Fact Checking Network, which really makes us the global leader in fact-checking and supports fact-check work throughout the world. We’re the creators of a program called MediaWise, where we train school-age kids to baby boomers and everybody in between on how to tell fact from fiction online. We’re the home of the Craig Newmark Center for Ethics and Leadership, which helps journalists improve the trust they have with their audiences. And we’re the owners of the Tampa Bay Times newspaper, the largest daily newspaper in Florida.

“All of these things roll up into this mission. Our job is to make journalism better and, in the process, make democracy stronger. That’s the goal: elevate journalism in service of democracy.”

Neil Brown
President



Photo by Chris Kozlowski, Poynter

In May, Poynter hosted a conversation about weather and climate with popular Tampa TV meteorologist Denis Phillips. “Local meteorologists and local forecasters are some of the most trusted science communicators in the United States,” said Dr. Jo Huxster, associate professor of environmental studies at Eckerd College. Poynter convenes meaningful conversations about the media, politics and culture as the crossroads where journalists, citizens, opinion leaders and experts — the brightest and liveliest — gather.



NPR TV critic Eric Deggans (left) and Poynter senior news writer Tom Jones speak at a “Breakfast with Media Insiders.” Through gatherings of large groups or smaller cohorts, we promote civil expression and the value of journalism to bring people together to advance solutions to society’s complex problems.

Photo by Mel Grau, Poynter

LOCAL

‘The best thing that I and my staff have ever been through’

Poynter’s Digital Transformation Program drove audience, revenue growth for 79 news organizations

Poynter’s Digital Transformation Program (DTP) teaches public media leaders and their staff how to transform their organizational culture and operations to advance their digital development.

Over nine months, public media organizations learned how to access and use data analytics to set quantifiable, digital performance goals and inform business decisions, how to reach and engage new audiences on digital platforms, and how to earn new digital revenues, including underwriting and membership.

To date, the program has driven \$3.1 million in net new digital revenue and audience growth of 10 million for participating news organizations.

“This program came at exactly the right time.” for Seattle’s Classical KING radio, said CEO Brenda Barnes. “We are building digital from scratch, and we are more likely to build it

efficiently and effectively thanks to the DTP. I think all stations that haven’t been through the program would benefit from it no matter where they are in the digital transformation process.”

As part of its participation in the Digital Transformation Program, Classical KING focused on growing its digital audience, and exceeded both audience and membership goals. The station also implemented project management and KPI tracking for several digital projects.

“Moving quickly is easier when an outside consultant or organization guides us,” said David Lowe, president and general manager of KVIE, a community television station in Sacramento. “It’s just human nature and I don’t think we could have achieved what we’ve already done without this. And our team has worked really well together and might not have come together like this without this program.”



WNET

WNET, the nonprofit parent company of a group of PBS stations and newsrooms, created a new YouTube series “Hay Dinero” after market research demonstrated that Latina women in their market are interested in building generational wealth.

Participants saw
10 million
net new digital
audience growth

- \$3.1 million in net new digital revenue
- 458 public media professionals trained
- 79 public media organizations

Supporting organization



“The Digital Transformation Program was exhilarating – it was the best thing that I and my staff have ever been through. It has really focused us on our future and given us the tools to meet the challenges ahead.”



Pat Crawford

Executive Director, WUWF, a university licensee radio station based in Pensacola, Florida

LOCAL

Newsrooms working to transform their crime coverage see the payoffs

The United States got safer between 1993 and 2019, but you wouldn't know that by asking the average American.

Journalism is partly to blame.

Despite federal statistics that demonstrated crime fell 34% from 1991 to 2000, research shows that crime stories focused on homicide rose by over 700%. Research has also shown that journalism also consistently overrepresents communities of color in crime coverage.

Even as crime continued to fall in the 2010s, newsrooms continued to produce a high volume of stories about crime. Many of the stories that have traditionally made up the bulk of criminal justice coverage are one-off crime stories that only include law enforcement perspectives, provide little context as to crime trends, and don't follow up in communities to understand



By Cheryl Thompson-Morton Craig
Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY

root causes and solutions of criminal incidents.

There are many reasons that newsrooms have continued these practices and struggled to change. "Going beyond mostly cosmetic reforms is much harder for news companies because it requires the entire staff to rethink how it defines breaking news," wrote Poynter's Kelly McBride. "Most crime stories are the junk food of the daily news budget. Nobody wants to run them, but breaking the habit is incredibly difficult."

One-off crime stories often are cheap and easy to cover, allowing newsrooms to churn out content more quickly. Certain salacious



Chris Kozlowski, Poynter/Shutterstock

Police reporting often amplifies inaccurate narratives and harms communities most affected by crime.

stories may bring in more traffic. Crime is often a topic that is touched by multiple teams in the newsroom who may not be working in concert with one another. Additionally, many journalists are used to reporting on the topic using this approach and don't see the need to change it.

Over the past several years, newsrooms have tried to make changes to their crime coverage but have found it difficult to do alone.

