Article Categorization Process

In addition to media monitoring of TV and radio, Playspread analyzed online articles for quantity and quality of investigative reporting. In a change from previous years, this process starts with classifying articles as either **investigative** or **non-investigative**.

Investigative Articles

To be **investigative**, the article must meet at least one of the two following standards:[1]

1. Reporting to investigate a single topic in-depth (i.e., examination attempts to be systematic, thorough, or from more than one perspective), typically to "uncover corruption, review government policies or corporate houses, or draw attention to social, economic, political, or cultural trends."[2]
2. Reporting proactively gathers information that was not previously public and is <u>NOT</u> simply a passive reaction/report on press releases, government announcements, or related content. [3]

In addition, once an article is confirmed to meet at least one of these standards, it must also have at least four of the six characteristics below:

1. Exposes the public to matters that are concealed–either deliberately, or accidentally**,** often behind a chaotic mass of facts and circumstances.
2. It requires using both open/publicly available sources and documents *as well as* primary investigation by the reporter (material gathered through the reporter's own initiative).
3. The article will dig deeply into an issue or topic of public interest.

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[1] Kaplan, David. *Global Investigative Journalism: Strategies for Support. Center for International Media Assistance*, 2013.
[2] Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. *How to Become a Mouthpiece for the People: A Manual for Investigative Journalism*, 2016. p 1-5
[3] Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. *How to Become a Mouthpiece for the People: A Manual for Investigative Journalism*, 2016. p 1-5

4. This may not affect the entire country, but could be a community, village, town, region, or other group of people that are disadvantaged by not knowing the information or will benefit by learning it.
5. The article will make use of multiple sources (documents, interviews, in-person viewing of a situation/issue).
6. The article should reveal new information or reveal the significance of previously available information in a new way.

Articles meeting these criteria are sorted into the investigative category.[4]

Non-Investigative Articles

Non-investigative articles do not meet the standards of investigative articles, as they do no proactively gather information that was not previously public, or provide in-depth exploration of a topic or issue. Non-investigative articles can fall into any of the following categories:

- **Op-Ed/Editorial/Letter to the Editor**: An article, column, or letter written to represent the strong, informed, and focused opinion of the writer on an issue of relevance.[5]
- **Press Release reprint or publication of speech:** An article that is a reprint of a press release or public speech or statement. Press releases are used as official announcements to notify the media about newsworthy events, and could originate from public officials, private businesses, government offices, or other organizations.[6] This includes articles that include summary paragraphs of information from speeches, but where the author did not seek information from other sources – document, human, or otherwise – to add detail or nuance to the story.
- **News story - Feature:** A story that breaks from a traditional news story through using elements such as storytelling devices and character profiles to tell a more in-depth story.[7]
- **News story - News:** Stories that report the most essential information in a concise and impartial manner, often following the "inverted pyramid style" (as shown above), placing the

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[4] This updated categorization process means that online articles under the Media Monitoring 1.0 Methodology that were previously rated as "Potentially Investigative" are now categorized in the "Investigative" category in the Media Monitoring 2.0 Methodology. This change does not affect the analysis process described in **Annex 3** or affect the ability to compare data across years. Previous analyses combined both "Potentially Investigative" and "Investigative" articles only at the analysis stage, whereas the current article categorization process sorts online articles into one category from the start.

[5] Harvard Kennedy School, School of Communication. *How to Write an Op-Ed or Column.* 2017.
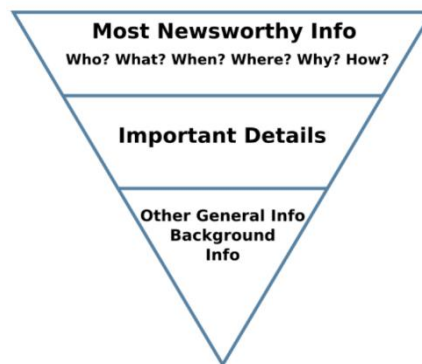
[6] George Washington University. *The PR Guide to Writing a Press Release.*

[7] Roberts, Jasmine. The Ohio State University. *Writing for Strategic Communication Industries.*

most newsworthy information at the beginning of the article[4]. News stories are normally reporting on a recent event, action, or happening.
News stories often address one or more of these six[8]:

- **Timeliness**- Recent events have a higher news value than less recent ones.
- **Proximity**- Stories taking place in one's hometown or community are more newsworthy than those taking place far away.
- **Prominence**- Famous people and those in the public eye have a higher news value than ordinary citizens.
- **Uniqueness/oddity**- A story with a bizarre twist or strange occurrences. "Man bites dog" instead of "dog bites man."
- **Impact**- Stories that impact a large number of people may be more newsworthy than those impacting a smaller number of people.
- **Conflict**- "If it bleeds, it leads." Stories with strife, whether it's actual violence or not, are more interesting.

Media Monitoring Quality of Investigative Reporting Rubric

After all the articles were classified, only the investigative articles were assessed for quality using the rubric below. With the start of the Media Monitoring 2.0 Methodology, EnCompass conducted an online refresher training with the Playspread team, consisting of four media and communication journalists. After the training, they coded all investigative articles on a scale of 1-5 for each of the five domains, where 1 indicated, "does not meet standard" and 5 represented, "exceeds standard".

To what extent does the article meet the following standards for quality?

Categories	Standards for quality	Does not meet standard (Score: 1)	Meets some aspect of standard (Score: 2)	Moderately meets standard (Score: 3)	Meets standard (Score: 4)	Exceeds standard (Score: 5)

Public Interest	Investigative report is reflective of the needs and interests of a specific population (i.e., group of people sharing common characteristics), which it connects to the broader public interest.[9] Or, the report relates a specific issue to the average citizen or broader issues of governance (management of public affairs).	- Is not relevant to the public interest or does not consider impact on average citizen	- Implications only considered for a single individual or affected community, often presented anecdotally, but article fails to draw connection to a broader population or discuss in relation to the public interest	-Readers are able to infer an impact on a group beyond the article's immediate sources, but these connections are not clearly conveyed or are only partially successful in connecting the issue to broader public interest	-Report makes clear connections between the needs and interests of a specific population and a broader community or the public interest OR -Relates the specific issue to the average citizen or broader issues of governance	In addition to meeting standard: - Report explores conflicts between needs and interests of a specific group and the broader public interest from multiple perspectives, which are well-sourced AND - Shows multiple different ways average citizen may be affected including positive and negative aspects, or examines the complexity in resolving the governance issue
Report Originality	The article presents new information evidence that is the result of original, rigorous, reporting (e.g., the media source states that they are breaking the story, or that they dug deeper into an ongoing story to find additional information previously not public that	-Report does not present original information or publishes investigation that came entirely from other source	-Report presents another source's original investigative information and supplements this with public information, but does not itself uncover new informatio n	-Report presents some new and original information (e.g., report does not break the story, but obtains perspectives from at least one previously non-public source, though this new	-Report presents new information (e.g., media source states that they are breaking the story, or they dug deeper to find previously non-public information that alters the story or paints it in a new light).	-Investigation is clearly part of a larger series of reports published by the media source, indicating consistent monitoring or long-term investigatio n of the issue OR -Investigation is saturated with original

[9] Reporting on Corruption A Resource Tool for Governments and Journalists Reporting on Corruption, UNCAC, 2013. p 14

changes the story)[10]		n previously unavailable to the public.	information does not substantively alter the story)		information that had not previously been publicly available.
Neutrality of Investigation	The investigation leading to the report is conducted in a way that does not make assumptions at the outset; this means good faith of sources is not presumed (any source may provide false information), and no information is used without attempt at verification. These attempts at verification are presented, even if unsuccessful (e.g., a document could not be obtained despite journalistic attempt, or contradicting sources were not willing to comment). This does not mean the published investigative report cannot present a hypothesis, but it does document how investigation	- Investigation is biased or set out to prove a pre-existing point without any attempt to engage information that could disprove point.	-The investigation contains attempts to verify some, but not all, assertions. Bias is evident, whether intentional or unintentional. -It is not clear if individuals or organizations accused of wrongdoing were given an opportunity to respond.	-The investigation attempts to verify sources' assertions, but attempts are either weak or do not completely verify information; stronger sources could have been approached for information. As a result, the audience may be left with some questions about the reliability of information.	-The article presents how investigation sought neutrality, i.e., how it avoided assumptions, did not presume good faith of any source, and attempted to verify all information with at least one other source. -Individuals or organizations accused of wrongdoing are given opportunity to respond (even if they choose not to, in which case "no comment" is reported). If obvious viewpoints are missing (e.g., "the government declined to comment"), the journalist	*In addition to meeting standard:* -The investigation confirms (or attempts to confirm) assertions made with multiple sources. -The report shows that the investigation process was conducted in a manner that was sensitive to biases and conducted in a collaborative environment that encouraged the exploration of differing viewpoints.

