

THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE HOW THE PLATFORM AFFECTS THE NEWS

Did you know that information (a news article or social media post) is affected by how and where it's published?

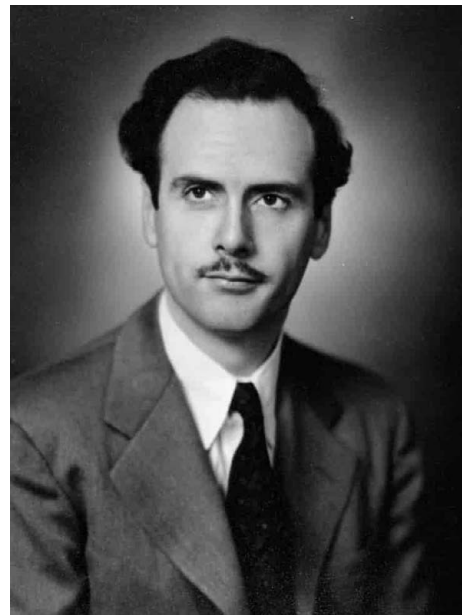
A daily newspaper that lands on people's doorsteps first thing in the morning, for instance, publishes news stories about events that may have happened the day before—but not that morning. That's because it takes time for a newspaper to be laid out, printed on a press and delivered.

TV broadcasts can get news on the air more quickly—up until the news hour. They can even break into the broadcast if something big happens while they're on the air. But TV news programs are normally on just a few times a day. For instance, "breakfast television" in the morning, noon and an evening newscast around 5 or 6 p.m. During each of those time slots, the way the news is presented may vary. For instance, early morning news programs tend to be lighter and more chatty whereas the evening news tends to be more serious.

In 1980, American businessman Ted Turner popularized the 24-hour news cycle with CNN, (Cable News Network, Inc. CNN). CNN and many other stations now report the news around the clock. But that presents its own issues. When you have 24 hours every day to fill, what happens on a slow news day when nothing much is happening? The anchors still have to find things to fill every hour of every day. Often that means over-analysis (where the newscasters talk and talk as they wait for events to unfold). Sometimes it means covering lighter or less-important events in between the more important stories.

Magazines are typically published monthly or weekly. How does that affect the news they report? Journalists who work at monthly magazines often take three months or more to research and write one article. Those tend to be longer and more in-

depth. That's because they have the time to think and research. They wouldn't, however, report on breaking news because by the time the magazine



IN 1964, CANADIAN PHILOSOPHER
MARSHALL MCLUHAN WROTE:

"The medium is the message."

HE MEANT THAT WHERE AND HOW SOMETHING IS
PUBLISHED (THE MEDIUM IT USES) AFFECTS IT.

comes out their information would be stale.

Social media is the fastest platform. Twitter is very popular with news media, who use it to report on things as they happen—often while they're still happening. Twitter is an up-to-the-second medium. Many news reporters are required to post on social media while at the same time research and write up their news article for their paper or website. The news reported on social media tends to be shorter, more visual (requiring

photos or videos) and less analytical. The medium is definitely the message with social media.

Social media presents many challenges for journalists. It's a fast and efficient way to get the news out, but journalists have to resist the temptation to post information before it has been vetted for absolute accuracy. There is often pressure on journalists to get the news out quickly via social media—although professional journalists consider accuracy a far bigger priority than speed.

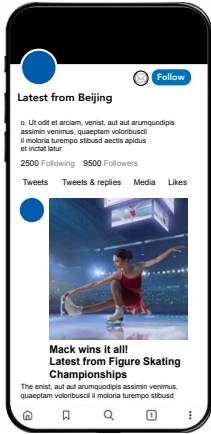
Some news organizations, such as the Toronto Star, have dedicated social media teams. They help support the organization's journalism by posting on Twitter, TikTok, Instagram and other platforms. In the case of The Star's Evelyn Kwong, her team also trains journalists about social media and stickhandles comments from the public. (Read more in the September 2020 For the Record, ["Social Media Experts: Helping to Spread the Word."](#))

There are also news websites. They may be connected with a newspaper (The Toronto Star's is thestar.com, for instance), magazine or broadcast team. Or they may be completely online with no paper product (for instance, TeachingKidsNews.com.) Unlike a hard copy of a newspaper or magazine, websites have unlimited space for the news. They can also give links to even more information. And, they can make changes or additions at any time so the news is always up to date.

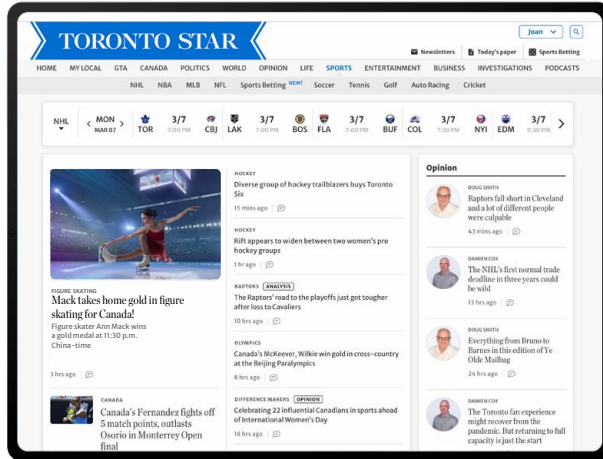
News podcasts are also very popular. They are similar to radio shows, but they can be saved, downloaded and accessed whenever the listener wants. (For more about podcasts see the April 2021 For the Record, ["Podcasting: A Radio Show in your Pocket."](#))

THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE

Fictional figure skater Ann Mack wins a gold medal at 11:30 p.m. Let's see how it might be reported, depending on the medium.



TWITTER:
Mack wins it all!
Latest from Figure Skating Championships

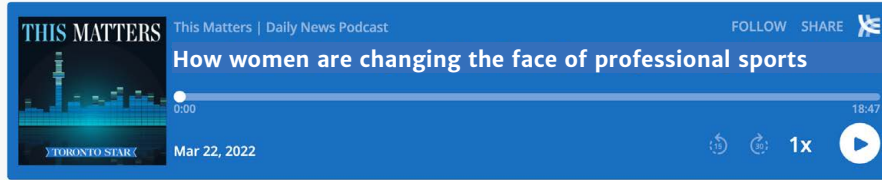


NEWS WEBSITE: Mack takes home gold in figure skating for Canada!

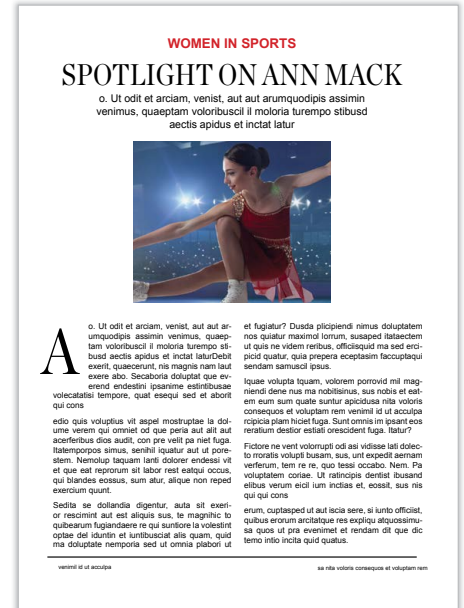


NEWSPAPER: Women's Figure Skating

Listen:



PODCAST: How women are changing the face of professional sports



MAGAZINE: Women in Sports: Spotlight on Ann Mack



BROADCAST TV: We break into our midnight broadcast to announce: Ann Mack has swept the championships!