

Alisa Miller and Kirk Citron: Does the way we think about news and media need to change?

"The real question: is this distorted worldview what we want for Americans in our increasingly interconnected world? I know we can do better. And can we afford not to? Thank you."

"My point is this: In the long run, some news stories are more important than others."

<u>Level</u>	<u>Goals</u>	<u>Themes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intermediate• Upper-intermediate• Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic news & journalism vocab• Idioms• Discussion & debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• News and media• Journalism

Kirk Citron

How many of today's headlines will matter in 100 years? 1000? Kirk Citron's "Long News" project collects stories that not only matter today, but that will resonate for decades — even centuries — to come. At TED2010, he highlights recent headlines with the potential to shape our future.

Alisa Miller

Alisa Miller, head of Public Radio International, talks about why — though we want to know more about the world than ever — the US media is actually showing less. Eye-opening stats and graphs.

Intro Discussion

- What kind of news do you think will remain important and be remembered in the future? For how long?
- What kind of news does the mainstream media in your country focus on? Do you think this needs to change?
- How do you think consumers affect mainstream news and media?

Video: And now, the real news

Students to watch first video – Kirk Citron's TED talk.

Comprehension checking

1. What types of news stories does Citron think will matter "in the long run?"
2. Which news agencies does he mention in his statistics and examples?
3. How many different areas of news does he mention? What are they?
4. What is his pick for the news story of the year? Why do you think he considers it important?

Vocabulary

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| 1. To be “drowning” in news | A. To continue to expand the borders of what is possible. |
| 2. To matter “in the long run” | B. To quickly become unimportant and forgotten. |
| 3. To “fall by the wayside” | C. To have so much news available that we can’t possibly process all of it. |
| 4. To “push back the limits” | D. To be important for an extremely long time, or forever. |

Video: The news about the news

Students to watch the second video - Alisa Miller’s TED talk.

Comprehension Checking

1. According to Miller, what is one reason why world news coverage has declined?
2. What is the most common source that people turn to for their news in the United States?
3. What are the two main problems with news on the web that Miller talks about?
4. Does Miller think that people know less about the world simply because they are not interested?
5. Do more formally educated people generally know more?

Vocabulary

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| 1. Foreign bureau | A. Two commonly utilized, independent news gathering organizations. |
| 2. Coverage | B. For things to be connected to each other. |
| 3. Associated Press & Reuters | C. A generic term for a news office operating somewhere outside its native country. |
| 4. Interconnected | D: 1. The total treatment of a particular issue, or of an area of news.
2. The sum of all news stories. |

Common news and journalism idioms/phrases.

Bad news travels fast: Information about trouble, problems or misfortune spreads quickly.

Breaking news: News important enough and new enough to interrupt other broadcasts. Generally extremely recent, and the most important/relevant story at that moment.

Hot off the press: News just released by a publisher.

Megaphone diplomacy: Political negotiations held through media outlets and news publications. Usually with the aim of forcing the other country/government to adopt a desired position.

To spread like wildfire: For news to spread extremely fast.

Word of mouth: For information to spread from person to person not through journalism, advertising or other media, but through people talking to one another.

1. When my grandmother died, everybody seemed to know immediately. I guess _____.
2. The President needs to establish a direct dialogue with Russia, this _____ is not going to achieve anything.
3. Nobody needed to read the news to know what was going on, it just spread by _____.
4. The leaked documents were all over the Internet in a couple of hours. They _____.
5. This is the first anybody has read about the conflict, it's _____.

Discussion

- How do you think journalism has changed over the past 25 years? 50? 100? Is it better now, or worse? Why?
- Where do you usually go for your news – TV, Internet, Newspapers, Magazines, Radio, Podcasts?
- What news sources are the most popular in your country? Why? Are they good quality?
- Do you think there is something wrong with the way we report and receive our news today?
- If there is a problem, is it caused by newspapers, reporters, journalists, the general public or anyone else? How has this happened?
- Is there anything wrong with a country's news services being overly focused on their own nation? Is this not normal?
- If you were to make a map of the world according to international news coverage in your country, what would it look like?

- What kind of news do you usually read, watch or listen to? What is the most popular in your country?
- What kind of news do you think will matter in the long run?
- Which news stories do you think are most likely to fall by the wayside? Why?
- Do you think the changing focus on particular news areas as illustrated in Miller's talk will affect this? How so?
- Do we need to change the way we consume news? In what way?

Debate

- News today is the best it has ever been. With new technologies like the Internet, smartphones and tablets we can usually get news wherever and whenever we want. People can also choose what they want to read or watch, so there is no problem in regard to which news stories get reported. Everything is available all the time, and it is just getting better.
- The distribution of news coverage is a huge problem. Countries focus too much on national news and not enough on international journalism. World news should have a greater focus in our society.
- It is not useful to talk about which stories are most relevant, or that will matter in the long run. Kirk Citron is wasting his time – the stories that matter most will be preserved anyway, and trying to predict which ones will be important is useless.