

About Us

“To govern wisely, an authentic democracy needs an informed citizenry.” -- *Valid Sources*.

MISSION

Valid Sources is a non-profit organization formed to identify and promote excellent, ethically-balanced journalism. Our mission is to identify models of excellence that aspire “to seek the truth and report it,” to document these activities and to raise these profiles. *Valid Sources* seeks to fulfill two goals:

- Elevate public understanding of the value of ethically balanced journalism, and
- Inform the journalism community of best journalism practices.

BACKGROUND

Since its inception in the continental United States in about 1700, professional journalism has been a dynamic enterprise. The speed of news gathering has accelerated; the sophistication of news coverage has been refined; and the distribution and penetration of news delivery has broadened and deepened. But fundamentally, valid news reporting remains the same: News is targeted, it is collected, it is verified, it is edited, it is packaged, and it is delivered.

Over time, news-gathering professionals have identified and instituted some “best ethical practices” to ensure that the quality of the information delivered is relevant and valid. Simultaneously, certain institutions – wire services, newspapers, broadcasting stations and networks – have created successful business models to fund the collection and the dissemination of accurate news and information.

As new technologies have evolved, the entry barriers for disseminating news-style information have been lowered, and the flow of accessible information – much of it delivered via the Internet – has expanded. The Internet has further fractionalized the choices for news consumers; there are many more sources and often these sources are delivered in less expensive bundles.

In this churning sea of competitive news and information providers, some reporter-rich news organizations’ business models are threatened. Some of the newest free alternative sources are acquiring the attention of formerly paying customers, delivering some high quality news content free, and changing some news consumers’ expectations. Marketing analysts have framed news content as a commodity. This notion has undervalued the worth of enterprise and investigative reporting gathered by professional reporters.

In this evolving news media environment, *Valid Sources* aims to inform the public and the new disseminators of news about the value of media sources that strive to “seek truth and report it.”

This *Valid Sources* goal reflects the language that frames the ethical code of the Society of Professional Journalists (<http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>): “Seek truth and report it.” This lofty aspiration is the foundation of a journalistic ethic that drives journalism education and is reflected in the code of ethics of many major news organizations.

Valid Sources seeks to reinforce this mission by identifying those news organizations and individuals who aspire to this goal, explaining how those news organizations do it, why they do it, and how the communities they serve benefit from these best journalism practices.