



Blandstanding

A Suggestion for Journalists to Improve Trust with the Public

Media Trust

- The United States ranked last in media trust — at 29% — among 92,000 news consumers surveyed in 46 countries, (2021 Reuters).

An aerial photograph of a city street intersection. The street has multiple lanes with white arrows indicating traffic flow. There are trees, a crosswalk, and a red overlay in the center. The red overlay contains the text 'Establishing Trust'.

Establishing Trust

2 –Way Street

**Like Seatbelts:
Manufacturers Can
Make Them But
Consumers Must
use Them**

Grandstanding
Crying Wolf

The Action of Behaving in a Showy or Ostentatious Manner in an Attempt to Attract Attention- (Think “Breaking News”)



A stack of newspapers is shown in a close-up, slightly blurred view. A red callout box with a white border and a downward-pointing arrow is overlaid on the top of the stack. The text inside the box is white and asks 'What is Blandstanding?'.

What is Blandstanding?

- **In Journalism,** blandstanding is the action of presenting news in a neutral manner, avoiding sensationalism, using language that describes events in an unbiased way and, when necessary, providing context.

How the Scales get Tipped Against Objectivity or Blandstand Reporting

Negativity Bias-

National Academy of Sciences Journal

(More Aroused by and Attentive to Negative News- 2019 study from 17 Countries)

Fox News Effect- Financial Incentives

1. Pushing Competition to Sensationalize
2. Feeding the Audience's Appetite
3. Selecting Messengers who Conform to Message
4. Differentiating from Competition

Negativity
Bias and
Financial
Incentives



Why Language Matters-

**The Smashed/Hit Broken Glass Study and its
Implications for Journalists**

Hypothetical

- Today the government (manipulated, altered, changed, revised, repaired) its quarterly unemployment statistics. The (gerrymandered, contrived, new, refined, improved) statistical calculations indicated that unemployment had shrunk to less than 2%, the lowest in 40 years.
- Context- The statistics were revised per the recommendations of a panel of economic experts.

Patrickmattimore1@yahoo.com

- •Patrick is a member of the Society of Professional Journalists and has written commentaries for a variety of publications, daily newspapers, professional magazines, and weeklies.
- •His areas of expertise are law, psychology, education and the media. He taught high school psychology for many years in the US. He was an adjunct professor of law in the Temple University/Tsinghua University LLM program in Beijing, where he also taught psychology at a private college.
- •While living in China (2009-2012), Patrick authored an award-winning online column for China Daily and was the sole foreign writer invited to tour China as part of a national tour of online writers. He wrote an "expert's take" on the media for China Daily's 30th anniversary edition. He also frequently wrote for another English newspaper, The Global Times. In Phuket, Thailand, Patrick wrote a regular psychology column ("On Your Mind") for the weekly newspaper, the Phuket Gazette. His columns frequently addressed the relevance of a particular psychological principle (or principles) to a current news event.