

Tom Rosenstiel

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Author, journalist, and researcher, Tom Rosenstiel is one of the nation's most recognized thinkers on the future of media. Executive Director of the American Press Institute since January 2013, he previously was founder and for 16 years director of the Project for Excellence in Journalism at the Pew Research Center in Washington, D.C., and co-founder and vice chair of the Committee of Concerned Journalists. He also worked as media writer for the Los Angeles Times for a decade, chief congressional correspondent for Newsweek, press critic for MSNBC, business editor of the Peninsula Times Tribune, a reporter for Jack Anderson's Washington Merry Go 'Round column. He began his journalism career at the Woodside Country Almanac in his native northern California. He is the author of seven books, including The Elements of Journalism: What News People Should Know and the Public Should Expect, now in its third edition, which has been called "The most important book on the relationship of journalism and democracy published in the last fifty years" (Roy Peter Clark, (Poynter), "a modern classic" (Bill Safire, New York Times), and one of the five "essential books" on journalism (Roger Mudd, Wall Street Journal). Elements has been translated into more than 25 languages and is used in every major journalism school in the United States. His other books include Blur: How to Know What's True in the Age of Information Overload (2011) and The New Ethics of Journalism: Principles for the 21st Century, co-edited with Kelly McBride of the Poynter Institute (2013). His books and research have generated more than 50,000 academic citations, a measure of the unusual reach and longevity of his work and ideas on a generation of scholars. Among his awards, he is a four-time winner of both the Sigma Delta Chi Award for Journalism Research and the national prize for media criticism from Penn State, the Honor Medal for Distinguished Service in Journalism from the University of Missouri Journalism School, the Dewitt Carter Reddick Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement in the Field of Communications from the University of Texas at Austin, the Columbia Journalism School Distinguished Alumni Award and the Goldsmith Book Award from Harvard.

EMPLOYMENT

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, American Press Institute, 2013-present

DIRECTOR, FOUNDER, Project for Excellence in Journalism, 1996-2012,
Columbia University (1996-2005), Pew Research Center (2006-2012)

CO-FOUNDER, VICE CHAIR, Committee of Concerned Journalists, 1997-2006
CCJ was a membership group of more than 3,000 journalists worldwide from all media, who joined to protect and clarify journalism values. Developed a curriculum for mid-career journalists used to train 7,000 news practitioners.

ADJUNCT PROFESSOR, Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, 1998-2000

MEDIA CRITIC, MSNBC's The News with Brian Williams, 1996-1997

CHIEF CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENT, Newsweek Magazine, 1995-1996

NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT AND MEDIA CRITIC, Los Angeles Times, 1984-1994

FINANCIAL CORRESPONDENT, Los Angeles Times, 1983

BUSINESS EDITOR, BUSINESS REPORTER, CITY HALL REPORTER, Peninsula Times Tribune, 1980-1983

REPORTER, Jack Anderson's Washington Merry Go Round column, 1978-1979

EDUCATION

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
M.S. Journalism, 1980

OBERLIN COLLEGE, B.A. English Literature, 1978

BOOKS

The Elements of Journalism, What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect, Third Edition, (Three Rivers Press, 2014) (with Bill Kovach)

The New Ethics of Journalism: Principles for the 21st Century (Sage Publications, 2013) (edited with Kelly McBride)

Blur: How to Know What's True in the Age of Information Overload (Bloomsbury Press, 2011) (with Bill Kovach)

We Interrupt This Newscast: How to Improve Local TV News and Win Ratings, Too, Project Head, co-Author (Cambridge University Press, 2007)

The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect, New, Updated Edition (Three Rivers Press, 2007) (with Kovach)

Thinking Clearly: Case Studies in Journalistic Decision Making, editor with Amy S. Mitchell (Columbia University Press, 2003)

The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect (Crown Publishers, 2001) (with Kovach)

Warp Speed: America in The Age of Mixed Media (The Century Foundation, 1999) (with Kovach)

Strange Bedfellows: How Television and the Presidential Candidates Changed American Politics, 1992 (Hyperion Press, 1993)

AWARDS AND HONORS

University Of Texas at Austin, College Of Communication, The Dewitt Carter Reddick Award For Outstanding Professional Achievement In The Field Of Communication, 2010

University of Missouri Journalism School Honor Award for Distinguished Service in Journalism, 2006, “in recognition of inspired work with citizens and journalists to raise the quality of journalism in democratic societies.”

