Housekeeping

- We appreciate your patience if any technical difficulties come up during the presentation
- Optional tools for today: media shortlist template and your election calendar
- Use the chat panel to say hello, chat with other attendees, and ask questions
Our objectives

- Develop productive relationships with credible journalists
- Make the most of media coverage to educate voters
- Counter misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation in the press

Our agenda

- Introduction (5 minutes)
- Election officials and the media (10 minutes)
- Starting your list (15 minutes)
- Building working relationships (15 minutes)
- Key terms (10 minutes)
- Misinformation and the media (5 min)
- Case study: Adams County, CO (10 min)
- Resources, discussion and wrap up (20 minutes)
Hello, there!

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Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL)

National, nonpartisan, nonprofit harnessing the promise of technology to modernize the American voting experience

TechAndCivicLife.org
ElectionExcellence.org
ModernizeOurElections.org
Communicating Trusted Election Information

- **NEW**: Working with the media
- **NEW**: Educating and persuading public officials
- Improving your election website
- Accessible communication for election offices
- Social media for voter engagement
- Combating election misinformation

Votebeat

Helping people understand our system of democracy so they can participate in strengthening it.

Votebeat.org/newsletters
A few basics to start off

ELECTION OFFICIALS AND THE MEDIA

POLL: How do you feel about working with the media?

- I'm comfortable working with the media
- I'm still skeptical of reaching out to journalists
- I respond to media requests but don't proactively reach out
- I've experienced downsides of working with the media
- I try to avoid the media at all costs
- I'm new to working with the media
- Other (add to the chat)
Why work with the media?

Shared goals:
- Convey accurate election information to voters
- Address misinformation and disinformation
- Build trust in democratic practices
- Reach lots of people
Convey accurate election info

Early voting hours to change with August election

Bethesda BEAT 2022 | POLITICS
Close races likely won’t be called on primary Election Day, county election official says
Gov. Hogan vetoed bill allowing for mail-in ballots to be counted prior to July 19 election

Address misinformation

NEWS
SOE addresses voters' frequent misconceptions
The Daytona Beach News-Journal
Published 10:03 a.m. ET Feb. 16, 2022
Build trust in democratic practices

Poll worker shares her experience working elections

Why work with the media?

Shared resources:
- Large audience
- Trained storytellers
- Identify and research new falsehoods -- early
- Often cost effective
Fact check No. 2: No one can vote more than once

McKenzie said the voter registration system is statewide, which allows them to catch duplicate registrations.

Additionally, he said Utah is one of about 30 states that participates in the Electronic Registration Information Center, a nonprofit which allows states to compare voter registration systems with the intent of identifying duplicate records.

Another safeguard against duplicate ballots is the unique barcode assigned to each envelope. If someone were to request a new ballot — maybe they lost or damaged their original one — they delete that person’s barcode from their system and issue them a brand new number.

Another scenario: If someone were to photocopy their ballot and submit it 10 times, the barcode would ensure that their vote was only counted once.

'We’re Rolling With It’: Election Workers Scramble To Adjust To Changing Voting Rules

September 18, 2020 · 5:00 AM ET
Heard on Morning Edition

PAM FESSLER

4-Minute Listen
**Hoax Image of Immigration Officers Arresting Voters Is Making Rounds on Social Media**

Jessica Huseman, ProPublica and Rachel Glickhouse, Univision News, Oct. 29, 2016, 2 a.m. EDT

*This post was co-published with Univision. [Lea en español.](http://example.com)*

An image has begun circulating on Twitter that appears to show an immigration officer arresting someone in line to vote. The image is a hoax, as is the accompanying threatening language directed at Hispanic voters.

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**Earned vs paid media**

*Today’s Local Paper*

Election office announces new transparency measures, open houses

JOIN US FOR ELECTION OFFICE OPEN HOUSE

...
STARTING YOUR LIST

Identifying media contacts

Working with the media: Quantity vs quality

- Important to balance
- Depends on your preference
- When in doubt, focus on quality
Types of media to focus on

- Newspapers and news sites
- Radio
- TV
- Other, depending on your community

Newspapers

- **Perfect for:** deeper dives, more complex stories
- **Tip:** suggest a voting info page on their website, outside of their paywall, that stays up throughout election season
Radio

- **Perfect for:** shorter stories with lots of voices and interesting audio
- **Tip:** ask about free public service announcement segments (15-30 seconds) and work with the station to produce them

