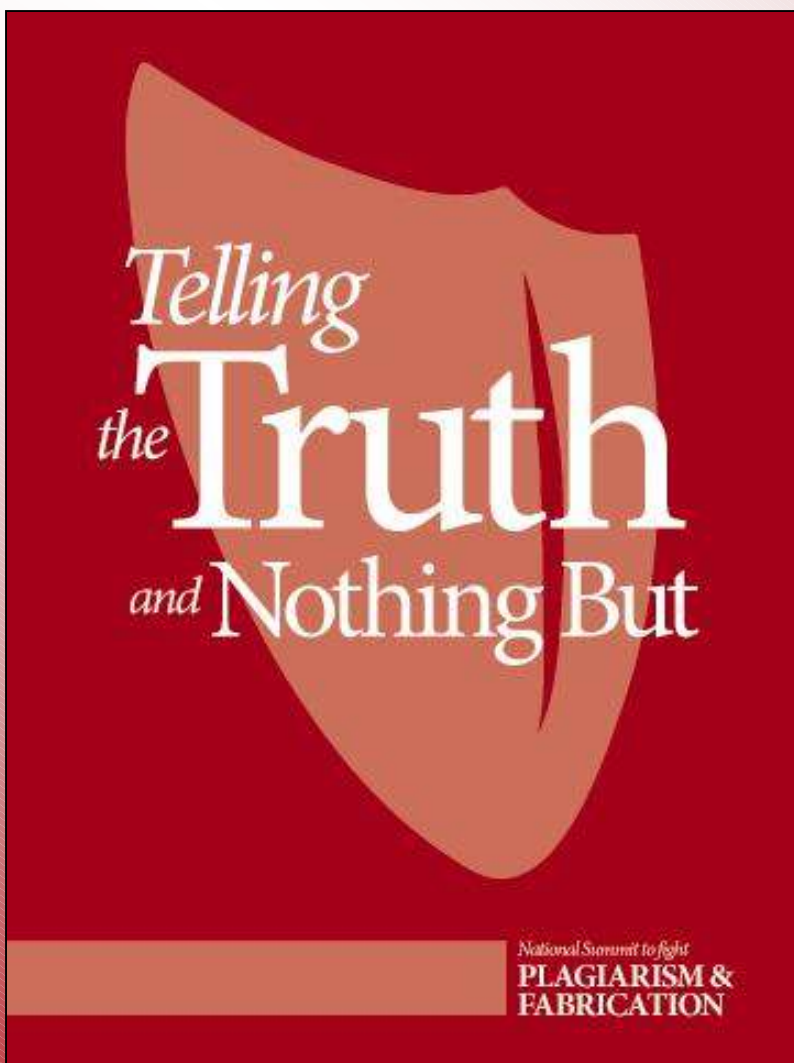


It Takes a Village

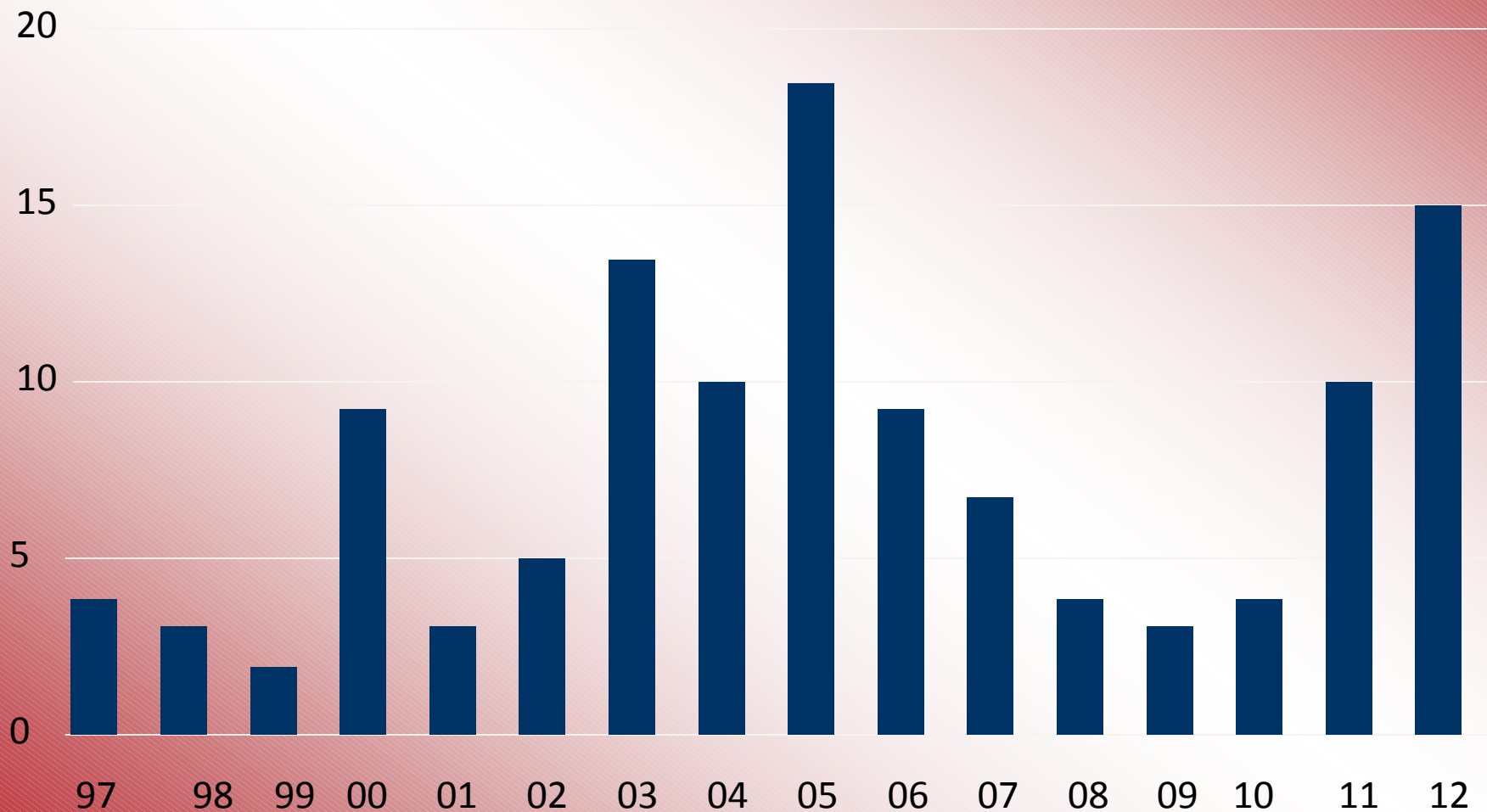
Working together
to prevent plagiarism and
fabrication in news