Goldsmith Book Award, Harvard University, 2002, for Elements of Journalism

Sigma Delta Chi Award for journalism research

2011 for two different studies: the tablet revolution, non-profit news

2004 for The State of the News Media report

2001 for The Elements of Journalism

1999 for Warp Speed and for research into local TV news

Bart Richards Award, Penn State (only four-time winner)

2008, for the News Coverage Index (PEJ’s real-time content analysis)

2004, for the inaugural State of the News Media report

2002, for The Elements of Journalism

1991, for coverage at the Los Angeles Times of media and politics and the role of technology in the fall of Eastern Europe

Society of Professional Journalists, Fellow of the Society

OTHER MAJOR WRITINGS AND SELECT RESEARCH

The following is a partial, selected list of research Rosenstiel has had a major or primary role in designing and writing:

How Millennials Get News: Inside the Habits of America's First Digital Generation, March 16, 2015, co-author and editor. A multi-modal study of what information topics Millennials are interested in and how they learn about them.

Personal News Cycle: How Americans Choose to Get their News, March 17, 2014, co-author and editor. A survey-based study examining the technology and topic interests of consumers in the digital age. The findings counter conventional ideas that media usage is narrowing and is principally tied to demographics.

Annual "State of the News Media" Project leader, principal editor, lead author, 2004-2012; a comprehensive in-depth landscape study on the state of the American news, available at www.stateofthemedias.org.

"The Tablet Revolution: How People Use Tablets And What It Means For The Future Of News," October 25, 2011, co-author and lead editor; a three-phase study surveying tablet owners about how they use their tablet computers, particularly for news consumption.

"The Media Primary: How News media and Blogs have Eyed the Presidential Contenders During the First Phase of the 2012 Race," October 17, 2011, co-author and lead editor; an analysis of the tone of campaign coverage based on a mix of human and algorithmic content analysis.

"How People Learn About Their Community," September 26, 2011, co-author and editor; a survey that broke new ground in probing how people get local news by asking about specific local information topics rather than using traditional survey questions; in doing so, the survey revealed a more complex ecosystem of local news than previous surveys had identified.

"The New Landscape of Non Profit News," July 15, 2011, co-author and lead editor; a comprehensive content analysis of a new cohort of non-profit news sites discovered that half of the sites have an unacknowledged political bias that matches that of the funder.

"Understanding The Participatory News Consumer: How Internet And Cell Phone Users Have Turned News Into A Social Experience," March 1, 2010, co-author and editor; a survey of the public, which broke new ground by asking about news behavior based on a series of new questions that varied from the traditional survey questions about news consumption.

"How News Happens: A Study of the New Ecosystem of One American City (Baltimore)," January 11, 2010, Project leader and principal author; a study of how the news is covered and what outlets advance the news versus repeat it in one

city, Baltimore. The content study, which tracked the trajectory of news stories over a week amid all the outlets for local news in Baltimore, found that most of the substantive reporting originated in print.

“Obama’s First 100 Days: How the President Fared in the Press vs. Clinton and Bush,” April 28, 2009, project leader and principal author; a content analysis of press coverage of the early months of the Obama presidency found that his coverage compared favorably to the coverage received by Clinton and Bush during the same time period at the beginning of their presidencies.

