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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Poynter is

I'll bet that the word most frequently uttered by those of us working in media, politics and culture in 2023 was "2024." As we toggle between optimism and anxiety over the future of journalism and other democratic institutions, the calendar has been an ever-present character. Our hearts and minds have been strategically preoccupied as we brace for a U.S. election



Photo by Chris Kozlowski, Poynter

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Achievement in journalism.

Five hundred more people attended Poynter’s IFCN GlobalFact summit in Seoul, South Korea, to share ideas for fighting repression and misinformation. Two hundred more people came to Poynter’s “community conversation” at our St. Petersburg, Florida, headquarters to listen to NBC correspondent Kerry Sanders discuss covering hurricanes and climate. Sara Longwell, the publisher of The Bulwark, and PBS host Hari Sreenivasan joined our United Facts of America online festival and talked about civil discourse. On Zoom calls coaching media executives or with community leaders attending writing programs, Poynter is a convener. We bring people who care about journalism and the media together.

journalists can connect with audiences, where our respected brand gives us access to experts from all disciplines, where we are trusted to stoke genuine conversation and meaningful brainstorming. On the pages that follow, you’ll see a sampling of all that we’ve accomplished, and a glimpse of where we’re heading.

In the fast-changing journalism market, we are all susceptible to fear (it’s a volatile economy), we are too quick to fawn (sometimes we love our own work more than we should) and we often fail (so many options, so little consensus). Poynter tries to elevate journalism above all that — to a creative and credible place of value and integrity.

We’d love to hear how you think we might help.

The Crossroads.

At Poynter, we often dub these four areas of focus — teach, inform, empower, convene — our “crossroads” strategy. We strive to be an institute that is a crossroads — where

One mission. Many ways

“Poynter is a place of many missions. We support local news. We train journalists to do their job better. We are the home of PolitiFact, the nation’s largest political fact-checking website, and the home of the International Fact Checking Network, which really makes us the global leader in fact-checking and supports fact-check work throughout the world. We’re the creators of a program called MediaWise, where we train school-age kids to baby boomers and everybody in between on how to tell fact from fiction online. We’re the home of the Craig Newmark Center for Ethics and Leadership, which helps journalists improve the trust they have with their audiences. And we’re the owners of the Tampa Bay Times newspaper, the largest daily newspaper in Florida.

“All of these things roll up into this mission. Our job is to make journalism better and, in the process, make democracy stronger. That’s the goal: elevate journalism in service of democracy.”

Neil Brown
President

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Poynter's Digital Transformation Program (DTP) teaches public media leaders and their staff how to transform

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WNET, the nonprofit parent company of a group of PBS stations and newsrooms, created a new YouTube series "Hay Dinero" after market research demonstrated that Latina women in their market are interested in building generational wealth.

WNET

Participants saw

10 million
net new digital
audience growth

- \$3.1 million in net new digital revenue
- 458 public media professionals trained
- 79 public media organizations

Supporting organization

how their newsrooms will cover public safety moving forward. This policy includes a mission statement for public safety coverage; guidelines of what stories the newsroom covers; and plans for training, implementation and evaluation.

Sixty-five newsrooms have participated in the program so far, attending 12 two-hour virtual training sessions every other week. On other weeks, newsrooms received up to two hours of personalized coaching. Many of the news organizations themselves

Editing help. Anytime. Anywhere.

Poynter and ACES: The Society for Editing expanded on an already successful partnership in 2023 to offer a new online certificate course for editors.

The seven-course, 12-hour intermediate certificate is the second in the three-tier Poynter ACES editing certification series. It sets the industry standard for communications professionals who want to improve their editing skills.

Nearly 1,900 people took a Poynter/ACES certificate course in 2023.

“ACES is excited to be deepening its partnership with Poynter with this latest certificate,” said Gigi Sutton, the ACES executive director.

Instructors include WIRED special projects editor Alan Henry, POLITICO senior managing editor Anita Kumar, CNN legal counsel Frank

[Learn more about the certificate course](#)

LoMonte, Los Angeles Times editor Steve Padilla, Poynter assistant editor Kayla Randall, freelance editor Mark Allen, University of Kansas professors Lisa McLendon and Gerri Berendzen, and “America’s Writing Coach” Roy Peter Clark.

Poynter-Koch Media and Journalism Fellowship

- A year-long experience that gives early career journalists the coaching, network and skills they need to have a long and lasting career in journalism.
- Full-time job with one of our participating news organizations throughout the United States.
- 60 participants
- Individual coaching and mentoring

Participating newsrooms: The Dallas Morning News, The Atlantic, Houston Landing, The Baltimore Banner, KNKX Public Radio, Texas Tribune

INNOVATION

How Poynter is leading on AI

Poynter is in the unique position to help guide newsrooms and people as they work to develop AI policies, work flows and tools.

