





















# 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

# The findings

Bill Connolly, New York Times (retired)
Henry Fuhrmann, Los Angeles Times
Bob Heisse, State Journal-Register, APME
Nancy Sharkey, University of Arizona
Norm Lewis, University of Florida



# State of media

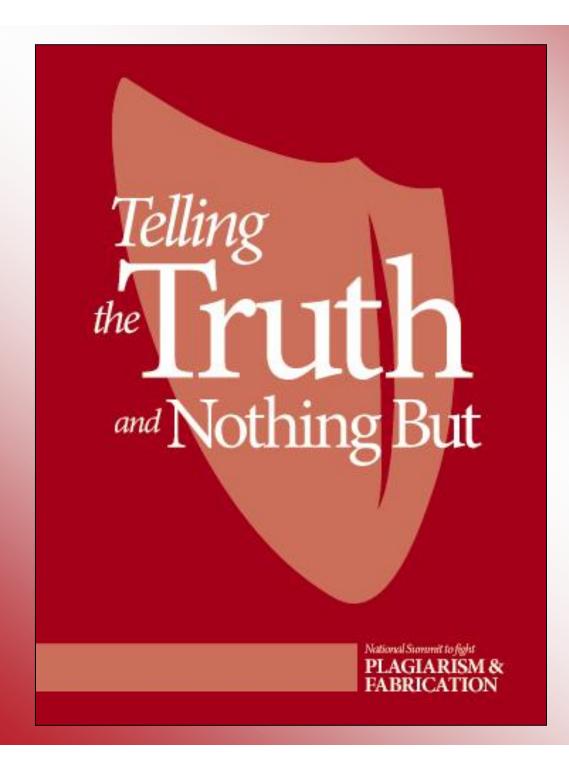
Nicole Stockdale, Dallas Morning News Stephen Buttry, Digital First Media, ONA Jim Slusher, Daily Herald Media Group Stacey Woelfel, KOMU-TV/University of Missouri



# Journalism leaders

Hugo Balta, NAHJ
Paul Cheung, AAJA
Stephen Buttry, ONA
David Cuillier, SPJ
Mark Horvit, IRE
Dylan Smith, LION
Amy Tardif, RTDNA
Pam Fine, ASNE





# The book

Download the book free at

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# Thank you

To all the journalism organizations and journalists who donated their time and intellect to this project.

To the Reynolds Journalism Institute for publishing the ebook.

To the **Ethics & Excellence Journalism Foundation** for generously underwriting the cost of this summit.



# **About the Project**

William Connolly, chair Retired senior editor New York Times

# **Plagiarism Research**

Norm Lewis, Ph.D. University of Florida

# 1. Plagiarism and fabrication are discrete issues.



### **Plagiarism**

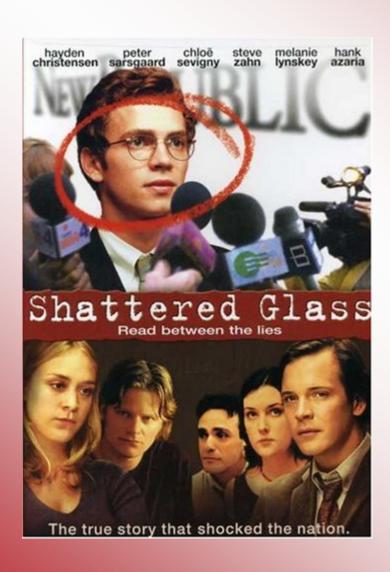
Nonfiction; copying sans attribution



#### **Fabrication**

Fiction; making up people, facts

### 2. Fabrication is inexcusable.





**Stephen Glass** 

# 3. Plagiarism is a serious mistake but rarely our field's worst offense.



Editor of a major metro daily, 2005

"We believe plagiarism is among journalism's most serious professional breaches, if not the single most grave thing."