That's where Poynter comes in to help.

Newsrooms from across the country have embarked on a journey to reshape crime coverage by transforming their reporting approach. Instead of focusing on crime incidents, they are learning to truly prioritize public safety and community impact.

Along with McBride, I lead Poynter's ongoing Transforming Local Crime Reporting Into Public Safety Journalism program. In our sessions, selected newsrooms get small bites of instruction on change management that guides them step by step as they transform their coverage. Participating newsrooms leave the program with a custom policy on

Continue reading →



"Revamping our crime coverage was something our newsroom was already in the process of doing. Poynter has been really helpful keeping us on track and pointing us in the right direction."

Lexi Suda
WJXT, Jacksonville, Fla.



“This program has greatly helped us to understand our impact as a local news organization and allowed us to think about that impact as we take strides forward to report on public safety in a way that helps our community and not hurt our community.”

Mike Balsamo
Associated Press

how their newsrooms will cover public safety moving forward. This policy includes a mission statement for public safety coverage; guidelines of what stories the newsroom covers; and plans for training, implementation and evaluation.

Sixty-five newsrooms have participated in the program so far, attending 12 two-hour virtual training sessions every other week. On off weeks, newsrooms received up to two hours of personalized coaching. Many of the news organizations that have already been through the program report positive outcomes, including improved reporting quality, increased accountability and higher subscription conversion rates.

One newsroom that embraced this



Learn more about the course

transformation process is the Lexington (Kentucky) Herald Leader. Breaking news editor Jeremy Chisenhall and Herald Leader staffers recognized the need to reevaluate their crime coverage and explore ways to better serve their community.

“Newsrooms all over the country face financial challenges and readership

challenges these days, but I think that a program like this can really help you,” Chisenhall said. “Getting this formal training and learning how to do those types of stories has been really helpful for us and I imagine it would

be really helpful for many newsrooms across the country.”

By participating in a program aimed at reshaping crime coverage, Chisenhall and his team gained a deeper understanding of the gravity of their reporting. They shifted their focus toward trend stories and police accountability, aiming to improve public understanding of safety and community issues. With the help of Transforming Crime’s teaching, the news team crafted a policy around crime coverage, which now requires journalists to examine whether a story helps the public’s understanding of safety or community issues before reporting on it.

Other newsrooms, such as Utah’s KSL, have also experienced several benefits, since reforming their approach to crime coverage. Annie Knox, an investigative reporter from KSL TV, said journalists are more open with their audience around what information law enforcement told them, what they were able to corroborate and what questions they still need to get answers on. Knox also started reporting on sexual assaults and the challenges of reporting them for the unhoused, a community that is often marginalized both by media and law enforcement.

“I used to see police coverage as (either) the more routine stories that we cover more often (or) the big accountability takedown pieces that take a long time to put together. I never saw a middle ground between the two, and this training has helped me understand that accountability work doesn’t have to be just for

By the numbers

65 newsrooms participating

- 12 two-hour virtual training sessions
- 2 hours of personalized coaching

those bigger stories,” Knox said.

Kyndell Harkness, the head of culture and community at Minnesota’s Star Tribune, was a participant in the 2022 cohort and a coach in 2023’s program. Harkness said she was drawn to the course because newsrooms are fighting for relevance and have to evolve. She said that the program helped her newsroom figure out what change management looks like for crime reporting, and allowed staffers to reflect more on why they covered crime in a particular way.

She noted that the program allowed her team the space to be more reflective, and that the experience highlighted the importance of building a newsroom-wide policy and process that leads to reporting from a public safety lens, instead of depending on individual journalists to carry the weight alone.

“I think we hold too tight to things in our industry out of fear,” Harkness said. “We hold on to the past because we’re afraid of what the future might hold for us. But when we know that our systems are broken, what we show actually matters. We have to understand that we are reporting on systems and we cannot be the mouthpiece for systems. And we’ve been the mouthpiece for systems for far too long.”

Supporting organizations



LOCAL

Poynter's Beat Academy gives journalists the skills they need at the moment they need them

Journalists, particularly newer ones, need three things to get up to speed on the latest trends driving change in their community: a framework to understand what's going on, a guide to experts to use as sources and a leg-up on finding the hard data that's relevant to their community.

Poynter's Beat Academy fills those gaps.

The Beat Academy can provide journalists from any newsroom skills to tackle new coverage areas, like private equity, or better fundamentals on key topics like immigration, climate change and affirmative action.

Individual journalists or entire newsrooms can participate. Lessons are practical and timely. Knowledge spans hard and soft skills.



Gary Lee, Oklahoma Eagle

for up to a week. "I am using information from your climate change series to help guide my reporting on the story," he said. "Beyond the risk forecasting website, your sessions inspired me to use local events to frame a global issue."

"Even though I have a great deal of reporting and editing experience, I find your sessions invaluable," said Gary Lee, managing editor of the Oklahoma Eagle, a weekly newspaper whose primary audience is the Black community in Tulsa.

