

Jeff Ansell News and Views

In this April 2015 edition we cover stories about Group Polarization, David Carr’s Career, and Career Killing Crisis.

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Please feel free to forward this newsletter to friends and colleagues.

I have a new video series debuting this June on Lynda.com, an online education company offering thousands of video courses. My series is entitled “Communicating with Confidence”. The program will be especially valuable to those who experience nervousness when presenting or speaking in public. <http://www.Lynda.com>

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Recently, I was a guest speaker at a conference hosted by the Ontario Nurses Association. My topic was about how to be an effective and compelling communicator. Here’s a short clip. [http://jeffansell.com/TIPS/V\\_Racing-Brain.html](http://jeffansell.com/TIPS/V_Racing-Brain.html)

Check out my BLOG . . . <http://jeffansell.com/wordpress/>

Friend me on Facebook . . . <https://www.facebook.com/jeff.ansell.96>

Follow me on TWITTER . . . <https://twitter.com/jeffansell>

Reviews of my book, When the Headline Is YOU - <http://is.gd/hHDqru>

“When the Headline Is YOU” is now also an AUDIOBOOK - <http://bit.ly/PiYotw>

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## 1.) GROUP POLARIZATION & JOURNALISM

A new interpretation of an old phenomenon is occurring online and having a considerable impact on the news business.

It's called "group polarization," and even though it is a well-recognized socio-psychological occurrence, we see it more often recently due to fast response times of news information distributed through social media networks. For example the recent crazy controversy over the wedding dress being white and gold, or blue and black illustrates how group polarization impacts what news consumers think about an object or story.

Granted, the colour of a dress is not news, but the story did go viral on large news networks, which by default means it was in some form, news. The story started when it was innocently posted on Tumblr and an argument began between friends that escalated to include celebrities like Mia Farrow, Julianne Moore, and Taylor Swift to name a few. Gawker picked it up and it went viral causing major news networks to feed the fire using it as "Click Bait."

Why is this phenomenon important to spokespeople? Well, imagine if it wasn't a dress color going viral, but instead information a spokesperson told a reporter that was open to interpretation.

Fact checking today is a challenge for many newsrooms in their scramble to get a story online before the competition. It's one reason stories like this go viral at all, and also at a rate much faster than just a few years ago.

As defined on Wikipedia: "In social psychology, group polarization refers to the tendency for groups to make decisions that are more extreme than the initial inclination of its members."

Consequently, as a spokesperson, you need to be very confident of the words that leave your lips, because it doesn't take much today for seemingly nothing to be blown into a headline with your name in bold type.

The Dress Story - As Reported by FOX - <http://goo.gl/UGhfdA>

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## 2.) TWITTER - A REPORTER'S MOST VALUED TOOL

Twitter has quickly grown to become "the most valuable research tool" for reporters around the world. It is used daily by local news reporters and international investigative journalists alike.

In conjunction with other online tools like Google Maps, reporters can check facts in mere minutes without picking up a phone or leaving their desks.

Challenges reporters reluctantly face today are; budgets drastically reduced, newsrooms shrinking, and resources disappearing that were relied upon in the past

to ensure stories were accurate. Reporters have less time and money, but are expected to do and deliver more.

It's a very difficult position for experienced reporters in this new online world. The "legacy" reporters who survive are those who tirelessly embrace change. New journalists on the other hand, those fresh out of journo-school, have an easier time because they are more familiar with all the new tools, and they have fresh minds uncluttered by industry politics, not to mention less of a life investment in their careers.

Twitter allows reporters to either break news immediately if they are on the scene, or use it as a real-time research tool to uncover more details. Being fluent in Twitter and knowing where to look for fast moving information is the secret. It's similar to a spokesperson responding to a crisis. It's too late to learn the language after the plane crashes or the building collapses.

Spokespeople, just like reporters need to respond immediately and to know how to use the tools at hand.

Reporter Markham Nolan explains in detail during a TED Talk how he fact checked obscure details in a story about a lightning strike at a woman's home. If a reporter takes the time to check such a benign story, just imagine what they check when lives are at stake.

TED - How Reporters Today Separate Fact from Fiction - <http://goo.gl/VUizBw>

.....JeffAnsell.com

### 3.) A RECAP OF MY TWITTER FEED

If you follow me on Twitter you might have seen these stories, but in case you missed them I thought I'd recap a few of the favorite events I alerted my Followers to over the recent past.

A/ A unified breaking news desk among 3 newsrooms means quick response when a crisis breaks <http://bit.ly/1Ly5ebl>

B/ Online search engines overtake traditional media as the most trusted source for news <http://bit.ly/1DPHCOx>

C/ Substantiated evidence that people react emotionally to your words, not an extended list of facts <http://bit.ly/1Ly4piJ>

D/ "We stand by our reporting (of the Red Cross) & have found no instances of errors" It's always bad to ignore media <http://bit.ly/1DPHkH1>

E/ Now that Obama has said YES to YouTube interviews by amateur reporters, how will you say NO? <http://washex.am/18zJfEm>

If you aren't following me on Twitter yet you can do so here  
<https://twitter.com/JeffAnsell>

..... [WhenTheHeadlineIsYOU.com](http://WhenTheHeadlineIsYOU.com)

#### 4.) RIP DAVID CARR 1957-2015

One of the most feared, loved, hated, cantankerous, and respected reporters of all time recently died, and when he did an era passed with him.