# 4. How often plagiarism actually occurs is yet to be researched.

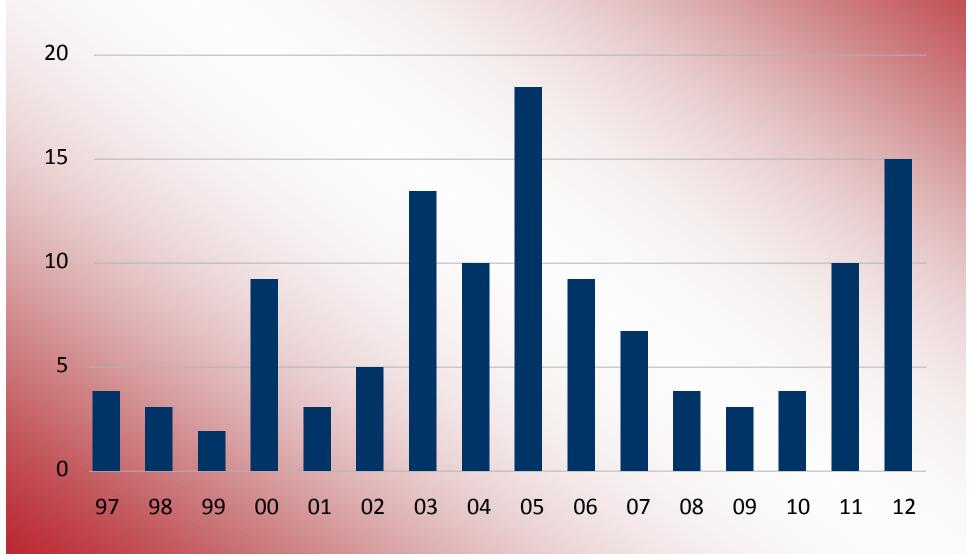


# 5. Plagiarism cases that become public are relatively rare.



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

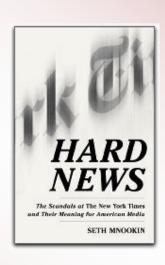
# Plagiarism by full-timers at daily, professional U.S. news organization, 1997 to 2012

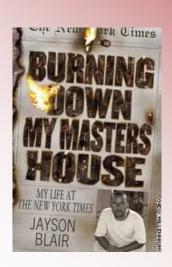


# 6. Extensive, repeated plagiarism is relatively rare.









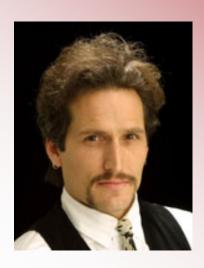
# 7. Most plagiarism occurs because of inadequate methods or unclear rules.



Mitch Albom



Nina Totenberg



Charlie LeDuff

### Inadequate method: Note mixing



**Steve Erlanger** 



# 8. Plagiarism occurs in part because the rules are unclear.



# (a) When does info. become public domain?



Former First Lady Barbara Bush

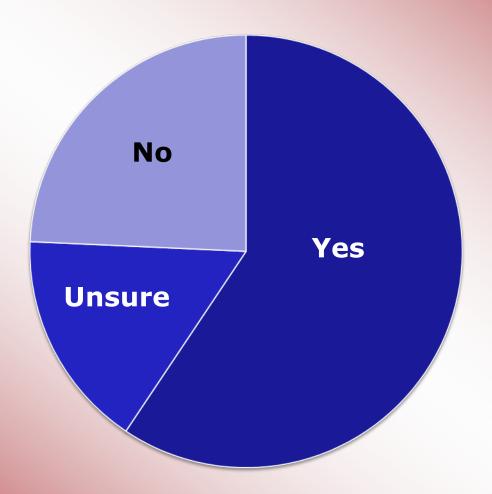
#### **At Hurricane Katrina shelter:**

"And so many of the people in the arena here, you know, were underprivileged anyway, so this -- this is working very well for them."

Source: NRP Marketplace Sept. 5, 2005

(b) Should we attribute a press release?

# (b) Should we attribute a press release?



Source: Author's national survey of journalists, 2011

# (c) What if we're under pressure to produce?

Respondents were significantly more likely to forgo attribution



Source: Author's national survey of journalists, 2011

Henry Fuhrmann
Assistant managing editor
Los Angeles Times

- A philosophy, not a formula
- The question of intent
- The realm of ideas
- •Why we care: audiences, creators, industry

The solution: Attribution



# Fabrication: Acts of deception



**Stephen Glass** 



Janet Cooke

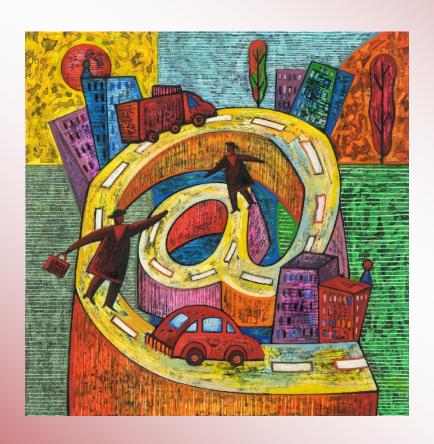
# Broadcasting: A call to action



Print: More to be done



Online: The wild, wild Web



Bob Heisse Executive editor State Journal-Register, Springfield, Ill.

Who plagiarizes or fabricates?

- Amateur writer or blogger vs. pro
- •Inexperienced or student vs. veteran
- Small newsrooms vs. larger newsrooms
- No clear findings

### Newsroom policies today

- Often clear about why plagiarism is wrong and a serious transgression
- Rarely outline prevention steps or policies on sourcing and attribution
- Nor do they spell out how the news organization will deal with an incident or discipline an offender

### Characteristics of a strong policy:

- Be clear that offenses will be dealt with
- Share policy widely and confront incidents with openness
- Conduct random spot-checks of reporters' sources
- Specify discipline: Plagiarism judged by severity; fabrication always dismissal
- Treat everyone equally

### Steps for news organizations:

- 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

# Responding to Lapses

Nancy A. Sharkey
Professor
University of Arizona