

Glossary of Media Terms

- **Angle:** The approach a reporter takes in writing a story—includes timeliness, controversy, cost, community impact, etc.
- **Assignment desk:** News staff responsible for identifying the stories for coverage each day
- **Backgrounder:** A document or conversation that provides vital facts and history of an organization or issue
- **Biography:** A document that gives vital facts and history of a person
- **Breaking news:** Urgent news reported immediately that can sometimes “bump” a scheduled story or live interview until a later time
- **B-Roll:** Extra video footage provided to the media that helps enrich the story and provides more flexibility when editing
- **Byline:** The name of the reporter/s or author/s who researched and wrote an article; typically printed at the top or bottom of a news or feature story or on screen for broadcast, or mentioned at the end of a radio story
- **Copy:** Written text for a news story or video script
- **Correction:** A note that corrects mistakes in a previous story—not to be confused with a retraction, which is the act of a news outlet “taking back” an entire story it wrote, which is highly unusual
- **Dateline:** Place and date of an article’s origin, which usually appears at the beginning of the first paragraph
- **Daybook:** Daily schedules of upcoming news events that reporters tap into for story ideas; the Associated Press maintains a daybook of events for each major city
- **Editorial:** An expression of opinion (as opposed to a news article, which presents facts without opinion) appearing on the editorial page, separate from news stories
- **Editorial board:** Editorial page staff that sets the newspaper’s editorial tone and stand on issues
- **Editorial board visit:** a prearranged meeting with the editorial board to share your position on an issue, in hopes that they will draft an editorial expressing support—mostly used with print news media
- **Embargo:** Any restriction placed on when specific information may be used, often stating the desired date and time of release
- **Feature:** A current article, but not hard news, and not necessarily leading with the most important fact first
- **Hard news:** presents facts of a current event deemed timely, reported objectively and in descending order of importance (inverted pyramid style of writing), in which the most comprehensive information is put in the lead, followed by less and less important information
- **Live shot:** Live coverage by a television or radio station
- **Media alert:** Also referred to as a news advisory or tip sheet, this is brief summary of the basic facts surrounding an event, often used when time is short or the occasion does not warrant a full news release
- **Media kit:** An organized package of information that includes background information on general topics or special events
- **Nat sound:** Background sound for a radio or TV/online feature
- **News:** information that is new, unusual, unexpected, controversial, of wide significance or interest to the audience of a publication or program

- **News (or Press) conference:** An arranged gathering of media representatives to cover the announcement and explanation of a significant and newsworthy subject or event Note: News announcement must be of high significance to warrant a news conference
- **News hole:** Space reserved for material other than advertising
- **News peg:** (also called “the hook”) The timely or attention-grabbing aspect of a story, showcasing the immediate need for why the issue should be reported now
- **News release:** Can also referred to as a press release, and is the most common written form of public relations, used to announce news and information
- **Official statement:** Also referred to as a position paper, a written comment prepared that gives consistent responses to questions about a particular issue
- **Op-ed:** A piece written by non-editorial staff expressing their opinion on an issue
- **Pitch:** A note or letter to a journalist or editor introducing a story idea
- **Sidebar:** A short feature appearing in conjunction with a news article, giving interest or historical aspects of a story
- **Special event:** An activity arranged for the purpose of generating publicity
- **Stylebook:** a printed guide to grammar and style, such as The AP Style Book or The Chicago Style Book, which can be useful when writing news releases and other materials
- **Wire services:** Companies that supply news to various media on a subscription basis, including the Associated Press, United Press International and Reuters; they cover stories as news and place them on the wire for news sources around the world to use. Others, such as Business Wire and PR Newswire, operate special wire services that feed directly into many newsrooms and will place your news release for a fee.

Resources

Websites

- Public Relations Society of America
For timely articles and news on communication
www.prsa.org
- Cision
A paid service for creating media lists that also provides research on the state of the media
www.cision.com
- WalkSteps
The online resource for developing strategies toward walkable communities
walksteps.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center
www.pedbikeinfo.org
- The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities
www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calls/walking-and-walkable-communities/index.html
- America Walks
A nonprofit national organization is leading the way in making America a great place to walk
americawalks.org
- Every Body Walk!
An award-winning campaign aimed at getting Americans up and moving
everybodywalk.org
- Kaiser Permanente
www.kp.org/share
- Metropolitan Group
A social change agency that offers many free articles on communication issues
www.metgroup.com

Books

- The Media Training Bible: 101 Things You Absolutely, Positively Need To Know Before Your Next Interview
By Brad Phillips
- Glass Jaw: A Manifesto for Defending Fragile Reputations in an Age of Instant Scandal
By Eric Dezenhall

YouTube Videos

- School of Media and Public Affairs at George Washington University www.youtube.com/user/GWUSMPA
- “The Fine Art of Messaging” Webinar presented by Metropolitan Group for America Walks americawalks.org/the-fine-art-of-messaging-webinar/