

Poynter. NEWS UNIVERSITY

Editing Triage

February 26, 2015

Welcome to the Webinar



This is an event from
Poynter's News University,
journalism's e-learning leader

- **Host: Vicki Krueger**
- **Director, interactive learning & NewsU**
 - Use the Q&A pod to ask questions of the presenter
 - Join us on Twitter: #nuwebinar

Thank You

Harnisch Foundation

- **For funding our Webinar equipment**

Knight Foundation

- **For its support of News University**



Polling Question

Do you have enough editing time?

- **Always**
- **Usually**
- **Rarely**
- **Never**

Today's Presenter

Teresa Schmedding

**Deputy Managing
Editor, Daily Herald
Media Group**

**Oversees digital,
design, editing, social
media, enewsletters**

**Current president,
ACES**

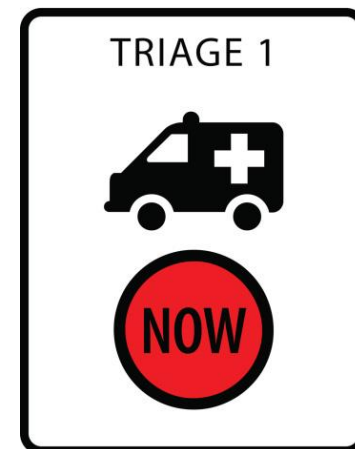
tschmedding@copydesk.org

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Today's Agenda

1. What is triage editing?
2. Why is it valuable?
3. Basic triage steps
4. How to assess damage, plan treatment
5. How to create a triage checklist
6. Sample triage checklists
7. My critical list
8. Summary



Polling Question

What is the price of mistakes?

- **Confuses people.**
- **Misinformation hurts sources.**
- **Our credibility.**
- **Nothing. Readers are forgiving.**
- **All of the above.**
- **None of the above.**

What is triage editing?

- **We are imperfect humans living in deadline world**
- **Not all errors are created equal**
- **Not everything can be critical all the time.**



1. Bright light in distance

2.
Whoa!
Dead
in 15

3. Urgent: 30 min

4. Meh:
1-2
hours

5. NBD: Take your time

Basic concept

Now imagine applying such criteria to editing

What is the value?

Deliberate approach to insane situations

- **Objective criteria in high-stress situations**
- **Order to chaos**
- **Increases consistency**
- **Reduces conflict**
- **Improves quality**
- **Saves time**



Polling Question

What do you think is the worst error?

- **Accuracy**
- **Spelling**
- **Clarity**
- **Style**
- **Grammar**

Basic steps

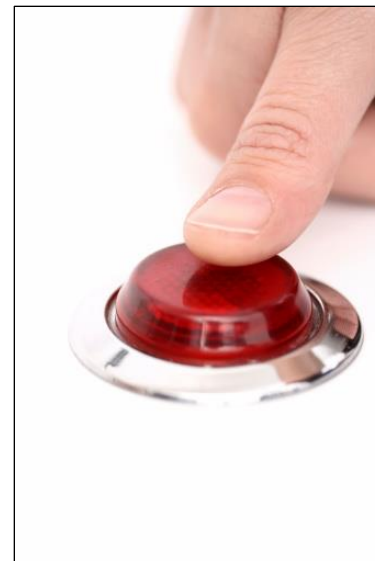
- 1. Triage content: assess value, damage**
- 2. Determine treatment (course of action)**
- 3. Treat**
- 4. Re-evaluate if needed**
- 5. Let. It. Go.**
- 6. Move on to next patient**



Triage content

Assess damage

- **Run spell-check, Tansa, PerfectIt, whatever tech you've got**
- **Skim document**
- **Take note of critical needs**



Determine course of treatment

This can be sticky or simple: Your call

- **Things to consider**
 - **Weight of project**
 - **Likely eyeballs**
 - **Lifespan**
 - **Time to fix v. impact**
 - **Cost to others?**
 - **Damage your credibility?**
 - **Harm someone?**
 - **Confuse readers?**



Polling Question

What do readers think
is the worst error?

- **Accuracy**
- **Spelling**
- **Clarity**
- **Style**
- **Grammar**

Determine course of treatment

- **Special considerations**

- Value to customer?
- Value to reader?
- Value to source?
- Value to you?
- Harm to source?
- Harm to credibility?
- Audience and goal?
- Who is the source?