“The New Washington Press Corps: As Mainstream Media Decline, Niche and Foreign Outlets Grow, A Special Report,” February 11, 2009, project leader and co-author; a detailed analysis of how the Washington press corps has changed over two decades, culled from interviews and analysis of press accrediting and media directories, found that the numbers of reporters had not dwindled, as many observers had suggested. But fewer journalists worked for American outlets and for outlets that served the general public, while more worked for niche outlets aimed at professionals and elites.

“The Color of News: How Different Media Have Covered the General Election, 2008,” October 29, 2008, project leader and principal author; a content analysis of the press coverage of the 2008 general election campaign found that coverage of Obama was not so much positive as coverage of McCain was negative, and that two outlets, MSNBC and Fox, differed more than all others.

“The Changing Newsroom,” July 21, 2008, project leader and editor; a report on how American newspapers have shrunk and been altered by the digital revolution, based on site visits, interviews, and a detailed survey of hundreds of newspapers.

“Character and the Campaign: What Are the Master Narratives about the Candidates in 2004 and How is the Public Reacting to Them?” July 12, 2004, project leader and principal author; a content analysis of coverage about the character of the candidates in the 2004 presidential race found that a limited set of master narratives had set in, narratives that became resistant to change, even amid new facts.

“Embedded Reporters: What Are Americans Getting?” April 3, 2003, project leader and principal author; a content study of reporting from embedded journalists in the early days of the war in the Iraq, which found that most outlets did little to try to piece together the limited accounts offered by embedded reporters, but those that did, which were primarily print and network evening television, were able to tell a very different story.

“Local TV News Project 2002-1998,” project leader and principal author; the largest study of local TV news ever undertaken, the research involved an analysis of 1,200 hours of content from 154 local television stations over five years—a

sample of more than 33,000 stories. That content analysis was then correlated with ratings trends data to assess what kinds of content, treatment, and topics were associated with audience gains. When combined with “newscast building” exercises with 2,000 local TV news professionals from another 40 stations around the country, and surveys of hundreds of news directors, the research formed the basis for the book “We Interrupt This Newscast,” which was produced in collaboration with academic researchers from University of Hawaii and Wellesley College as well as the staff of PEJ. The reports were published annually in Columbia Journalism Review as a Special Section. The work established that the nature of the reporting, and whether it contained substantive information, was what mattered, not the topic or the degree of visual stimulation.

“Return to Normalcy? How the Media Have Covered the War on Terrorism,” January 28, 2002, project leader principal author; a content analysis, which found that over time the press was inching back toward pre-September 11 norms of coverage.

“Before And After: How the War on Terrorism Has Changed the News Agenda,” November 19, 2001, project leader and principal author; a content analysis of network morning and evening news found that the events of September 11, 2001, had prompted a marked shift in the news people see on network television. In effect, the media had been frightened into being more serious.

“The First 100 Days: How Bush Versus Clinton Fared In the Press,” April 30, 2001, project leader and principal author; a content analysis that analyzed how George W. Bush was covered in his first months in office and compared that to an analysis of the same time period and same media for Bill Clinton.

“A Question of Character: How the Media Have Handled the Issue and How the Public Has Reacted,” April 10, 2000, project leader and principal author; If elections are a battle for control of message through the media, George W. Bush had the better of it on the question of character than Al Gore, according to this study of coverage leading up to the GOP convention. But the public may not be receiving—or believing—the message, according to surveys testing the public impressions of those same narratives.

“Striking the Balance: Audience Interests, Business Pressures and Journalists’ Values,” March 30, 1999, co-author; a national survey of journalists that probed what they thought of audience interests, business pressures, and their journalistic values. The survey, conducted in collaboration with the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, was one of the research components conducted to produce The Elements of Journalism.

“The Clinton/Lewinsky Story: How Accurate? How Fair?” October 20, 1998, project leader and editor; as the scandal wound to a close, this study attempted to discern the nature of the press coverage of the Clinton/Lewinsky story by

examining several major threads of the narrative and comparing them to the Starr Report and its supporting evidentiary material. Contrary to White House accusations, those doing the bulk of the original reporting did not ferry false leaks and fabrications into coverage. But in some important cases, the press leaned on the suspicions of investigators that did not hold up and downplayed the denials of the accused. The findings raised questions about whether the press always maintained adequate skepticism about its sources. This report became one of the component studies of the book Warp Speed.