Lee talked about how a violent wind storm wiped out power in parts of Tulsa



Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

A Milwaukee Journal Sentinel series supported by a reporting grant from the Beat Academy highlighted how Indigenous communities often stand alone on the front lines of environmental issues made worse through climate change. Poynter awarded \$115,000 in reporting grants to 2023 Beat Academy participants.



"The Beat Academy gave some of our most promising reporters a chance to pick up new tools and sources, and connect with other journalists in their field."

Thomas Koetting

Senior Manager-Content, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Supporting organizations



JOURNALISM CRAFT

Journalism's next leaders

Members of the 2022-2023 Poynter-Koch Media and Journalism Fellowship in November of 2022.



Photo by Kristen Hare, Poynter

Poynter-Koch Media and Journalism Fellowship

- A year-long experience that gives early career journalists the coaching, network and skills they need to have a long and lasting career in journalism.
- Full-time job with one of our participating news organizations throughout the United States.
- 60 participants
- Individual coaching and mentoring

Participating newsrooms: The Dallas Morning News, The Atlantic, Houston Landing, The Baltimore Banner, KNKX Public Radio, Texas Tribune

“I left the military five years ago hoping to become a journalist. Now, thanks to the instincts I developed as a Marine and the training and mentorship I received from the Poynter-Koch Media and Journalism Fellowship, I am leading a nonprofit newsroom that aims to improve the way homelessness is covered in American journalism.”



Will Schick
Former editor of Street Sense Media, now Director of Programs and Partnerships at the Asian American Journalists Association.

JOURNALISM CRAFT

Editing help. Anytime. Anywhere.

Poynter and ACES: The Society for Editing expanded on an already successful partnership in 2023 to offer a new online certificate course for editors.

The seven-course, 12-hour intermediate certificate is the second in the three-tier Poynter ACES editing certification series. It sets the industry standard for communications professionals who want to improve their editing skills.

Nearly 1,900 people took a Poynter/ACES certificate course in 2023.

“ACES is excited to be deepening its partnership with Poynter with this latest certificate,” said Gigi Sutton, the ACES executive director.

Instructors include WIRED special projects editor Alan Henry, POLITICO senior managing editor Anita Kumar, CNN legal counsel Frank



Learn more about the certificate course

LoMonte, Los Angeles Times editor Steve Padilla, Poynter assistant editor Kayla Randall, freelance editor Mark Allen, University of Kansas professors Lisa McLendon and Gerri Berendzen, and “America’s Writing Coach” Roy Peter Clark.

CUSTOM PROGRAMS

Big issues. Big reach.

As the world's leading instructor, innovator, convener and resource for anyone who aspires to engage and inform citizens, Poynter offers learning opportunities to individuals and organizations that want to strengthen their skills, grow their careers and explore journalism. Here are organizations and newsrooms Poynter taught in 2023.

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| Alabama Broadcasters Association | EdSurge | Jackson Hole News & Guide | KSAT |
| Alabama Public Radio | EdSource | Kansas Association of Broadcasters | KSL/Deseret News |
| Alaska Public Media | Elon University | Kansas City Media Collaboration | KTOO |
| Anchorage Daily News | ESPN | KAXE/KBXE Northern Community Radio | KTSU 90.9FM |
| Arizona PBS | GBH News Boston | KAWC/KOFA Colorado River Public Media/Border Radio | KUER-FM |
| Associated Press | Gulf Coast Media | KAZU | KUNC FM |
| Baltimore Sun Media | Houston Chronicle | KCUR FM | KVIE TV Sacramento |
| Brigham Young University | Idaho Public Television | KERA | Lexington Herald-Leader |
| CapRadio | IdahoPTV | KGNU FM-AM | Lewiston Tribune |
| Chicago Public Media | ICI Mutual Insurance Co. | KJZZ FM and KBAQ FM | Maine Public |
| Chicago Sun-Times | Ideastream | KLCC-FM | Marfa Public Radio Texas |
| Classical KING FM | IFES | KNBA FM | Marketplace |
| CoastAlaska | Illinois Public Media | Korean Press Foundation | McKinsey & Co. |
| Colorado Public Radio | Indiana University | KOSU-FM | Meridian International Center |
| Concord Monitor | Indi-ED | KPBS TV-FM | Michigan Association of Broadcasters |
| Connecticut Inside Investigator | Interlochen Public Radio | KPRC | Middle East Broadcasting Networks |
| D Magazine | International Center for Journalists | | Milwaukee Journal Sentinel |
| Dallas Morning News | Iowa PBS | | Minnesota Public Radio |
| Dow Jones News Fund | J. The Jewish News of Northern California | | |



Poynter Vice President of Teaching and Organizational Strategy Sitara Nieves coaches leaders from newsrooms across the country.
Photo by Chris Kozlowski, Poynter

Minnreg Veterans Association	National Newspaper Publishers Association	Media	Northern California Public Media KRCB/KPJK
Mountain Lake PBS	National Rural Electric Cooperative Association	New England Public Media	NPR Illinois
Nashville Public Radio	Naval War College	Newsday	Ohio Association of Broadcasters
National Association of Hispanic Journalists	New England Public	Nine PBS St. Louis	Ohio University
		NJ PBS	

PolitiFact reporter Maria Ramirez Uribe (seated) covers a presidential campaign rally in New Hampshire. PolitiFact, which has been part of the Poynter Institute since 2018, wrote more than 100 fact-checks of the GOP presidential candidates ahead of the first caucus and primary.