Sample triage

Level 1:

- Career-altering errors
- Errors that cause harm
- Errors readers care about
- Errors we care about
- Errors that will domino day
- Contains libel



Course of treatment:

Put a toe tag on it

Treat

Know your checklist

- **How to create one**
 - **Rely on research, branding**
 - **Talk to client**
 - **Talk to boss**
 - **Lean on metrics**
 - **Listen to readers**
 - **Rely on stylebook**
 - **Know your market, readers**
 - **Know your writers**
 - **Use whatever data you can**



Sample checklist

▪ Level 1

1. Profanity
2. Name spellings
3. Math
4. Libel
5. Grammar

▪ Level 2 (+1)

1. Consistency
2. Smooth transitions
3. Clarity
4. Hyperlinks
5. Trademarks



Sample checklist

▪ Level 3 (+1, 2)

1. Style
2. Split infinities
3. Cosmetic
4. Plagiarism spot check
5. Duplicate words
6. Wordiness

▪ Level 4 (+1, 2, 3)

1. Flow
2. Tone
3. Voice
4. Fabrication check
5. Full rewrite



Sample checklist

As time allows, in order:



- 1. Correct factual errors**
- 2. Check all display type for errors in fact and grammar**
- 3. Check all display type for clarity**
- 4. Check all type for clarity**
- 5. Fix spelling, homophone errors**
- 6. Fix usage errors**
- 7. Fix style errors**
- 8. Fix punctuation errors**

ACHES

- 1. Accuracy**
- 2. Clarity**
- 3. Headlines**
- 4. Efficiency**
- 5. Style**



Nick Jungman,
Director of student media,
University of Oklahoma

My checklist musts

- Accuracy
- Clarity
- Big type
- First graph, last graph
- Grammar
- Profanity (you don't want)
- Big, career-altering errors (libel, fairness, balance, victim ID)
- Hyperlinks



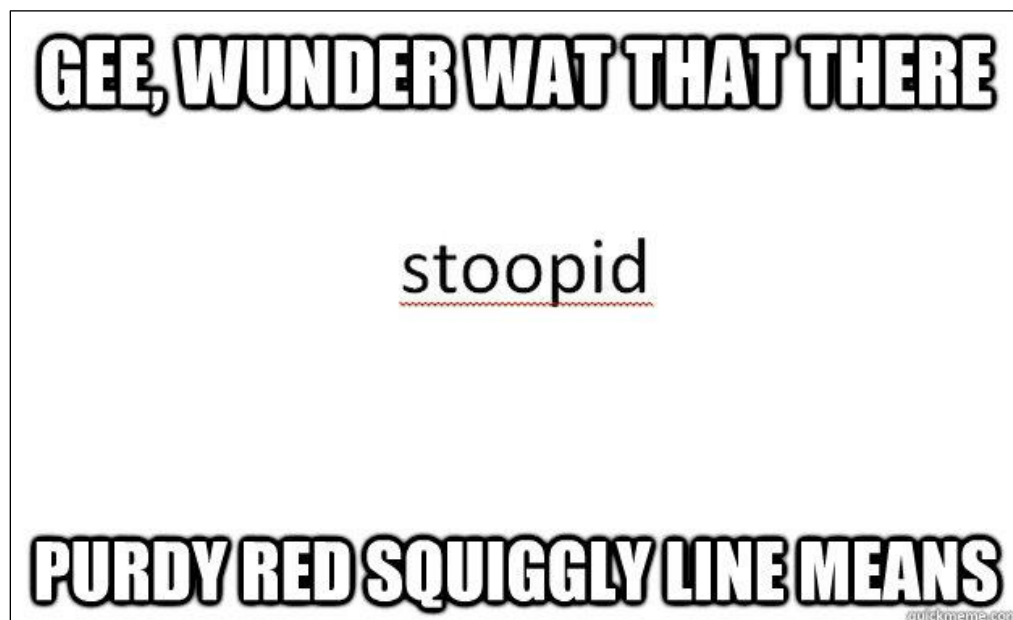
My checklist forgettaaboutit

- **Style**
- **Cosmetic**
- **Oxford commas**
- **Who, whom**
- **Dangling modifiers**
- **Split infinitives**
- **(Anything that trips your OCD button)**