[10] UNCAC. Reporting on Corruption A Resource Tool for Governments and Journalists Reporting on Corruption, UNCAC, 2013. p 14-15

	provided opportunity to disprove hypothesis.[11]				attempted to obtain information from other sources to address all key viewpoints. -If relevant, any potential conflict of interest by journalist and publication is disclosed (e.g., advertisers, relationships, etc.).	
Research Quality	The report presents compelling evidence from multiple types of sources, including both human sources and documents (legal or government documents, business records, vital statistics, think tank or academic reports[12]). These sources are clearly identified, verified, and have direct knowledge of topic. Sources of questionable reputability may be included but should not be basis for the article and thus do not fulfill this standard	-Report contains single source (either human or document).	References more than one source, but sources are all of same type (e.g., multiple reports from same NGO, or anecdotal stories from 'man on the street' or 'vox pop' interviews). Little evidence that source claims are substantiated. OR - References	References more than one source from more than one source type (e.g., government press document and NGO report; multiple human sources from different organizations / government agencies). Report substantiates some claims by sources with other sources of information, either	Report substantiates or disproves sources' claims with other sources of information, either human or document. Anecdotal stories or claims are corroborated by at least one human or document source that demonstrate 'authority' or 'expertise' on the subject at hand (e.g., if a patient at a hospital claim that they were not given proper care, a	Report is saturated with evidence substantiating or disproving all sources' claims with other sources of information, either human or document. Anecdotal stories or claims are corroborated with several strong sources that demonstrate 'authority' or 'expertise' on the subject. There is ample evidence that the journalists working on this report have

[11] UNESCO. Story-Based Inquiry: A manual for investigative journalists. p. 9. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001930/193078e.pdf#193103

[12] Center for International Private Enterprise. Investigative Reporting: A toolkit for Reporters. 2009. p 38. https://icirnigeria.org/resources/uploads/Investigative_Reporting_Toolkit-English.pdf

(consider treatment of these sources under neutrality standard, above).		more than one source and sources are of different types, but all sources are anonymous or rationale for anonymity is not explained. Little evidence that source claims were substantiated.	human or document.

There is evidence that efforts were made to corroborate information provided by human or document sources with other sources, but verification is not from sources that demonstrate 'authority' or 'expertise' (see score 4). | nurse might substantiate that claim by asserting that he/she has seen many such cases. Or, a public official might say that people in XX neighborhood are suffering from malnutrition, and a journalist may seek evidence from residents of that neighborhood).

- May contain anonymous sources, but rationale for anonymity is explained and source's authority is established; more than one source is not anonymous | gone to great lengths to obtain and verify sources. |

Source Variety	Report's sources (either human or document) present a wide variety of viewpoints, i.e., article presents all sides of a story or sources represent the opinions of all stakeholders.[13]	-Report's sources represent a single viewpoint (e.g., even if it contains multiple sources, all sources have the same view); article completely lacks dissenting views	-Sources offer slightly differing viewpoints (e.g., sources nuance each other), but do not substantively disagree; no dissenting source is cited	-Article presents more than one viewpoint, but there are key viewpoints or opinions that are clearly missing	-Report's sources present a wide variety of viewpoints, i.e., article presents all sides of a story or sources represent the opinions of all stakeholders	-Sources are provided the opportunity to respond to the viewpoints of other sources in the article (i.e., there is back and forth that allows sources to present new evidence or refute others' claims); neutral sources are engaged in addition to the various viewpoints
OVERALL SCORE						

[13] Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. How to Become a Mouthpiece for the People: A Manual for Investigative Journalism. 2016. p 31