If you want a feel for what it's like to be interviewed by a NY Times journalist with fierce tenacity, and how difficult it is to face his questions, stare, and fingers hammering on his laptop as you speak, watch this video.

Carr is interviewing executives from VICE magazine, also an aggressive news company with a well-known reputation.

Correction, "interviewing" is too light a word. "Confronting" is more accurate.

If there was ever a "Reporter Bites Dog" story, it would be about Carr.

A word of warning, video contains STRONG LANGUAGE - <http://goo.gl/0YBbi2>

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#### 5.) FIVE FACTS ABOUT THE NEWS

One would think that with all this technology floating around life would be easier for spokespersons and reporters. Unfortunately, the exact opposite is true. We live in uncertain times of explosive change.

More and more reporters are being laid off and newsrooms are closing every day, which makes the survivors' jobs harder, and their collective patience testier.

Advertising revenue, which supports newspaper operations is quickly eroding meaning less money to spend on fact checking and investigations. Shoot from the hip is the norm, and no longer the exception. Limited funds have caused newsrooms to share resources and stories, which means the headline that disparages your reputation or company gets the cookie cutter treatment faster than you can respond with "WHERE?" to a Tweet about "FREE ICE CREAM!" The fight for revenue makes newsrooms desperate, and when they get pushed to the wall frustration trickles down to their targets - YOU!

According to PEW Research, it wasn't easy for news companies in 2014 and it's not going to get any easier this year either.

Five Facts About the News - <http://goo.gl/aBuwkc>

FULL Story - PEW Research State of News Media - <http://goo.gl/TXM5oH>

..... [WhenTheHeadlineIsYOU.com](http://WhenTheHeadlineIsYOU.com)

## 6.) CRISIS? WHAT CRISIS? WHAT!?

No one predicted the BP Oil Spill in the Gulf, or the train derailment in Quebec, but tragedies like these spontaneously combust regularly.

We all know how it works, yet many people ignore the inevitable until it smacks them in the forehead. It's human nature to procrastinate and pretend nothing will ever go wrong, and you often hear of people having to "Hit The Wall" before they do something about it.

Why are we like this? Well, some feel it's because we naturally operate in positive mode because we think it is unhealthy to live in a negative atmosphere always fearing catastrophe. It might be a good philosophy for one's personal life, but in the business world it's called denial.

The reasons and solutions are too complicated to address in a newsletter, so if you want to be proactive, or, worst case scenario, if you wake up one day and suddenly find yourself splashed in the headlines and behind a Media Crisis 8 Ball, call us immediately.

There are however preemptive strategies you can take, and we have a program designed for exactly this type of incident. At the very least we can give you advice so the "HIT" to your reputation and share price are mitigated.

Sometimes you need a high energy media skills workout and a condensed program to quickly get you up to speed as a crisis builds, or even if you have an interview with a reporter scheduled in a day or so making you a bit apprehensive. Hopefully you won't wait that long to learn how to manage media, but if you do call us at 416.413.9660 and then check out our website for advice;

Media TIPS - <http://goo.gl/Vww7dR>

Media Skills Workout - <http://goo.gl/MgW0Pw>

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## 7.) PERISCOPE IS A GAME CHANGER FOR NEWS

Every now and then something comes along that has such impact it spawns a paradigm shift. A new app called Periscope promises to drive that type of change.

It's quite simple - like many great ideas, and easy to use, which makes it very powerful. If it does in fact catch on it will change forever how consumers get their news and how reporters send it.

Periscope, with one click, streams video directly from your phone to ALL of your Twitter followers. Think about it for a second.

You're walking down the street and a train derails a block away causing a catastrophic crash. You take out your phone, click one button and your video stream shows your Twitter followers a crisis-in-the-making. All they have to do is watch as you report. You see the train's engineer stumble out so you go to him and ask "What happened?" In shock, he blurts out, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I was drinking with friends earlier and fell asleep at the controls."

Or . . . you could just as easily be in a downtown elevator when a controversial politician or executive steps in. You slip out your phone and in your best investigative reporter voice ask why her actions caused an economic crisis.

Periscope not only "one-click" live streams to put a whole new paradigm spin on BREAKING NEWS, it also automatically saves your video recordings.

Here's a real, live action Periscope NYC crisis <http://goo.gl/1lOSDK>

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That's it for this edition of News & Views.

I hope you found it informative and valuable.

Please don't forget to read my BLOG between newsletters;

<http://jeffansell.com/wordpress/>

Sincerely,  
Jeff Ansell

Be well . . .

P.S. My book, "When the Headline Is YOU" is now also an AUDIOBOOK -  
<http://bit.ly/PiYotw>

"When the Headline Is YOU" can be found at a variety of places online and from your favorite bookstores, including Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Chapters, Indigo, & also directly from my publisher, Jossey-Bass.

<http://www.jeffansell.com/TIPS/When-the-Headline-Is-YOU.html>

The book captures my decades of experience as a media coach and reporter, and is designed to help people understand and interact effectively with news media.

If you're not even sure if YOU need my book, check out our animated trailer to help you decide. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xhwd6tly1ao>

FOLLOW ME ON TWITTER <http://twitter.com/JeffAnsell>

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My Website - <http://www.jeffansell.com/>

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