

**MODULE NAME: NEWS GATHERING**

**MODULE CODE :04107**

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**SUB ENABLING 1: DESCRIBE DIFFERENT CONCEPT RELATED TO NEWS SOURCES IN JOURNALISM**

- **Outline source of news for a journalist**
- **Explain the classification of news sources**
- **Outline the importance of news sources in journalism**

## **OUTLINE SOURCE OF NEWS FOR A JOURNALIST**

**A journalist is** a person who gathers information in the form of text, audio or pictures, processes it into a newsworthy form and disseminates it to the public.

**A source of news** (or source of information) refers to the origin point or the channel through which a journalist gathers raw data to build a story. In journalism, sources of news are the people, documents, and platforms that provide the raw information needed to build a story. It is very important to understand these "places" by how a journalist interacts with them.

Anything that provides news information for a period of time is said to be a source news. Source of news be a moving person or still documents. sources of news also refers to where journalist get news there are numbers of sources of news for news paper and electronic media where journalist use to get information or news.

## **SOURCES OF NEWS FOR JOURNALIST**

News sources are the primary origins of information that allow a journalist to build a factual and credible story. These sources range from human contacts, such as eyewitnesses and officials, to documentary evidence like public records and digital reports.

### **1. Human Sources (People)**

Are the individuals who provide journalists with first-hand accounts, specialized knowledge, or insider information. human interviews act as the "mortar" that connects these facts and provides emotional context. Human sources are classified under the following categories

- **Official Sources:** People with formal authority, such as government officials, police spokespeople, or corporate CEOs.
- **Eyewitnesses:** Regular people who personally saw or experienced an event, such as a crime or an accident.
- **Victims:** People directly harmed by an event or policy.
- **Experts:** Academics, scientists, or specialists who provide technical context and analysis

- **Whistleblowers:** Sources who provide confidential "leaks" or "tip-offs," often from within an organization

## 2. Documentary Sources

Are the "paper trail" or digital records that provide hard evidence for a story, documents provide facts, dates, and data that are difficult to dispute. Here we are looking on various things that are documented as a way to get news.

- **Public Records:** Court transcripts, property records, and government statistics.
- **Press Releases:** Official statements issued by companies or organizations to announce news.
- **Reports and Handouts:** Official studies, police logs - A summary of crimes, arrests, and accidents reported to the police in the last 24 hours, and audit reports- Documents showing where money was spent and whether it was used legally.

## 3. Media & News Agencies (The Wires)

Many newsrooms rely on massive global organizations to provide breaking news from around the world. are organizations that act as "wholesalers" of information. They employ thousands of journalists worldwide to gather, verify, and package news, which they then sell to other media outlets like newspapers, TV stations, and websites

- **Major Wire Services:** Organizations like **The Associated Press (AP)**, **Reuters**, and **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**.

## 4. Digital & Social Media

sources are the "real-time" layer of news gathering, this is because it is easy to create raw footage immediately after an event happens. The internet is a primary "place" for news-gathering, though it requires heavy verification

- **Social Platforms:** Real-time footage and tips from X(Twitter), TikTok, Instagram and YouTube.

## 5. Direct Observation

- **On-the-Spot Reporting:** Being physically present at an event (like a protest or a fire) to report what is happening in real-time
- **Beat Reporting:** Regularly visiting specific places, such as a courthouse or city hall, to build relationships and find stories

## EXPLAIN THE CLASSIFICATION OF NEWS SOURCES

In journalism, classifying news sources helps reporters and audiences evaluate the reliability, perspective, and origin of information.

### 01) Classification by Proximity

This is the most important classification to master because it helps journalists to judge the **originality** and **reliability** of information. It is based on how close the source was to the actual event.

- **Primary Sources;** A primary source provides **direct, firsthand evidence** about an event, object, or person. There is no "middleman" interpreting the facts. examples **Human:** An interview with a survivor of a flood or a speech by a President. **Documentary:** A video recorded on a phone, a police arrest report, or a court transcript
- **Secondary Sources;** A secondary source interprets, analyzes, or summarizes primary sources. It is one step removed from the event. examples **Media:** A news article written by a reporter who wasn't at the scene but interviewed witnesses later. **Academic:** A biography of a famous leader or a documentary film about a historical war.
- **Tertiary Sources;** These sources index, abstract, or organize primary and secondary sources to provide a broad overview. examples **Reference:** Encyclopedias (like Wikipedia), dictionaries, and almanacs. **Lists:** Fact-books or bibliographies

### 02) Classification by Official Status

This helps determine the authority and potential bias of the information provider, how to weigh the **authority** and **motive** of a source. This classification asks: *"Does this person speak for an institution, or do they speak for themselves?"*

- **Official Sources:** People or documents representing an institution with formal authority. *Examples:* Police spokespeople, government officials, and corporate CEOs.
- **Unofficial Sources:** Individuals offering perspectives without institutional ties. *Examples:* Bystanders, community leaders, and whistleblowers.

### 03) Classification by Attribution

Journalists classify sources by the ethical agreements made during an interview, refers to the "ground rules" or legal agreement between a journalist and a source regarding how that person's name and information can be used in a story. This is a critical ethical topic to understand because breaking these rules can destroy a journalist's reputation or even lead to a lawsuit.

- **On the Record:** All information and the source's name can be quoted
- **Unattributable / "On Background":** The information can be used, but the source is described generally (e.g., "a senior official")

- **Off the Record:** The information is for the journalist's understanding only and cannot be published or attributed at all.

#### 04) Classification by Content and Nature

Modern newsrooms also categorize content to help audiences distinguish between facts and views

- **Hard News:** Time-sensitive, serious facts reported immediately (e.g., politics, crime, business).
- **Soft News (Feature):** Less time-sensitive stories focused on human interest or lifestyle (e.g., entertainment, travel)
- **Opinion vs. News:** Identifying "News Articles" (impartial facts) versus "Editorials" or "Op-Eds" (persuasive viewpoints)

### OUTLINE THE IMPORTANCE OF NEWS SOURCES IN JOURNALISM

- 1) **Establishing Credibility and Trust:** The reliability of a news story depends heavily on the credibility of its sources. Using reputable sources, such as official records, experts, or eyewitnesses, ensures information is accurate, which in turn upholds the reputation of the journalist and news organization.
- 2) **Ensuring Accuracy and Fact-Checking:** Sources provide firsthand information that allows journalists to verify events. Journalists often cross-check information against multiple sources (at least three are recommended) to ensure fairness and accuracy before publishing.
- 3) **Providing Diverse Perspectives and Context:** Utilizing multiple, diverse sources helps avoid bias and ensures all sides of a story are represented, rather than relying on a single viewpoint.
- 4) **Enabling Accountability and Investigation:** Sources are vital for investigative journalism, providing, for instance, data or "whistleblower" information that reveals misconduct in government or business.
- 5) **Developing Context and Analysis:** Sources do not just provide facts, but also background information and expertise that help interpret complex events, allowing journalists to explain the "why" and "how" behind the news.

- 6) **Building Long-Term Relationships:** Journalists cultivate long-term, trusted relationships with key sources to gain access to exclusive information that is not publicly available

## References

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