---

TV

- **Perfect for:** shorter stories with engaging images
- **Tip:** when your office isn’t busy, invite reporters in to film “b-roll”
Find your contacts (5 min)

- Identify 2-3 media organizations each for newspapers, radio, and TV
- If you have time, gather contact information (contact name, email, and phone number)

**TIP:** Most news websites will have a “contact us” section you can find on the bottom of the site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newsroom or station</th>
<th>Contact 1</th>
<th>Email 1</th>
<th>Phone 1</th>
<th>Notes and plan to reach out 1</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
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<table>
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<th>Radio</th>
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- Identify 2-3 media organizations each for newspapers, radio, and TV
- Gather contact information (contact name, email, and phone number)

TIP: Most news websites will have a “contact us” section you can find on the bottom of the site.

Debrief: Find your contacts

- Was it easy or challenging?
- Were there types of media organizations that were easier or harder to identify?
- Did you include media that your voters can read in their preferred language?
Proactively connect with your media contacts

BUILDING WORKING RELATIONSHIPS
The first phone call (or email)

- Give the basics
- Offer some help
  - “What do you want to know?”
  - “Is there anything you saw last year that you didn’t understand?”
  - “What kinds of stories are you looking for?”

Office visits

- Based on the questions you receive, invite the journalist to come in and see for themself.
- Give them a tour, let them try out machines, and field their questions.
Consistency

- Establish a regular flow of information
- Use tools to keep you on track
- Remind them you exist!
  - “The first mail ballots are going out on Monday. Are you covering this? Here if you have questions.”

Mark your calendars!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poll worker training begins</td>
<td>Monday, September 19, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-election machine testing (open to the public)</td>
<td>Tuesday, October 4, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last day to register to vote for general election</td>
<td>Tuesday, October 11, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance ballots for the general election begin mailing</td>
<td>Wednesday, October 14, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-person, early voting begins</td>
<td>Monday, October 19, 2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Election Day                                              | Tuesday, November 3, 2022
|                Polls open 7 am – 7 pm                        |                                          |
| Voter registration re-opens                               | Wednesday, November 4, 2022               |
| Post-election audit (open to the public)                   | Monday, November 8, 2022                  |
| Canvass of general election (tentative date)              | Wednesday, November 16, 2022              |
Mark your calendars!

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Common stories

- Audits (pre-election and post-election)
- Celebrating a community partnership (schools, organizations, businesses)
- Events (open houses, speakers)
- “Here’s what happens…” (“to your ballot once you cast it,” “at the post office”)
- Implementing something new/staying on top of new challenges
- Interviews with the election official
- Preparing ballots to go out
- Poll worker training
- Spotlighting staff and poll workers
Update your election calendar (3 min)

- Pick a handful of events (or more!) on your election calendar, or that you know are coming up
- Then, decide when and how to invite your media list to cover it

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reach out to press list about poll worker training</td>
<td>Monday, September 12, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poll worker training begins</td>
<td>Monday, September 19, 2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Debrief: Update your election calendar

- How did it go?
- What questions came up for you as you planned out your calendar?
What are we talking about?

KEY TERMS

Exclusives
Offering a particular media contact the first opportunity to report a story.
Primary document / primary source
The real materials that help explain or verify a news story

Adapted from University of Missouri Libraries

On the record
The default agreement between you and a reporter.
**On background**
Agreed on in advance when there is a real threat to your job or safety, this relationship allows you to share quotes, documents, and other info while not being named directly.

**Off the record**
Agreed on in advance when there is a real threat to your job or safety, this relationship allows you to suggest ideas or topics that a reporter may want to follow up on without attributing those suggestions to you in any way.
### Conversation Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation</th>
<th>What it means</th>
<th>Common?</th>
<th>When?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the record</td>
<td>You can use my information and my name</td>
<td>Common and default</td>
<td>Any typical conversation with a journalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Local election official Ben Franklin said...”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On background</td>
<td>You can use my information but not my name</td>
<td>Less common</td>
<td>Actual threat to your job or safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“A local election said...”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off the record</td>
<td>You cannot use my name or my information</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Actual threat to your job or safety that is especially severe</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Not included in article, but helps a reporter understand a situation.]</td>
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</table>

**Bad actors or bad faith actors**

People who pretend to be credible journalists to advance anti-democratic goals.
Assessing bad actors