Committee members

- **Steve Buttry**, director of community engagement and social media for Digital First Media and Journal Register Co., ONA representative
- **Maria Cianci**, a managing editor at Yahoo!
- **William G. Connolly**, retired in 2001 as a senior editor of The New York Times
- **Mike Farrell**, associate professor in the School of Journalism and Telecommunications at the University of Kentucky
- **Pam Fine**, Knight Chair for News, Leadership and Community, a professor of journalism at the University of Kansas, ASNE board member.
- **Steve Fox**, University of Massachusetts at Amherst journalism faculty
- **Henry Fuhrmann**, an assistant managing editor at The Los Angeles Times
- **Bob Heisse**, is executive editor of The State Journal-Register in Springfield, Ill., regional editor for GateHouse Media in Illinois, immediate past president of the Associated Press Media Editors
- **Margaret Holt**, standards editor at The Chicago Tribune
- **Jan Leach**, associate professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Kent State University
- **Norman P. Lewis**, assistant professor of journalism at the University of Florida
- **Teresa Schmedding**, deputy managing editor/digital operations of the Daily Herald Media Group in suburban Chicago, president of the American Copy Editors Society
- *Nancy A. Sharkey*, professor of practice in the School of Journalism at the University of Arizona
- **Travis Siebrass**, the assistant news editor/digital at the Daily Herald Media Group in suburban Chicago
- **Craig Silverman**, an adjunct faculty member at the Poynter Institute, an award-winning journalist and the founder/editor of Regret the Error
- **Jim Slusher**, assistant managing editor for opinion, the Daily Herald Media Group in suburban Chicago
- **Dylan Smith**, the editor and publisher of TucsonSentinel.com, chairman of the board of the Local Independent Online News Publishers
- **Patrick Smith**, an online editor at The Omaha World-Herald in Nebraska
- **Nicole Stockdale**, the assistant editorial page editor for The Dallas Morning News and editor of the Sunday opinion section, Points
- **David Swartzlander**, assistant professor of journalism and the Journalism Department chairman at Doane College in Nebraska, president of the College Media Advisors
- **Amy Tardif**, station manager and news director at WGCU FM in Southwest Florida, RTDNA representative
- *Fara Warner*, editorial director, business, technology and entertainment group, at AOL
- **Mark Willis**, journalist with Sirius-XM Satellite Radio, RTDNA representative
- **Stacey Woelfel**, associate professor at the University of Missouri School of Journalism and the news director for KOMU-TV
- **Kent Zelas**, a blog editor with the AOL Huffington Post Media Group

Plagiarism by full-timers at daily, professional U.S. news organization, 1997 to 2012



Key findings

- Plagiarists blame pressure
- Inadequate rules a problem
- Cut/paste mentality
- No evidence problem is greater among inexperienced v. veteran or small v. large organizations

Inadequate rules

- Newsroom policies often clear that plagiarism is wrong, but *do not*
 - Outline prevention steps or policies on sourcing and attribution
 - Spell out how the news organization will deal with an incident or discipline an offender

Inadequate rules

- What is aggregation policy?
- What is note taking policy?
- What is cut/paste policy?