Photo by Miriam Valverde, Poynter



“I was lucky enough to attend trainings at Poynter several times earlier in my career. Continuing to build our skill sets is incredibly important, but also is being able to connect with others in the industry who are equally passionate about the work we do and are trying to continue to get better.”

Marisa Kwiatkowski, award-winning investigative reporter

Pamplin Media Group	States Newsroom	Vermont Public	Telecommunications
PBS Fort Wayne	St. Louis Public Radio	Vox Media Union	WNET
Perry Communications	TEGNA	WAMU FM	WNET Digital
Philadelphia Center for Gun Violence Reporting	Texas Association of Broadcasters	WERU Community Radio	WNET/Thirteen
Pioneer PBS	The Colorado Sound	WCAX-TV	WNIJ FM
Pittsburgh Community Broadcasting WESA-FM and WYEP-FM	The Daily Kos	WCBS	World Partnerships
Racine County Eye	The Daily Memphian	WCBU FM	WPSU TV-FM
Radiant Foundation	The Journal Times	WCCO	WRTI FM
Radio Milwaukee	The News & Observer	WCNY TV	WQLN PBS/NPR
Ragan Communications	The Philadelphia Inquirer	WDIV	WSHU Public Radio
SABEW	The Washington Post	WDSE TV-FM	WSCV – Telemundo51
Scripps	Twin Cities PBS	WFYI Public Media	WTCTV
SEIU	U.S. Army Asian Studies Detachment	WGLT FM	WUNC FM
6ABC Philadelphia	UC Davis	WGVU Public Media	WUSF Public Media
Six Rivers Media	UN News	WHUT-TV	WUWF Public Media
Southern California News Group	University of Georgia	WHYY	WUWM FM Milwaukee
Southern California Public Radio	University of Idaho	WINK News	WVIK Quad Cities NPR
Spectrum	URL Media	WITF Public Media	WVPE FM
SPH Media	USAGM Voice of America	WJXT	WVTF FM Radio IQ
Staten Island Advance	Voice of America	WKAR Public Media	WXPR Public Radio
	USC Radio Group	WKMG	WXXI Public Media
	Vegas PBS	WKMS FM	WYES TV
		WLIW TV	WYPR FM
		WMHT Educational	Yellowstone Public Radio



INNOVATION

How Poynter is leading on AI

Poynter is in the unique position to help guide newsrooms and people as they work to develop AI policies, workflows and tools.

At the start of 2023 fewer than a handful of people in news organizations of any size were familiar with the term “large language model.” In 2024, generative AI is dominating the conversation.

The public launch of ChatGPT and Dall-e was a pivotal moment, akin to the launching of mobile web. And then we all saw how fast the technology changed when OpenAI released even newer versions of the tools that made the first ones already seem antiquated.

Media organizations have been playing catch-up since day 1. Poynter is in the unique position to help guide newsrooms and people as they work to develop AI policies, workflows and tools.

Our AI Steering Committee has focused on three areas where we can build on our strengths and existing work to carve out a distinctive and highly-relevant path for journalism and democracy. Here are the areas where we can have immediate impact:

- Developing ethical AI policies for newsrooms – specifically around use that serves the public and democratic good.
- Evaluating and explaining generative AI for media literacy and fact-checking.
- Helping small newsrooms experiment with and develop tools to use AI.

To accomplish those goals we plan to:

- Use Poynter’s ethical framework, developed by Poynter Senior Vice President Kelly McBride, to create and publish a newsroom guide around ethical decision-making for the use of and

Poynter illustration by Annie Aguiar; Shutterstock

Continue reading →

Poynter AI Steering Committee



Alex Mahadevan



Enock Nyariki



Jennifer Orsi



Katie Sanders



Kelly McBride



Sitara Nieves



Tony Elkins

implementation of AI. Training opportunities will follow.

- Organize an ethics summit with a hand-invited group to work towards developing an ethical framework and broader understanding of how this will affect the industry.

- Start implementing generative AI use into our existing training workshops like our successful Transforming Crime Coverage into Public Safety Journalism program. AI aggregation and potential publishing of police blotters, for example, bring many ethical issues, along with community trust issues. We want to ensure our own workshops account for how

people may adopt the tools.

- Research and publish about how the technology is affecting our environment — paying special attention to ethics, misinformation, fact-checking and content creation.

- Partner with AI practitioners to bring practical applications to newsrooms.

