



What Is Journalism? (And What Isn't?)

When you're watching or reading the news, it isn't always clear what is fact and what is opinion. These resources can help you navigate the landscape of reporting versus commentary and understand journalistic ethics.

Conversation Questions

1. What combination of news, opinion, and analysis do information consumers need in order to be well-informed?
2. How can an information source like a news service demonstrate that it provides trustworthy information?
3. Family question: How should news sources help readers tell the difference between news and opinion?

Key Definitions (from Merriam-Webster)

- *Journalism* – the collection and editing of news for presentation through the media
- *News* – a report of recent events
- *Opinion* – a view, judgment, or appraisal formed in the mind about a particular matter
- *Analysis* – a detailed examination of anything complex in order to understand its nature or to determine its essential features

Read

“The Difference between News, Opinion and Analysis” from *The Speaker*

<https://goo.gl/AfVCDz>

The Speaker, a collaborative journalism project meant to provide news on under-reported issues, outlines the difference between news, opinion, and analysis while providing examples of each.

“Better Design Helps Differentiate Opinion and News” by Rachel Schallom

<https://goo.gl/zEEJ6E>

The NiemanLab discusses how journalism is using design techniques to help readers tell news from commentary.





**“News or opinion? Online, it’s hard to tell” by
Rebecca Iannucci**

<https://goo.gl/4FUe7z>

Researcher Rebecca Iannucci shares findings of a study examining the ways internet news sites label—or don’t—their articles to help readers tell what is news coverage and what isn’t.

“SPJ Code of Ethics” from the Society of Professional Journalists

<https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>

The Society of Professional Journalists offers the code of ethics for news reporting and dissemination, including tenets to “seek truth and report it” and “be accountable and transparent.”

**“Tale of 2 polls: What do librarians have that journalists don’t?”
by David Beard**

<https://goo.gl/CnK9Nk>

This article digs into a recent set of polls showing that public opinion of journalists has decreased while that of another information profession—librarians—has increased.

Listen

“Breaking News” from Radiolab

<http://www.radiolab.org/story/breaking-news/>

This podcast episode ventures into the arena of journalistic ethics in a technological landscape where simulated news reports—seemingly from people in positions of authority—can spread misinformation on a wide scale.

“It’s All Journalism”

<https://player.fm/series/its-all-journalism>

This podcast series tackles the trends in journalism in a world of digital media. Interviews with working journalists shed light on how the profession views their work and responsibility.