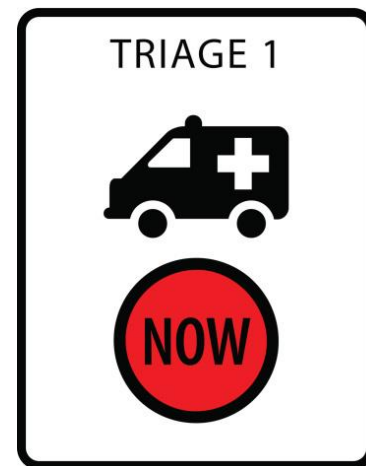
Big bonus tips

- Use tech – first !!!!!
- Spot check for accuracy, plagiarism, fabrication



In summary

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Research

- **Audience Perceptions of Editing Quality**

Fred Vultee, Digital Journalism, 2014

- **When the Editor Disappears, Does Editing Disappear?**

Susan Greenberg, Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies, 2010

Final thought

"A good editor accepts that they cannot achieve perfection and knows which errors it is essential to prevent and which, if missed, alter nothing of consequence."

Colleen Barry, Copy Curmudgeon



(Everything about Jay Cutler is a mistake
Teresa Schmedding)

Thank You

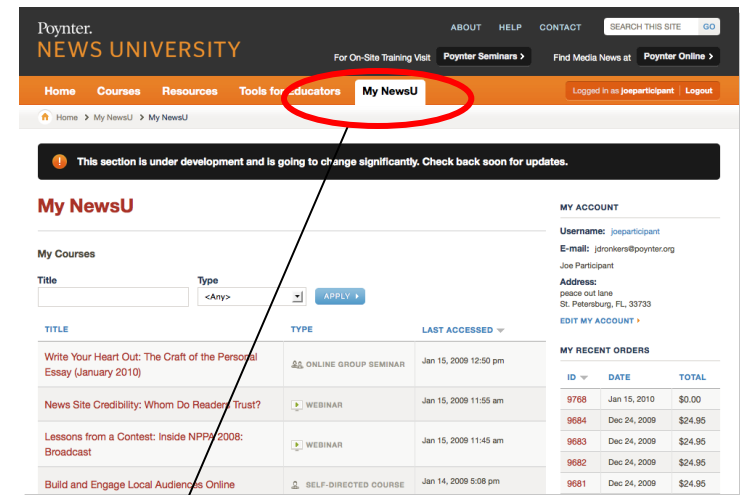
We'll be going to Questions shortly

We want to tell you about some other training

Webinar Replay

Registration gives you access to the replay

- Available two days after the live Webinar
- Access it anytime



Upcoming Webinars

Date – Title

Date – Title

Date – Title

Poynter Seminars

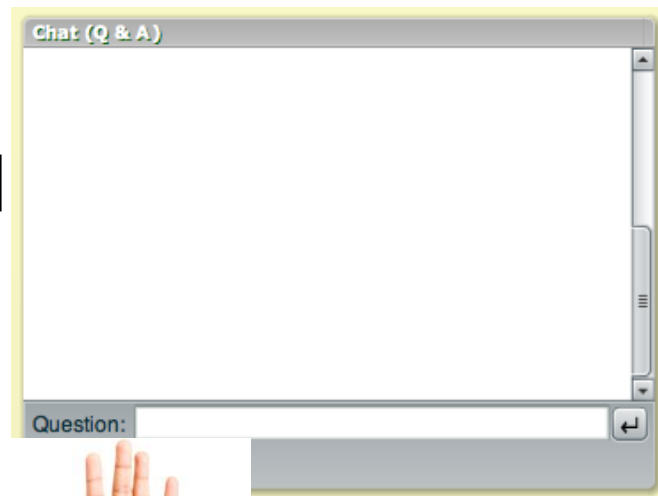
Title of seminar

- **Short description**
 - **Event date**
 - **Application deadline**

Questions? Fire Away!

Use the special Q&A pod to submit questions

- **Questions are not posted to the public**



Thank You for Attending

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www.newsu.org

Journalism Training.

Anytime.

Anywhere.

For Anybody.