2024 will be the year where every newsroom experiments with generative AI. It is imperative they do so in a way that doesn't violate the public's trust or undermine our industry's core values. Poynter is primed to help guide them through this process and help them develop



Photos by Chris Kozlowski, Poynter

Poynter's Leadership Academy for Women in Media has transformed the careers of more than 550 people since 2015. During a week often described as overflowing with "Poynter magic," each participant learns to manage teams more effectively, hone and communicate their strategic vision and steer their organizations toward success.



Poynter leadership training propels careers and changes lives. In a 2023 survey of Leadership Academy for Women in Media alumni from the last eight years, 75% of respondents said they have more confidence in themselves and the industry, 72% said they use something they learned during the academy at least once per week, and 60% took on new or expanded leadership roles.



During Poynter's yearlong Table Stakes program, we combine in-person gatherings, regular online group seminars, peer group support and personalized coaching sessions to hold participants accountable and help entire organizations succeed.

POYNTER.ORG

Shining a light on how the news gets made

In November, The Washington Post went further than any mainstream news outlet had ever gone before by showing graphic images of mass shootings involving AR-15s. That day, The Poynter Report — Poynter’s daily media newsletter — spoke at length with Washington Post executive editor Sally Buzbee to talk about that controversial decision.

We wanted to know: What exactly did the Post show? How did it display these images? And, mostly, why publish these photos?

The point was to take readers behind the scenes, to pull back the curtain and show how one of the most influential newspapers in the country covers one of the most critical issues of our country.

This is the mission of The Poynter Report each and every day: to show readers how news is covered, to make it transparent so that readers can better understand, and better trust, the news they are consuming.



Get the Poynter Report in your inbox

means highlighting exemplary work, such as courageous war coverage. Sometimes it means exposing a lack of in-depth coverage, especially in locations where resources have been severely cut. And occasionally it means pointing where irresponsible media has failed and how it can do better.

In the end, The Poynter Report’s pursuit is to shine a light on how the news is made so that consumers can see how the media is an advocate of the people, not the enemy.

The media has been under attack in recent years, often called the “enemy of the people” by some of our leaders. Trust in the media has never been lower.

We see it as our goal and, frankly, responsibility, to show readers how the media works, how it brings citizens the news. Often that

By the numbers in 2023



233 editions



24,667 subscribers



38.7% open rate

Poynter.

THE POYNTER REPORT

WITH SENIOR MEDIA WRITER TOM JONES



OPINION

Major surprise shakeup at the Los Angeles Times



Kevin Merida arrives at the Griot’s Washington, D.C., Gala presented by Byron Allen last April in Washington. (Kevin Wolf/Invision/AP)

POYNTER.ORG

Documenting journalism's big threats

Most newspaper subscribers have a sense that something has gone horribly wrong over the last two decades. At their doorsteps, they find smaller and smaller papers with a dwindling number of bylines and more wire copy they can find elsewhere, all delivered at an ever-inflating price — if the papers are even delivered at all.

But few understand the causes behind these woes.

In an effort to find the causes — causes that are almost universal among newspapers, Poynter media business reporter Angela Fu focused intensely on one newspaper and spent six months speaking to current and former staff members, local readers and other experts. What resulted was a 4,000-word investigation of the decline of The Buffalo News.

In many ways, the News was a perfect example. Just a few years ago, long after many other newspapers had crumbled and folded, the



Read the story

News was thriving. Billionaire owner Warren Buffett treated the publication as the crown jewel of his newspaper empire. That came crashing down in short order when Buffett soured on newspapers and sold his stake to a chain.

In the span of two months, the new owner announced it would slash the newsroom budget by \$1 million, pushed out four decadeslong veterans, paused hiring, eliminated open positions, announced plans to cut the paper's award-winning design desk along with five more jobs, called for employee furloughs, and announced the closure of the paper's production facilities, affecting another 160 jobs.

For decades, the News dodged the worst of the spiraling cutbacks that have decimated local newspapers. Under its new ownership, that's no longer the case. Angela's investigation revealed the stakes — stakes that most local newspapers have also faced.

By the numbers: Poynter.org 2023



8,637,997 page views



4,320,611 total engaged minutes



5,332,381 unique users



Photo: Moaz Elazzazi

Accounting clerk Alva Hill has been at the News for two and a half years, and during that time, her job duties have changed "dramatically" because of Lee's outsourcing of Buffalo-based jobs. "Their goal is to centralize everything," she said.



Samuelsson showing his worth for Sabres
SPORTS, PAGE C1

It's time to get ready for Dyngus Day
GUSTO, PAGE 11

THE BUFFALO NEWS
Serving Western New York since 1890
WHERE YOUR STORY LIVES

Stadium is a private project that will abide by many public rules
By MIKE PETRO AND JONATHAN D. EPSTEIN

Trocaire to join Medaille in bid to strengthen both
Integration' illustrates challenges faced by many small, private colleges

Buffalo Next: Higher Education
By JANET GRAMZA

THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2023

MISINFORMATION

PolitiFact expands its reach to Spanish-speaking communities

Fact-checking as a form of service journalism has grown significantly in the United States over the past decade, but it still rarely reaches the 40 million Americans who speak Spanish in their homes.