At the start of 2023 fewer than a handful of people in news organizations of any size were familiar with the term “large language model.” In 2024, generative AI is dominating the conversation.

The public launch of ChatGPT and Dall-e was a pivotal moment, akin to the launching of mobile web. And then we all saw how fast the technology changed when OpenAI released even newer versions of the tools that made the first ones already seem antiquated.

Media organizations have been playing catch-up since day 1. Poynter is in the unique position to help guide newsrooms and people as they work to develop AI policies, work flows and tools.

Our AI Steering Committee has focused on three areas where we can build on our strengths and existing work to carve out a distinctive and highly-relevant path for journalism and democracy. Here are the areas where we can have immediate impact:

- Developing ethical AI policies for newsrooms – specifically around use that serves the public and democratic good.
- Evaluating and explaining generative AI for media literacy and fact-checking.
- Helping small newsrooms experiment with and develop tools to use AI.

To accomplish those goals we plan to:

- Use Poynter’s ethical framework, developed by Poynter Senior Vice President Kelly McBride, to create and publish a newsroom guide around ethical decision-making for the use of and



Poynter AI Steering Committee

implementation of AI. Training opportunities will follow.

- Organize an ethics summit with a hand-invited group to work towards developing an ethical framework and broader understanding of how this will affect the industry.

- Start implementing generative AI use into our existing training workshops like our successful Transforming Crime Coverage into Public Safety Journalism program. AI aggregation and potential publishing of polic

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Shining a light on how the news gets made

In November, The Washington Post went further than any mainstream news outlet had ever gone before by showing graphic images of mass shootings involving AR-15s. That day, The Poynter Report — Poynter’s daily media newsletter — spoke at length with Washington Post executive editor Sally Buzbee to talk about that controversial decision.

We wanted to know: What exactly did the Post show? How did it display these images? And, mostly, why publish these photos?

The point was to take readers behind the scenes, to pull back the curtain and show how one of the most influential newspapers in the country covers one of the most critical issues of our country.

This is the mission of The Poynter Report each and every day: to show readers how news is covered, to make it transparent so that readers can better understand, and better trust, the news they are consuming.

By the numbers in 2023

The media has been under attack in recent years, often called the “enemy of the people” by some of our leaders. Trust in the media has never been lower.

We see it as our goal and, frankly, responsibility, to show readers how the media works, how it brings citizens the news. Often that

means highlighting exemplary work, such as courageous war coverage. Sometimes it means exposing a lack of in-depth coverage, especially in locations where resources have been severely cut. And occasionally it means pointing where irresponsible media has failed and how it can do better.

In the end, The Poynter Report’s pursuit is to shine a light on how the news is made so that consumers can see how the media is an advocate of the people, not the enemy.

Fact-checking as a form of service journalism has grown significantly in the United States over the past decade, but it still rarely reaches the 40 million Americans who speak Spanish in their homes.

PolitiFact, the Pulitzer Prize-winning project of the Poynter Institute, launched a Spanish-language fact-checking project in 2023 with the hopes of helping a new segment of Americans be better informed about the key issues facing the country.

Today, PolitiFact has a team of three Spanish-speaking fact-checkers to debunk viral online misinformation for Spanish

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Isaac Harte's first fact-check at MediaWise as part of its Teen Fact-Checking Network was about dancing robots.

Three years later, the work remains just as interesting, and in many ways, even more critical. Now Harte's work is about the COVID-19, the election, the Biden administration, guns and the war in Ukraine.

The Teen Fact-Checking Network, a first-of-its-kind innovation of MediaWise, aims to have teenagers talking directly to teenagers about misinformation and media literacy. Teens produce and film their own video fact-checks, and post their findings across social media.

The aim is to meet the audience where it is. The network has created 1,140 fact-checks or media literacy videos since it launched. And, this year, it went global.

Teen Fact-Checking Network partners in Brazil, Germany and India created 30 videos

that reached more 400,000 across the three nations. And MediaWise has already started work in Canada and Spain for the coming year.

In a recent reflection, Harte writes: "It's baffling to me that it has only been three years since I began at MediaWise. It feels that so much has changed in the world, but also that a lot has changed in my own life. When I began at MediaWise I was a middle schooler; I'm now a junior in high school and — as the two photos above show — I have grown up a bit in that time, too. But, .7 (sei)-5.6 (s)1 T (i)-7.4n/5 2 (n u)18.4 to (i)-7.4n/(t)-21.4 (, (i)-7.6 ng (en-US)/MCI (e)-4.5 (n).37/Langk6, (i)-7.6 ng (en-Ug (en-US)/M 3pa m)-)-7.6 (n f)8.5 (o)14.8 (rw)-32.2-1.inm

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