

Disruptive Technologies: Key Tools for Journalists in the Newsroom Today

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In the last decade there has been a significant boom in disruptive technologies and the media industry has been most hit by the disruption economy. The rise of the web, mobile devices and social media has changed the way audiences consume and interact with news and in turn the way news and stories are told. As the world and technology evolves so must the tools journalists use to tell stories.

Journalists need to think differently about how they research the stories they tell, how they package their stories for an ever evolving audience and the best ways to mine data from the many platforms that exists out there. There are three key areas for journalists that tools exist to help make their news reporting lives easier. Research, tracking, and visualisation.

Below are some useful tools that journalists can deploy for compelling, visual stories in today's mobile and social media dominated world.

Research

The internet is treasure trove of information and most of the time journalists spend hours trying to find useful information in that minefield. Yet there are various tools that can help journalists navigate that world.

Google Advanced Search [<https://newslab.withgoogle.com/lesson/23>]. This is an advanced search which allows users to search for information seamlessly by using specific qualifiers. Users can ask the search engine questions with tags that allow it give them the right information. These tags include date, time, weather and song. Users can also search for specific things in an article's title, url or text body by using "intitle", "inurl" or "intext".

Google Public Data Explorer [<https://newslab.withgoogle.com/lesson/12>]. While researching stories on tight deadlines, finding quality datasets often present a

challenge. Google Public Data Explorer helps journalists find and interpret these datasets. [It works by aggregating datasets](#) from various trusted sources, users are then able to create sophisticated visualisations using tool provided by Google Public Data Explorer. This tool also allows journalists to track changes over time to determine changes as wells trends on that particular topic.

Reverse Image Search [<https://newslab.withgoogle.com/lesson/11>]. Images and the copyright issues that follow them have become a major problem for media houses in the internet age. Publishers churning out large volumes of content including images often don't think about what is happening to their images. With Google Image Search users can drag and drop their images into the image search bar and trace where that image has been used across the web.

Google Consumer Surveys [<https://newslab.withgoogle.com/lesson/13>]. Consumer survey allows journalists to gain insights by conducting their own quick research. If they want to get people's opinions on a recent news item, users can easily create a survey. This tool allows journalists to add unique insights and perspectives to their stories. Surveys can be created on any topic and users will start seeing results from a valid sample with 24 hours.

Google News Archives [<https://newslab.withgoogle.com/lesson/15>]. Often the biggest challenge that journalists face when it comes to research is search archives. When searching for news in Google, users get the most recent articles relevant to their query. However, sometimes, journalists may want to track the topic's coverage over time to find the most significant article rather than the most recent. Google News Archives allows journalists to look retrospectively on specific topic. See how the story unfolded in the news when it was first mentioned.

Twitter. Social media is one the most interesting tools regarding tools journalists can use today. Twitter stands out as top of the class vis-à-vis a platform that lends itself easily to news reporting, consumptions and dispensing. The rise of personal publishing has given room to plenty of on the scene accounts from users. This

means journalists who can't be at the scene of an event can curate audience tweets and interpret them to tell a story.

Co Everywhere [<http://www.coeverywhere.com/>]. As useful as Twitter is for good user generated content, chances are there often thousands of tweets that journalists need to sift through on any given subject. There are after all approximately 500 million tweets sent every day. All that information and possible useful user generated content is actually useless if the journalist doesn't know it exists. That's where Co Everywhere comes in. This tool makes it easy to filter social media by location. It allows users to set up areas for local government offices, large corporations, schools, non-profits or wherever is important to your beat and watch as relevant social media pours in. This is particularly useful for breaking news stories or scheduled events.

News Tracking

Tweetdeck. Tweetdeck is possibly one of the most useful tools in this social media obsessed age. Tweetdeck allows media houses to track who is sharing their content, what those people are saying about them but most importantly it allows media houses to track stories. Anyone with a Tweetdeck account can add various columns to track certain hashtags or certain topics.

Google Analytics [<http://www.google.co.za/analytics/>]. Analytics is a great tool that allows media houses to turn insights into action and in turn pageviews and profit. This tool allows media houses to improve performance across your sites, apps, and other marketing channels. By tracking what is happening across your sites, editors can see which stories do well, where users are coming from and the time they spend on their sites. Media houses can use these insights to tailor content for their audience, optimise their sites for maximum experiences and give readers a reason to stay longer and comeback.

New ways of telling stories (Visualisation)

Google My Maps [<https://newslab.withgoogle.com/lesson/19>]. Often audiences get lost in the words of a story and lack the context of what is happening. Maps allows journalists to create engaging stories and share data that can add important context with your audience. It can be quite daunting to create a map in order to bring this necessary context to your story, but Google maps is easy to use and allows journalists to create custom maps in a matter of minutes.

Google Trends [<http://trends.google.com/>]. When news breaks everyone covers it, so that often finding a new angle for an old but still important story can be difficult. Trends allows users to see what the audience is searching for regarding that topic in real time. Journalists can also track interest in specific topics over time, where queries for these topics are coming from and what those queries are.

Storify [<https://storify.com/>]. A quick way to tell stories particularly breaking news. Story is a great aggregator that allows journalists to curate tweets and social media posts about a specific subject and publish it directly to your site. This tool is particularly good around topical issues that audiences share their opinions about on social media. Journalists can dig even deeper and interpret the social media commentary for an in depth data piece.

Topsy [<http://topsy.com/>]. This is a social media analytics tool that allows journalists to track social media conversation around a specific topic or hashtag. Users can create graphs of audience conversation around the topic and as well gain insights on the number of times the topic has been mentioned on Twitter and the key influencers discussing it. This also allows journalists to create compelling data driven stories with geographical context and time lapses.

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