

Topic 3:

Journalistic Investigations
and Information
Management



Investigative journalism & information management



- Contacts
- Listening
- Interviewing
- Making notes
- Protecting documents
- Teamwork

How to decide what to investigate



There are several different ways in which investigative journalists can get ideas for stories:

Intuition

Personal observation

Personal sources

Reports by civil society organisations

Media

Leaks

Open government sources

Common sense

Brainstorming ideas



- Is the idea clear? Does it have a particular angle?
- Has it been investigated before?
- What is the new angle taken by the investigation? Is it really fresh and genuine?
- How important is it to people? Does it have relevance to their daily lives – health, education, nutrition, transport, justice, the economy, politics, good governance?
- Are the sources publicly available or not?
- Is the idea risky? If so, how risky? Where does the risk lie?
- Will proving it be difficult and complicated, or will it be easy?
- What kind of budget does it need? How much is it likely to cost, according to your estimates? Is the money available?
- What skills will be needed to pursue the investigation?
- What tools will be needed to pursue the investigation?

Investigative journalism usually has a strong ties the following areas:

- Social change & social media
- Investigative reporting
- Media watchdog groups & activities



INFORMATION SOURCES

✓ Human sources

The ideal human source in investigative journalism is the closest person to the story who can be relied upon and trusted, who is willing to stand by their statements publicly and who is easily and safely accessible.

✓ Paper sources

Documents can provide an initial source that is entirely reliable so long as they are not forged. They also cannot be modified or refuted in court if the journalist is sued, unlike human sources, whose narrative may change.

✓ Electronic sources

E-resources have become one of the most important and essential for all activities aspects of information in the current era of information and communication technology.

INFORMATION SOURCES

- ◆ **Physical examination of the equipment used during the safety event**

This may include examining the front-line equipment used, its components, and the workstations and equipment used by supporting personnel

- ◆ **Documentation spanning a broad spectrum of the operation**

maintenance records and logs; personal records/logbooks; in-house personnel and training records and work schedules; flight planning documents, etc.

- ◆ **Interviews conducted with individuals involved in the safety event**

These can provide a principal source of information for any investigation

INFORMATION SOURCES

- ◆ **Direct observation of actions performed by operating or maintenance personnel in their work environment**

This can reveal information about potential unsafe conditions

- ◆ **Specialist advice**

Investigators cannot be experts in every field related to the operational environment. When necessary, they must be willing to consult with other professionals during an investigation.

- ◆ **Safety databases**

Useful supporting information may come from accident/incident databases, in-house hazard and incident reporting systems, etc.



MAKING THE CASE FOR INFORMATION MANAGEMENT IN YOUR NEWSROOM

- Dealing with large quantities of documents
- Easy recall in the case of legal action such as a subpoena
- Public transparency about the reporting
- Collaboration on investigative projects
- Revisiting past stories for historical context