PolitiFact, the Pulitzer Prize-winning project of the Poynter Institute, launched a Spanish-language fact-checking project in 2023 with the hopes of helping a new segment of Americans be better informed about the key issues facing the country.

Today, PolitiFact has a team of three Spanish-speaking fact-checkers to debunk viral online misinformation for Spanish communities and fact-check the candidates running for president in 2024. The work is amplified through news partners including Telemundo, and the fact-checking collaborative FactChequeado. In 2024, PolitiFact will debut a Spanish-language version of the PolitiFact website.

“With this partnership, we are pleased to double-down on our commitment to delivering google-proof journalism in two languages,”

said Jorge Carballo, President/GM of NBC 6 and Telemundo 51, and Migdalia Figueroa, Regional President/GM of Telemundo 31, Telemundo 49 and Telemundo Fort Myers. “We are pleased to team up with PolitiFact and its experienced team of editors and reporters to make fact-checking available across all of our stations, in every platform, and in two languages. As Floridians prepare to exercise their civic right, our newsrooms will be hyper-focused on ensuring our audiences have the information they need to elect their political leaders.”

Through innovative fact-checking partnerships with Meta and TikTok, PolitiFact is slowing the spread of thousands of pieces of false or harmful online content each month — reducing future views of false information by 80% on average.

And through collaborations with Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, and WMUR in Manchester, New Hampshire, PolitiFact is on-the-ground to cover the 2024 candidates in the early primary and caucus battlegrounds.

“I read/ listen to a very wide variety of news sources including MSNBC, CNN, FOX, NEWSMAX and OAN ... my pursuit in an attempt to ‘wear the shoes’ of today’s diametrically opposed views. The exercise demands a neutral repository of the facts. (That’s) PolitiFact.”

Patrick Davis
PolitiFact reader



Screenshots

PolitiFact reporters and editors appeared on television around the world discussing their work. PolitiFact has partnered with ABC News for the 2024 presidential election.



By the numbers

27 million
page views

- 1,484 total fact-checks published
- 138 Spanish-language fact-checks published
- 83,978 email subscribers
- 4,061 donors
- 66% recurring donors
- 9 local affiliate partners

“Your work to uncover facts as rhetoric and phony news mount up is really crucial for democracy and, still more concretely, public awareness of the real world they live in.”

Edward Kissam
PolitiFact reader



Sign up for PolitiFact's email newsletter

MISINFORMATION

Three years later, he's still checking the facts

Isaac Harte's first fact-check at MediaWise as part of its Teen Fact-Checking Network was about dancing robots.

Three years later, the work remains just as interesting, and in many ways, even more critical. Now Harte's work is about the COVID-19, the election, the Biden administration, guns and the war in Ukraine.

The Teen Fact-Checking Network, a first-of-its-kind innovation of MediaWise, aims to have teenagers talking directly to teenagers about misinformation and media literacy. Teens produce and film their own video fact-checks, and post their findings across social media.

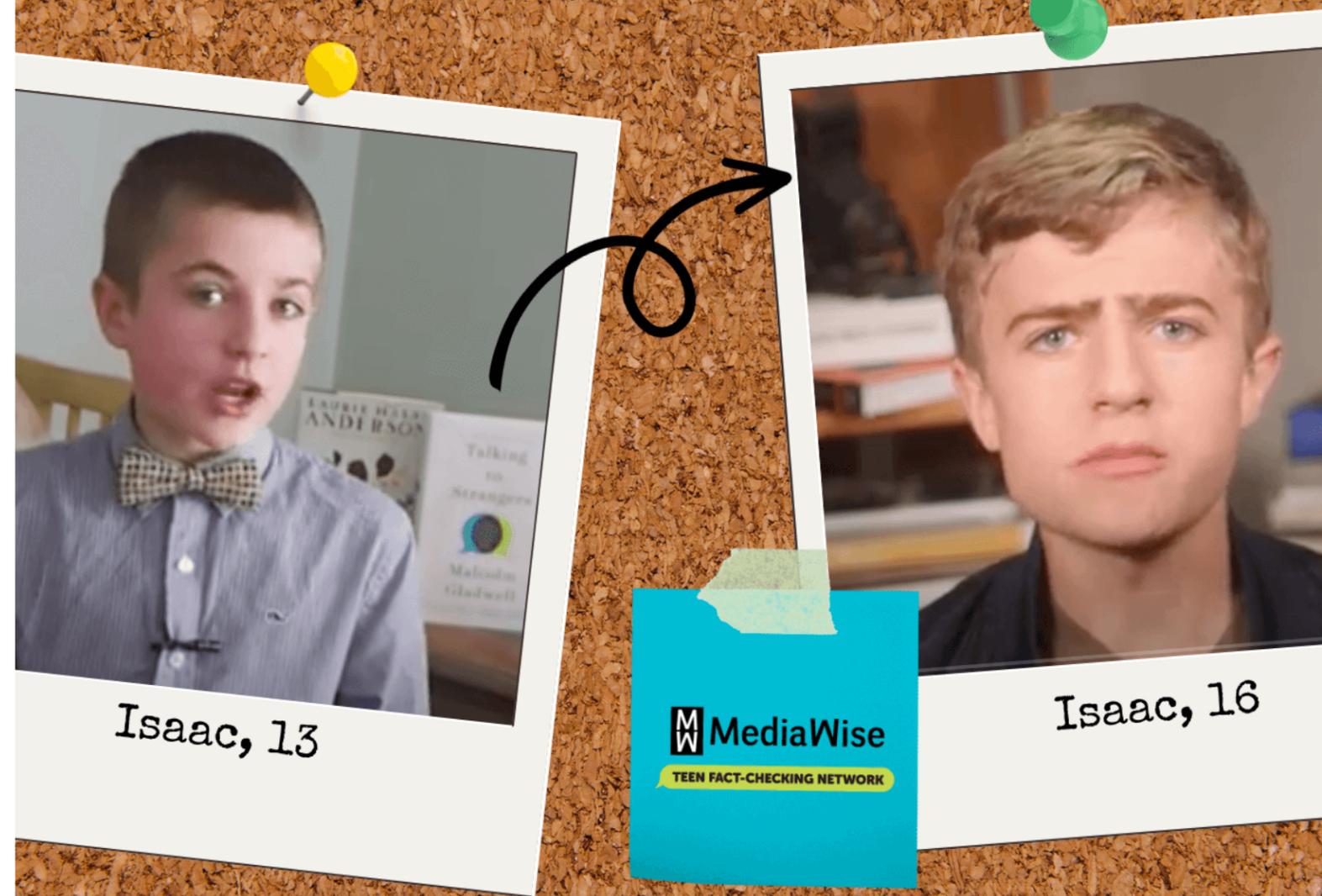
The aim is to meet the audience where it is. The network has created 1,140 fact-checks or media literacy videos since it launched. And, this year, it went global.