“Changing Definitions of News,” March 6, 1998, project leader and principal author; a content analysis of whether there has been a trend toward entertainment as news by looking at news content over 30 years in the same outlets.

“The Clinton Crisis and the Press: A New Standard of American Journalism?” February 18, 1998, project leader and principal author; from the earliest moments of the Clinton crisis, the press routinely intermingled reporting with opinion and speculation--even on the front page--according to this systematic study of what and how the press reported. The study raised questions about the standards of American journalism in the early days of the scandal and whether the press was, at that moment at least, in the business of reporting facts or something else.

“Not Necessarily the News,” Esquire magazine, cover story, January 1995; a behind the scenes look at morning network news programs.

“Yakety-Yak: The Lost Art of Interviewing,” Columbia Journalism Review, cover story, January/February 1995; the story looked at the history of interviewing and the contemporary landscape of how interviewing was now done in the age of 24-hour news, particularly on television.

“Dead Air: The Myth of CNN,” The New Republic, cover story, August 22 & 29, 1994; this piece, the culmination of years of writing about CNN, traced in critical and historical terms how CNN had affected change throughout television news, from breaking the hegemony over footage to moving away from checking facts before airing them.

MONOGRAPHS AND CHAPTERS

Toward the Millennium: The Elections of 1996, Chapter Contributor, “The Road To Here” (Chapter One) (University of Virginia Press, 1997)

The Beat Goes On: President Clinton's First Year with the Media (A Twentieth Century Fund Monograph, Summer 1994)

The Future of News, Chapter Contributor, “The Talk Show Culture” (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991)

“The Next Journalism:” a column on Poynter.org

Other writings have appeared in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, and many other publications.

Frequent appearances on radio and television and citations and interviews in the press. Programs include PBS News Hour; All Things Considered, Morning Edition, CNN, MSNBC, World News Tonight, The NBC Nightly News; CBS Evening News, Talk of the Nation, Nightline, The Today Show, Good Morning America, CBS Morning show, Marketplace, Monitor Radio, On the Media, BBC, CBC, Sirius XM, and many others.

SELECT OTHER ACTIVITIES

Judge, Pulitzer Prizes, and many other journalism prizes

Member, Advisory Board, Kaiser Health News Service Advisory Board

Member, Board, National Press Foundation

Member, Poynter Institute National Advisory Board, 2012-2015

Member, Advisory Board, News Literacy Project Advisory

Consultant, rewrote PBS’ Editorial Guidelines, 2011 and 1997

Consultant, advised on creation of editorial goals for Essential Media, new owner of Pittsburgh’s public radio station

Member, Bollinger Commission to reconsider the curriculum of The Journalism School at Columbia University

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Mr. Rosenstiel is in frequent demand to speak to groups and companies on the future of media. What follows is a sample of recent engagements:

International Symposium on Online Journalism; American Society of News Editors annual convention; Newspaper Association of America annual conventions; Inland Newspaper Association annual convention keynote; Gannett Corp., multiple presentations; Calkins Media, multiple presentations; McClatchy Corp., multiple presentations; Pioneer News Group, multiple presentations; Local Media Association, keynote; University of Chicago Institute for Politics,

moderator on future of news; recent lectures, Dartmouth College, Johns Hopkins University, National Defense University, American Association for the Advancement of Science annual convention, SUNY Stony Brook, University of Southern California, Stanford University, University of California at Berkeley, University of Missouri, University of North Florida, University of Colorado, Georgetown University, Oberlin College, George Washington University, American University, Catholic University, University of Toronto, Carleton University, Ottawa, Yale Law School, U.S. State Department, Grinnell College, University of Texas at Austin; testimony, U.S. House of Representatives Joint Economic Committee.