What Are The Seven News Values?

We often speak of seven news values held by news media gatekeepers – impact, timeliness, prominence, proximity, bizarreness, conflict, and currency.

**Impact**: The number of people whose lives will be influenced in some way by the subject of the story. For instance, a bakery strike may have less impact than a postal strike.

**Timeliness**: Recent events have higher news value than earlier happenings. Of particular value are stories brought to the public ahead of the competition. These are known as scoops.

**Prominence**: For the same occurrence, people in the public eye have higher news value than obscure people. For example, we cared that basketball pro Magic Johnson and actor Rock Hudson had AIDS, while an ordinary citizen with AIDS would not have commanded the attention of the national news media.

**Proximity**: Stories about events and situations in one's home community are more newsworthy than events that take place far away. For example, journalists assess the value of a news item reporting tragic deaths by comparing the number of deaths with the distance from the home community. For instance:

- if 1,000 persons drown in a flood in a faraway country, the story has about the same news value as a story describing how 100 persons drowned in a distant part of the United States.

- In turn, that 100 person story has about the same news value as a story concerning 10 flood victims within our own state.

- Finally, a story about those ten victims has about the same value as a story describing a flood which drowns one person in our local community.
**Bizarreness**: A classic example of this is dog-bites-man vs. man-bites-dog. Man-bites-dog is more bizarre. Dog-bites-man usually is not news.

**Conflict**: Strife is newsworthy. War. Public anger or bitter disagreement over fundamental issues.

**Currency**: More value is attributed to stories pertaining to issues or topics that are in the spotlight of public concern rather than to issues or topics about which people care less. Stories come and stories go. For example:

- At the beginning of the 1990s, there were stories about the First Gulf War, the Savings and Loan Crisis, and Senate confirmation hearings on Clarence Thomas for the Supreme Court.

- As time passed, those stories became less interesting and were replaced by the Los Angeles Riots, the Miami hurricane, the new World Wide Web, a comet colliding with Jupiter, World Trade Center bombing, Unabomber life sentence, and the presidential elections.

- In turn, those stories were replaced by Somalia, Bosnia, O.J. and Haiti.

- In 1997, the death of Princess Diana, the Hong Kong handover, Pathfinder on Mars, cloning, the Oklahoma City bombing, and Big Tobacco money.

- In 1998, start of the swine flu pandemic, California smoking ban

- In 1999, JFK Jr. dies in a plane crash, the Clinton impeachment trial, Microsoft monopoly, war over Kosovo, Columbine school shooting, and the Y2k millennium worries.

- In 2000, the arrival of the millennium, the dot-com bubble burst, the gun control debate, W elected president.

- In 2001, George W. Bush inaugurated, the September 11
attacks, war in Afghanistan, Russian space station falls into the Pacific Ocean, Timothy McVeigh executed, stem cell research.

- In 2002, SARS, U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, Andrea Yates guilty of drowning her 5 children, the Queen Mother dies, Mars Odyssey finds water ice, American Taliban pleads guilty, Beltway snipers arrested, Department of Homeland Security formed.

- In 2003, Iraq disarmament crisis, the war and occupation of Iraq, bird flu, sons of Saddam Hussein killed by U.S. military, The Station nightclub fire in Rhode Island, Human Genome Project completed, Bush "Mission Accomplished" speech, Eric Rudolph captured, Staten Island Ferry crash, last Concorde flight, Green River Killer confesses, mad cow disease in Washington state, Strom Thurmond and Johnny Cash die.

- In 2004, the stream of earlier stories were replaced by the Indian Ocean earthquake tsunami, the President's vision of travel to Mars, same-sex marriage, the hanging of American contractors in Iraq, evidence of water on Mars, the Madrid train attack, the Iraq prison abuse scandal, the 9/11 Commission findings, hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne, the Olympics in Greece, high gas prices, Fallujah, W re-elected president.

- In 2005, George W. Bush inaugurated, Hurricane Katrina, Huygens lands on Titan, Kyoto Protocol, Abu Ghraib prison scandal, non-stop solo flight around the world, BP oil refinery explosion in Texas, Pope John Paul II and Rosa Parks die, Live 8 concerts, Kashmir earthquake, Saddam Hussein trial, first human face transplant.

- In 2006, Saddam Hussein hanged, NASA returns dust from a comet, Indonesia earthquake kills 6,000, Israeli-Hezbollah war in Lebanon, Pluto downgraded from planet, North Korea's first nuclear test.

- In 2007, the Virginia Tech massacre, Live Earth concerts, last harry Potter book, Writers Guild strike, Benazir Bhutto assassinated.
In 2008, $100-a-barrel oil, markets plunge, the Great Recession begins, Fidel Castro resigns, Dmitry Medvedev is president of Russia, Bill Gates retires, first bionic eyes implanted, Beijing Olympics, Barack Obama elected.

In 2009, Obama inaugurated, Michael Jackson and Walter Cronkite die, the health care debate, H1N1 flu pandemic, Iranian student riots.

In 2010, Haiti earthquake, Chile earthquake, China earthquake, volcanic ash from Iceland disrupts Europe, Pakistan monsoon, tallest man-made structure opened in Dubai, Poland president killed in airplane crash, actor Tony Curtis dies, animal mass deaths, Deepwater Horizon oil platform explodes in the Gulf of Mexico, Chile miners trapped, FIFA World Cup in South Africa, Wikileaks, North Korea sinks South Korean warship, school bullying, bedbugs.

In 2011, assassination attempt on Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, U.S. deficit and debt battle, Rupert Murdoch's shaky media empire, sports league lockouts, deadly tornados and heat waves, last space shuttle flight, computer hackers, American women's soccer.

In 2012, Syria, Penn State, Libya, Superstorm Sandy, Obama beat Romney, Sandy Hook Elementary School, gay marriage.

In 2013, fiscal cliff, NSA, Egypt, Obamacare, Syria, India gang rapes, Korean airliner crash, Al Jazeera TV, gun violence.

And so on...