Teen Fact-Checking Network partners in Brazil, Germany and India created 30 videos

that reached more 400,000 across the three nations. And MediaWise has already started work in Canada and Spain for the coming year.

In a recent reflection, Harte writes: "It's baffling to me that it has only been three years since I began at MediaWise. It feels that so much has changed in the world, but also that a lot has changed in my own life. When I began at MediaWise I was a middle schooler; I'm now a junior in high school and — as the two photos above show — I have grown up a bit in that time, too. But, arguably, a lot has remained the same.

"We're on the brink of another presidential election, and it looks like both major political parties may be nominating the same two candidates they nominated in 2020. It also looks like fact-checkers will be presented with another flood of election disinformation that seeks to influence voters. Since the 2020 election, many social media platforms have



Isaac Harte, 16, of Pennsylvania, has been battling misinformation online as part of MediaWise's Teen Fact-Checking Network since he was 13 years old.

Poynter

scaled back content moderation, and experts believe that this — combined with the new threat from artificial intelligence — could culminate in an unprecedented level of disinformation.

"Nevertheless, I remain cautiously uncynical. My generation's unique ability to use technology and the internet means we are well equipped to combat disinformation — if we are aware of the necessary media literacy skills such as those that MediaWise teaches."

By the numbers

205,000+
social media followers

- 81 future journalists who have participated in the TFCN
- 6 countries with a MediaWise Teen Fact-Checking Network

Supporting organizations



MISINFORMATION

Standing up for facts around the world

Poynter’s International Fact-Checking Network brings fact-checkers around the world together every year at its GlobalFact convening, with 2023 marking the first conference in Asia. Factcheckers gathered in Seoul, South Korea, to share best practices and industry knowledge, and to network and offer encouragement to each other as they pursue their important work.

In 2023, Poynter’s IFCN awarded \$1.875 million in grants to 55 different news organizations through IFCN’s GlobalFact Check Fund.

Poynter will award up to \$4 million in additional grants in 2024.

The Philippine news organization Rappler, whose founder Maria Ressa was awarded the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to safeguard freedom of expression, is using its grant money to provide training to aspiring fact-checkers.

