



Factors Considered by Reporters in Determining Newsworthiness

*Through the identification and promotion of newsworthy research, programs, and projects,
we can increase media coverage of the communication discipline*

News is defined as something new, surprising, unexpected, counterintuitive, first, biggest or that raises new issues or problems. But what makes something newsworthy?

Detailed below are four factors that a reporter may consider as he/she evaluates whether or not to write about a particular piece of research, program or project. In our ongoing effort to bring newsworthy work to the attention of media for coverage through news release development and direct pitching, please use this information as your guide in determining the news value of your work.

If you believe that your work addresses one/all of the factors described below, please contact Arlyn G. Riskind at NCA's National Office: ariskind@natcom.org

I. Pioneering Research

The word *news* means exactly that - things which are new or provide a new insight of interest to a targeted audience. A program, project or research that highlights *new* insights about communication could be of significant interest to the media. A sample of this type of coverage can be found here, <http://blogs.wsj.com/juggle/2010/12/12/telecommuters-are-happier-workers>, a study of how teleworkers are more satisfied than office-bound workers.

II. Broad Audience Appeal

When covering the news, a reporter is concerned with the number of people who will be affected by his/her story. Consider whether your work is on a subject in which many people are familiar and/or care about. No matter how new and exciting a finding, if the intended audience is narrow, it is unlikely to generate coverage. Work that has broad audience appeal will likely attract media interest. A sample of coverage of this kind can be found here: http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2010-06-22-10yearcourtship22_CV_N.htm?loc=interstitialskip, a study highlighting the success of on/off romantic relationships.

III. Provocative Topics

Provocative topics will often generate the greatest media interest. For example, in recent years there has been increasing interest in research about bullying, health, and social media. A sample of coverage about a provocative topic can be found here: <http://health.usnews.com/health-news/news/articles/2012/03/23/talking-about-weight->

[tied-to-poor-self-image-depression-study](#), a study on how engaging in fat talk can lead to depression.

IV. Easily Understandable

Ultimately, it is the reporter's responsibility to communicate a story audiences will understand. Some research may be too complex for the general public, resulting in little to no media attention. But work that brings to light understandable connections of broad audience appeal is likely to generate media coverage. A sample of this type of coverage can be found here: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/04/120404101822.htm>, a study on how text messaging in class can affect students' learning.

Arlyn G. Riskind, NCA's director of public affairs and public information, is interested in receiving your suggestions of newsworthy research, programs and/or projects. Please contact Arlyn at ariskind@natcom.org or 202-534-1104 with your recommendations.