**WHAT IS NEWS?**

What makes something “news?” Why would the public want to know about something? Who determines if an idea is “news?” The first answer is the simplest: three of the four letters in n-e-w-s spell NEW. News needs to be fresh and immediate, or it isn’t “news.” The fresher and more immediate, the better the programs. Beyond that, there are no clear-cut rules. There are some guidelines, however.

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| Time How immediate is the event? |
| Geography How close is the event? |
| Quantity How many people does it affect? |
| Degree How are people affected? |
| Change Taxes go up, down, more/less |
| Hyperbole First, last, most, least, big/small |
| Context Relation to other events |
| Interest i.e. 5th murder of week. |

“News” can also fit into specialized categories. Something that is “news” and important to one group might be irrelevant to another. The best example of this is specialized news: sports news, automotive news, business news, entertainment news, regional news, alumni news, etc. it is important to know your audience. The Economist magazine audience is not the same as local television news.

**TYPES OF NEWS**

Those who present the news have the responsibility of deciding what it is. Some news, like an airplane crash or building fire, is obvious. Other news, like the fact that the price of rice is one neighborhood is 15% higher in the adjacent area, may be less obvious. In many ways, news feeds off itself. News is determined in part by what people are talking about the people often talk about what is the news. So the process can be circular. It is always advantageous to a station to initiate coverage of something that is then deemed to be news by the broader community.

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| Spot News Event happening right now |
| Daily News Scheduled events of importance |
| Enterprise Stories you find |
| Hard News Stories important to the audience |
| Feature News Fun or interesting but not |
| Franchise Scheduled specialized subject |

DUNYA sees its market Pakistan and then the region and finally the globe, always looking for the local angle. But doesn’t mean we skip stories that are outside our usual perspective. Keeping a flexible mindset is critical if we are to move away from the standard hum-drum news content of so many other channels.

News organizations tend to pay a great deal of attention to what other news organizations are reporting, both as a competitive look over the shoulder and a kind of a cross check to insure accuracy. We will do that, but we want to set our agenda and our own approach, independent of what we have seen for so long on local television.

**ACCURACY AND FACTS**

We have to report what we know, not what we think. When we want to report on what we think we call that “analysis” to separate it from the news.

Some of the ways that we assure ourselves and our viewers that we are reporting what we know are:

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| * Always confirm facts with at least two sources on controversial stories, preferably three. |
| * Check with the principals; make sure you have the information directly from an authoritative source; don’t accept second hand information. If you make sure you explain where the information is from. |
| * Confirm information; don’t rely on the wires or newspapers as a source. Double check every fact they publish. |
| * Insure a constituency; make sure you’re not just spreading one person’s groundless complaints. If someone says they speak for a group, confirm that. |
| * If you don’t know the answer to something, ask. |
| * If you can’t answer an important question, acknowledge that you’ve yet to find the answer. |
| * Do not presume or get locked into preconceived ideas: Avoid forging reality from editorial premises. Report only what you see and what you know. |
| * Do not let the producer push you into exaggeration or hype. Producers tend to be rewarded for dramatic shows that win ratings. Reporters are rewarded for accuracy. There’s often a divergence of priorities. When this happens, argue. |
| * Keep your and our producer’s opinion out of the story. Use the law, religious standards or professional ethics to gauge wrong doing… not opinion. |
| * Do not let the anchor catch you with a misinformed question, such as “In other words Mary…”, or “…so what this means is…” if they wrong. |