USA Today in the United States is using IFCN funding to produce fact-checking in

Spanish

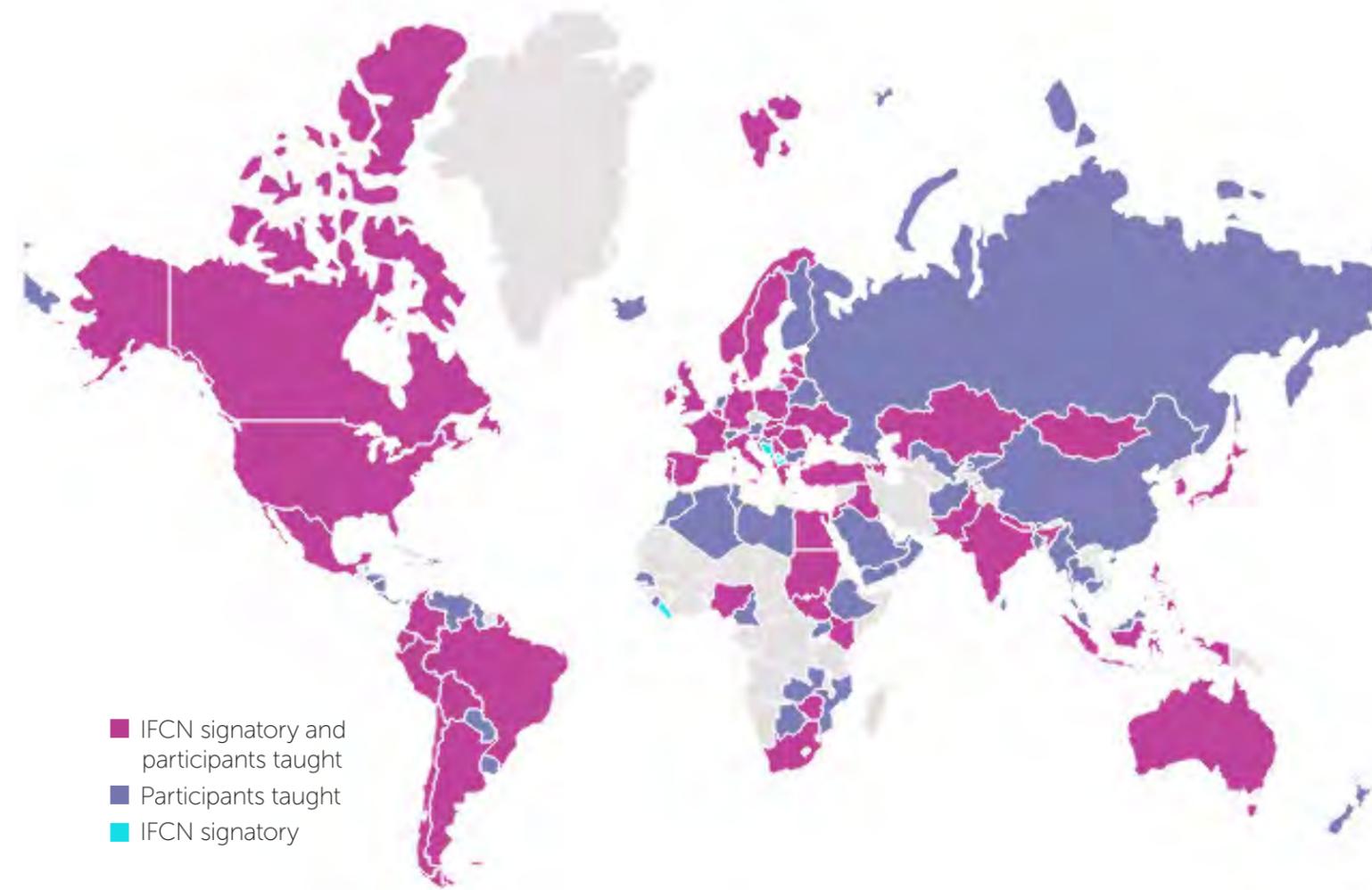
Deutsche Presse-Agentur of Germany is working to train fact-checkers in Germany, Austria and Switzerland in artificial intelligence and the ways it can affect misinformation.

Deutsche Presse-Agentur of Germany will work to train fact-checkers in Germany, Austria and Switzerland in artificial intelligence and the ways it can affect misinformation.

IFCN support to West Africa’s DUBAWA/ Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development will result in more fact-checkers in Sierra Leone, Liberia and The Gambia.

The IFCN today supports 160 different fact-checking organizations.

“Misinformation is on the march. The politically powerful are using disinformation to confuse the public and control the agenda. And fact-checkers and other journalists face attack and harassment simply for doing their jobs,” said Angie Drobnic Holan, IFCN director. “Yet our work continues. We are on the side of truth. We are on the side of information integrity.”



Grantee spotlight

In 2022, IFCN awarded \$800,000 in grants to journalism organizations to better combat climate misinformation.

Code for Africa used a portion of their grant to address climate inaccuracies on Wikipedia. Their work led to 1,321 corrections across Wikipedia, Wikidata, and Wikicommons in 2023. The organization also established a climate disinformation task force, awarding eight fact-checking fellowships to African journalists who published 285 fact-checks refuting climate denialism.



Supporting organizations



MISINFORMATION

Facts on the global stage



IFCN

IFCN International Training Manager Alanna Dvorak interviews Jessikka Aro, author of the books “Putin’s Troll Army” and “Putin’s Trolls: On the Frontlines of Russia’s Information War Against the World.”

IFCN Community and Impact Manager Enock Nyariki checks in guests at GlobalFact 10.



IFCN



IFCN

Former PolitiFact Editor-in-Chief Angie Drobic Holan was named IFCN’s new director in June.

GlobalFact 10

Seoul, South Korea
June 28-30, 2023
60 sessions

500 attendees

80 countries

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