- Ask questions
  - Where do you work and who funds your work?
  - Who are your readers?
- Google them
  - Can you find them in a credible publication?
  - Do they or their colleagues publish articles with election lies?
- Take a moment
  - If you need a second opinion, take their information and check with a colleague

Communicate trusted election information

MISINFORMATION AND THE MEDIA
Prepping the media

- Common misinformation that comes up every election
- Clear information about your election process and what to expect throughout the election season

Media guide

- Make it available in print and on your website
- Include key facts about your election process:
  - Election calendar
  - Election equipment
  - Contact information
  - Where election data returns can be found
  - Guidelines for visiting polling locations
  - FAQs
Custom support for writing your media guide

- No cost
- Provided by current and retired election administrators
- Led by The Elections Group

Airtable.com/shr9hTBFgARXldrW0

Communication goes both ways

- Reach out to reporters to prep them about upcoming elections and ask them to look into emerging misinformation
- Reporters may reach out for help with stories about misinformation, especially when new misinformation is emerging
Yangmee Lor, Community Outreach Coordinator

CASE STUDY: ADAMS COUNTY, CO

Yangmee Lor

- Adams County C&R, Community Outreach Coordinator
- Co-founder - PABNEEG [www.pabneeg.org](http://www.pabneeg.org)
- Board member of:
  - National Lao-Hmong Memorial Foundation [www.nlhmf.org](http://www.nlhmf.org)
  - Colorado Dragon Boat [www.cdbf.org](http://www.cdbf.org)
  - Asian Corporate Entrepreneur and Leaders (ACEL-Denver) [www.aceleaders.org](http://www.aceleaders.org)
  - Asian Chamber Foundation of Commerce (ACFC) [www.aapifoundation.org](http://www.aapifoundation.org)

Contact information:
[ylor@adcogov.org](mailto:ylor@adcogov.org)
Connecting with in-language media

- The process begins with the community -- not necessarily the publication itself
- Identify key organizations and community leaders and begin outreach there
- Expect a longer term process of getting to know these leaders by staying in contact and showing up to community events
- Strong advocates in the language community can help connect you to media contacts

Connecting with in-language media

- Trusted “media” may be word of mouth from community leaders
- Remember that different groups make up a language community, and they may have different interests and concerns
Connecting with in-language media

- Overlooking in-language media, community leaders, and in some cases “word of mouth” outreach, leaves communities of foreign language prone to disinformation
- It also misses tremendous opportunities to build inclusive and empowering connections in your community

Language Access Plan

- Builds a solid foundation with getting to know who your language groups are.
- Gets your team on the same page!
- Allows you to reflect on where your organization is in regards to diversity and inclusivity.
Results

- 19 Community Partnerships in over 13 different communities and languages
- Partnerships with in-language media
- Upcoming project will help us build low English proficiency friendly voter and elections education for over 25 languages.

Resources

- Xoark, LLC: diversity outreach/cultural broker [xoark.com](http://xoark.com)
Planning language access guide

- Developed by the Center for Civic Design based on research with local election offices
- Used by jurisdictions like Adams County, CO
- Broader than media relations, but helps you plan to build relationships with community groups

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Free materials to help you work with the media
Telling Our Story: An Elections Communication Guide
ElectionsGroup.com/telling-our-story-guide

Custom support for writing your media guide
Airtable.com/shr9hTBFGARXIdrW0
Communicating Trusted Election Information
TechAndCivicLife.org/course/trusted-info/

Let's talk
DISCUSSION
Next steps

● Build a media list by finding contact info for 2 or 3 journalists
● Reach out to our media list with informal calls
● Invite a journalist for coffee or a short office tour
● Highlight times in our election calendar when we could include media
● Write a short media guide about how elections are run in our area
● Offer an “exclusive” to a local journalist
● Coordinate with neighboring offices to get more media attention
● Other (add to the chat)

Share your thoughts

● What resonated with you from today’s course? (Any “ah-ha” moments?)
● What are your next steps?
● What questions do you have about what we covered today?
As questions come up for you …

- Reach out to CTCL
  - We’ll help out, or
  - We’ll find someone for you who can

hello@techandciviclife.org

WRAPPING UP

We’ve covered a lot of ground
What was your experience with today’s course?

- A brief survey is linked in the chat box
- Please complete the survey now to provide feedback and improve the course for future participants

Thanks!

Email: Hello@TechAndCiviclife.org
Twitter: @HelloCTCL
Website: www.TechAndCivicLife.org