**News values**

These are the essential elements of every good news story

News values, sometimes called news criteria, determine how much prominence a news story is given by a media outlet, and the attention it is given by the audience. A. Boyd states that: "News journalism has a broadly agreed set of values, often referred to as 'newsworthiness'..." News values are not universal and can vary widely between different cultures. In Western practice, decisions on the selection and prioritization of news are made by editors on the basis of their experience and intuition, although analysis by J. Galtung and M. Ruge showed that several factors are consistently applied across a range of news organizations. Some of these factors are listed below, together with others put forward by Schlesinger and Bell. According to Ryan, "there is no end to lists of news criteria". Among the many lists of news values that have been drawn up by scholars and journalists, some, like Galtung and Ruge's, attempt to describe news practices across cultures, while others have become remarkably specific to the press of certain nations. Galtung and Ruge, in their seminal study in the area put forward a system of twelve factors describing events that together are used as a definition of 'newsworthiness'. Focusing on newspapers and broadcast news, Galtung and Ruge devised a list describing what they believed were significant contributing factors as to how the news is constructed. Their theory argues that the more an event accessed these criteria the more likely it was to be reported on in a newspaper. Furthermore, three basic hypotheses are presented by Galtung and Ruge: the additivity hypothesis that the more factors an event satisfies, the higher the probability that it becomes news; the complementarity hypothesis that the factors will tend to exclude each other; and the exclusion hypothesis that events that satisfy none or very few factors will not become news

**news values**

News values are general guidelines or criteria which determine how much prominence a media outlet gives a news story. They explain why a story interests its audience; and how editors and other journalists decide that one piece of information is news while another is not.

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In the 1960s, researchers Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge examined news stories worldwide to determine their similarities (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). Their seminal study created the first news value list, which is still referred to today by journalists and strategic communication professionals. (See the [University of Oxford’s paper](https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Delving%20into%20the%20Discourse_0.pdf)on Galtung and Ruge’s research for more information.) News values have evolved over time, and there is much debate over whether journalists should consider other criteria to select newsworthy content. (See [Dr. Meredith Clark’s article](http://www.poynter.org/2016/its-time-for-a-new-set-of-news-values-heres-where-we-should-start/418952/) on considering a new set of news values.) Currently, eight values are used to determine a story’s newsworthiness (Kraft, 2015). Some of the values’ names may differ slightly in other sources, but their meaning is the same.

***Immediacy/Timeliness***

Events or stories that have recently taken place or will happen in the immediate future have immediacy or timeliness. Breaking news stories or stories about unexpected events that are developing are good examples. Media gatekeepers deem these stories so important that they often interrupt regular television schedules to immediately give audiences the information. Recent happenings typically carry more news value than less timely events.

Timeliness also takes into consideration factors such as seasonal events, commemorations, and holidays. A strategic communication professional may pitch an activity that connects with this type of timeliness—for example, a fundraiser that distributes toys to low-income children during the holiday season.

***Proximity***

Proximity considers the location of the event in relation to the target audience of the media outlet. Audiences are more likely to pay attention to stories that take place in their local communities. For example, a news station in Ohio usually wouldn’t cover day-to-day events at the Indiana State Fair. However, happenings at the annual Ohio State Fair always get daily coverage in central Ohio news outlets.

***Human interest***

Stories that are emotionally compelling capture the audience’s attention and appeal to their attitudes and beliefs. Feature articles often are good examples of human interest stories when they depict a person, organization, or community in a way that triggers an emotional connection between the audience and the characters. Other examples are a behind-the-scenes look at the life of an athlete or the story of a person struggling to overcome an obstacle.

An example of a human interest story that contains strong emotional elements is that of Leah Still, daughter of National Football League player Devon Still. Leah captured the hearts of many when news outlets began to cover her battle with cancer in 2015, when she was four years old. Many people admired Leah’s positive attitude and determination to beat her illness. Now cancer-free, Leah continues to be an inspiration to thousands of people. For more information about this story and its human interest elements, take a look at this video:

[Leah and Devon Still’s story (Source: ABC’s Good Morning America)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hl-Y8FI16oc)

***Currency***

Topics that are trending in news media and other media, such as Twitter and Facebook, are considered newsworthy. “Hot topics of the day” or stories that are in the general public discourse are other examples. In 2015, many media outlets covered a story about a meme featuring a dress that appeared blue and black to some people and white and gold to others. The phenomenon was dubbed “dressgate” and went viral on social media. Since many people discussed and debated the color of the dress, some news outlets decided to cover the story. However, topics that have currency value generally have a short life span in the news cycle because they are discussed only briefly by the public. Click here for more information on the “[dressgate](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2016/03/15/dressgate-if-you-saw-that-dress-as-white-your-brain-was-working/)” discussion.

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