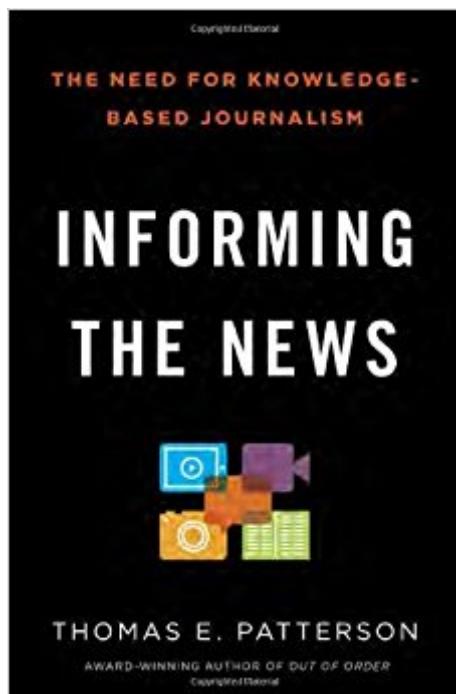


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# Informing The News: The Need For Knowledge-Based Journalism



## Synopsis

As the journalist Walter Lippmann noted nearly a century ago, democracy falters “if there is no steady supply of trustworthy and relevant news.” Today journalists are not providing it. Too often, reporters give equal weight to facts and biased opinion, stir up small controversies, and substitute infotainment for real news. Even when they get the facts right, they often misjudge the context in which they belong. Information is the lifeblood of a healthy democracy. Public opinion and debate suffer when citizens are misinformed about current affairs, as is increasingly the case. Though the failures of today’s communication system cannot be blamed solely on the news media, they are part of the problem, and the best hope for something better. Patterson proposes “knowledge-based journalism” as a corrective. Unless journalists are more deeply informed about the subjects they cover, they will continue to misinterpret them and to be vulnerable to manipulation by their sources. In this book, derived from a multi-year initiative of the Carnegie Corporation and the Knight Foundation, Patterson calls for nothing less than a major overhaul of journalism practice and education. The book speaks not only to journalists but to all who are concerned about the integrity of the information on which America’s democracy depends.

## Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Vintage; 1 edition (October 8, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0345806603

ISBN-13: 978-0345806604

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #27,445 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #50 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Ideologies & Doctrines > Democracy #62 in Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Writing > Journalism & Nonfiction #240 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Communication & Media Studies

## Customer Reviews

In this insightful and well-sourced polemic, Patterson details the persistent failings of the news media. Genuinely concerned with the civic ramifications of an uninformed populace, he documents

what he calls the drastic factual deficit in the U.S. with myriad examples showing how segments of the population hold severe misconceptions on crucial issues. Patterson reveals the fragmented nature of our media, given current technology; details how reporters inflate coverage and criticism of political figures to attract an audience; calls out the subservience of reporters to the officials whom they rely on for quotes; and critiques the “he said, she said” system of reporting, noting that it creates false equivalencies and is easily manipulated by public-relations teams.

Patterson expresses a lack of faith in the current rise of “crowd-sourced” reporting to cure these ailments and instead prescribes stronger, “knowledge-based journalism,” calling for specialized coverage of public affairs that is authoritative, well researched, and as close to “journalistic truth” as it can be. Any would-be journalist or individual fascinated with the political economy of media will learn much from Patterson’s comprehensive assessment of the news world today. --Steve Uhrich

“No one has studied the press and the woeful state of public knowledge more carefully than Patterson. In this important new work, he moves from analysis to recommendation, proposing a new model for a press that actually lives up to its democratic potential.” Clay Shirky, Associate Professor Journalism, New York University and author of *Cognitive Surplus: Creativity and Generosity in a Connected Age* “Patterson delivers an impressive evaluation of a crisis he identifies as just as bad, if not worse, than that associated with the ‘yellow journalism’ of the early 1900s. . . . A well-organized and detailed book that underlines the need for remedial policy action and effective oversight.” Kirkus Reviews

The only thing wrong with this book is that it needs a current edition to keep up with the changes in journalism. It is a good history of how journalism has gone downhill.

Journalism’s role in civic life has foundered on a poor understanding of context and too much ignorance made acceptable by the he said-she said idea of balance. This book clearly describes what’s so wrong with where we are and how we got here. The prescription of knowledge, deep knowledge in context, is a big challenge. Where the energy and skills to meet it will come from is not certain. But meeting the challenge is necessary. Read this book. Read more. Learn more. Decide what you can do. Do it.

This book should be a "must-read" for journalism majors while fascinating, and thoroughly

well-researched, it is both thought -provoking and inspiring.

Really good book for aspiring journalists!

I couldn't get through this book. It was repetitive and dry. If you can get past the dry writing, maybe you'll like it. Dry.

Excellent presentation of subject matter, coupled with solid and interesting examples. Should be required reading for all journalism students and journalists.

A new "classic!"

I chose this book after I heard the author's interview on NPR. It was some solace after such frustration with today's sensation-only preoccupation without information and the extreme focus on celebrities's lives.

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