Prevention

- Good newsroom policies should
 - Be clear there is a price
 - Share policy widely and confront incidents with openness
 - Establish random spot-checks of reporters' sources
 - Specify discipline: Ex, plagiarism judged by severity; fabrication always dismissal
 - Treat everyone equally

Companies should ...

- Encourage video or audio of interviews
- Require reporters to discuss unnamed sources with at least one editor
- Make digital reporters link to material that will confirm sources' identities
- Editors should challenge and check digital material

We should ...

Attribute everything!

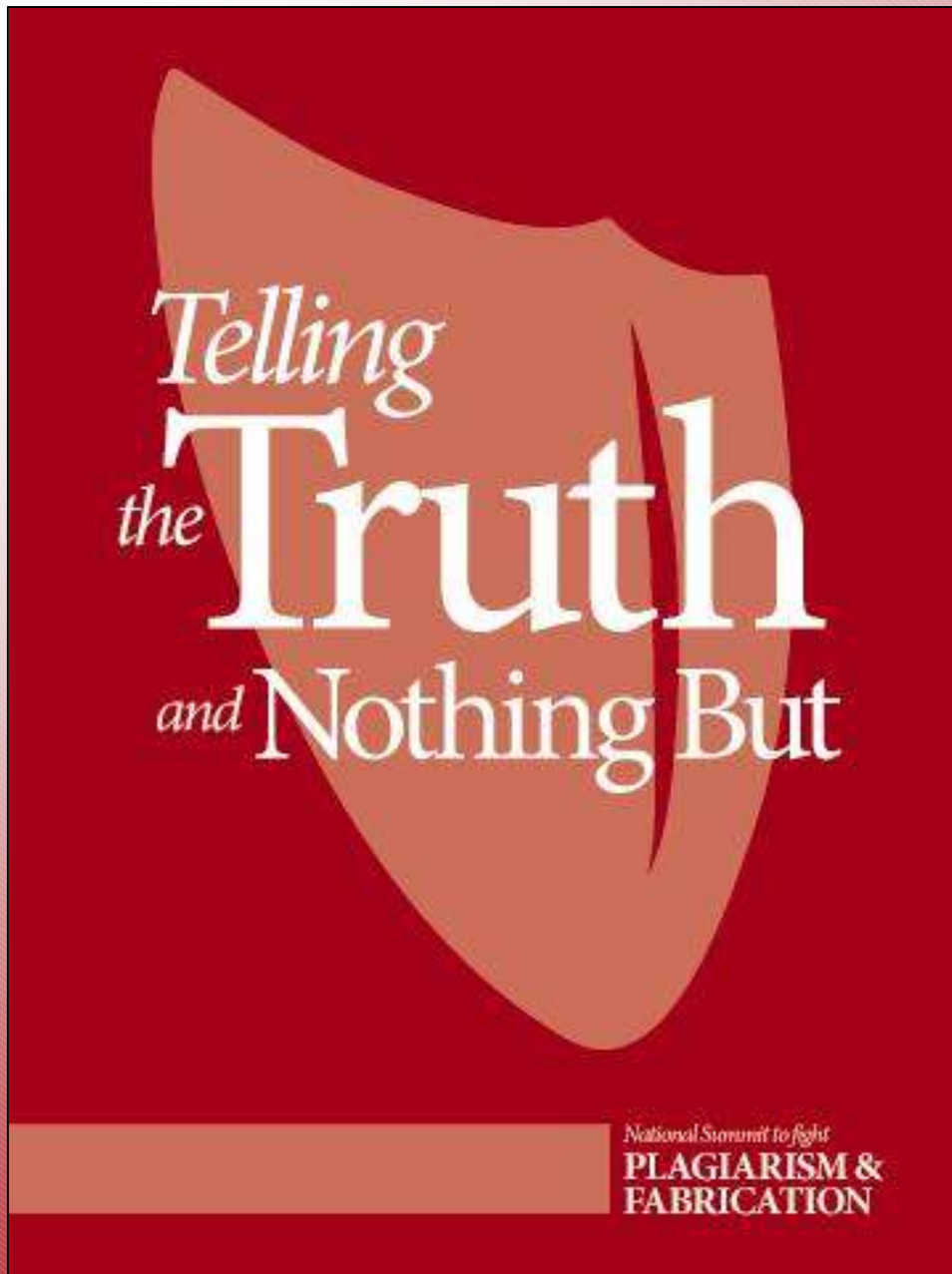
- Require sourcing
- Don't be shy about giving credit to competitors



Source: Author's national survey of journalists, 2011

Critical editing

- Basic: How do we know this is true?
- Logic errors
- Look for sparse attribution
- Lack of digital links
- Change in voice
- Writing beyond skill level
- Smell test: Perfect quote, perfect source, perfect detail



The book

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Teresa Schmedding • tschmedding@dailyherald.com • JAWS 2013

Thank you

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