

Mallary Jean Tenore, managing editor, Poynter.org

Michael O'Connell, producer, It's All Journalism

Welcome to It's All Journalism. My name is Michael O'Connell. Say you're a journalist and your newspaper wants you to use Twitter or you need to figure out how to master the latest technological trends. Who do you turn to? A lot of people turn to Poynter Institute for the latest news and trends in media today.

Mallary Jean Tenore is the managing editor of Poynter's website, Poynter.org. She writes about social media, new tools for long-form journalism, women in technology and how to do corrections in fast paced digital environment. How you doing Mallary?

Mallary Jean Tenore, managing editor, Poynter.org

I'm doing well, thanks.

Michael O'Connell

Now we've been emailing each other for a couple of months. Well, which is actually I've been bugging you for a couple of months sending you links to our podcast and trying to get you to come on and talk about some of the things you write about. Not too long ago, you did a little crowdsourcing looking for input and advice from working journalists for young journalists. Can you tell me about that story and what you found out?

Mallary Jean Tenore

Sure. The story's about [10 ways that journalists](#), young journalists in particular, can make themselves more marketable, and it actually came out of a presentation that I gave at my alma mater, Providence College. The idea was that I wanted journalists to get a better sense about how they can get a job and how they can put themselves out there. And since I was doing all this preparation already for this talk, I figured I might as well write a piece about it and then I can use this piece actually in my presentation.

And so, I had a bunch of tips that I already wanted to share, but since this wasn't a big scoop and I wasn't afraid that someone else was going to take this story, I said, "I might as well let Twitter followers know what this story is that I'm working on."

And so, what I did was I just sent out a question on Twitter and said, "Writing a piece about ways that young journalists can make themselves more marketable, what advice should I give them?" And so, I wasn't sure what sort of feedback I would get, but I ended up getting about dozens of responses from people who clearly were pretty passionate about this and wanted to share advice.

There were so many comments coming in that I decided to put them together in a [Storify](#). For those of you who don't know, Storify is essentially a tool that lets you tell a story using different social media elements. So, I pulled these tweets together in a Storify and embedded that in the bottom of my story. And when it came time to give the speech at

Providence College, I was able to read off a lot of these responses that people had given. And it was a great way to be able to get different voices into my piece and to really use Twitter as a way to advance my reporting.

Michael O'Connell

So, were any of those suggestions that sort of jumped out at you that you hadn't even thought of?

Mallary Jean Tenore

Yeah, that's a good question. One was "math and stats." Someone said, "Seriously, you can learn programming anytime." And that one I thought was interesting, because it was a little bit different from some of the others. So, there's been a push in recent years for journalists to learn more about computer science and programming and at [News University](#), which is part of Poynter, there's a course on Math for Journalists. I like the idea of thinking not just about the literary side and sort of the writing side of things, but also thinking about learning new skills that might not be traditionally associated with journalism.

Michael O'Connell

You actually came to Poynter as a young journalist yourself, in a summer young journalist's program and then later on as a year-long fellowship. Can you talk about how that sort of came about?

Mallary Jean Tenore

Sure. Well, when I was in college, I knew I wanted to be a journalist and my school didn't have a journalism program, but I was editor of our school newspaper and had different internships. At the time, it was right before newspapers started to do a lot of layoffs. This was 2007. I wasn't seeing too, too many job openings, but I just decided that I was going to put together a bunch of my clips and resume and cover letter and send it out to as many different news organizations as I could. So, I sent out about 75 of those pamphlets with my clips and resume, and then I also was making connections along the way. So, I found out that Roy Peter Clark, the vice president of Poynter, was actually a graduate of Providence College, and there weren't too many journalists who graduated from Providence College that I was aware of. So, I decided to reach out to him and we were actually going to a national writer's workshop together in Connecticut, and so we decided we were going to meet up there.

When we met, he automatically sort of became this mentor for me and said, "Oh, you should apply for this six-week fellowship that the Poynter Institute has." I had heard about Poynter and I wasn't too, too familiar with it, but the more I looked into it, the more I realized it would be a good place to be as a young journalist. So, I ended up applying for that position, and I also applied for a year-long Naughton Fellowship, which was named after Jim Naughton, who was the former president of the Poynter institute and long-time journalist. He just recently passed away a few months ago. And so, I ended up getting into the six-week fellowship program and then from there was chosen as the

one to go on to the year-long fellowship. So, really making that connection with Roy and also the experience I gained at college was a huge help.

Michael O'Connell

One of the things that we've gotten out of this podcast is that we've had a chance to talk to a lot of working journalists, and we've posed some questions about how young people can get into journalism. And it really does seem your story is one of connections, that you reach out and meet somebody who may not be that person who has a job, but he or she may be able to mentor you or help you or point you in that direction. I know in my own career, I've had many opportunities like that.

Just sort of to backtrack a little bit back to young journalists, crowdsourcing, social media, etcetera. What skills do you think young journalists should be picking up besides to one you sort of mentioned, which is math, math for journalists?

Mallary Jean Tenore

Right. Well, I think that journalists, young journalists in particular, need to be able to strike a balance between traditional journalistic skills like reporting and editing and mix those with more sort of modern day skills that journalists need.

Many of those skills relate to social media and they also relate to programming and thinking about stories in new ways. So, one of the things to think about is, "How can you, perhaps, create a new position for yourself? Or create something that hasn't already been created?"

For a long time, I think journalists were in this mindset that they needed to sort of just go back to what they had been doing and think about it in new ways. But now, when I've been talking with young journalists, I'm realizing that some of them are actually wanting to create new things.

If you think about it, in the past few years, there have actually been new positions created at news organizations that have been responses to what's changing in journalism. So, for instance, now you see social media editors or social media managers, which quite frankly wasn't a position you had in newsrooms five years ago. You're also seeing mobile managers, people managing mobile. And you're seeing programmers and people who are doing graphic interactives. So, I think you want to be able to balance those traditional reporting skills with some of the new ones.

And, we talk a lot about social media, but one of the other things that I think would be good for young journalists to know is to gain a better understanding of mobile journalism and how we can adopt sort of Mobile First strategies in newsrooms. I'm thinking about this particularly because we ran a piece on the Poynter site yesterday about [5 Reasons Why Mobile Will Disrupt Journalism Like the Internet Did a Decade Ago](#) and, in the piece, Cory Bergman talks about the need for sort of mobile journalism because that's where so many people are getting their news now. And, we had a chat about this yes-

terday, a live chat, and we found in asking some poll questions, we found that a lot of people don't have people working specifically on mobile in their news organizations and they don't have sort of a definite strategy for mobile journalism. So, that's an area that I think is going to continue to grow and that young journalists could potentially help out more with.

Michael O'Connell

It's really intriguing that you're throwing out the mobile discussion at this point because, what does that mean to people? I think people understand that, "Oh, I can read *The New York Times* on my phone or my iPad or whatnot." But from a thinking, from a journalist's standpoint, from an editor's standpoint, what does that mean? How do you have to change your thinking to be a mobile journalist?

Mallary Jean Tenore

Right. Well, right now, what a lot of news organizations are doing is they're creating content for their website, they're creating content for their print product and then they're simply taking that product and putting it on the mobile platform. What we need to be thinking about is saying, "OK, how can we think about the mobile platform first and then think about the other products." And, of course, that's not to say the other products, like your online product, your print product, your broadcast product are not important, but because so many people increasingly are getting news online, you want to be thinking about how you can create an advertising strategy for mobile, how you can be thinking about putting push-alerts and breaking news alerts on mobile devices and really sort of changing the way we think about where we're putting news first.

In this piece that I mentioned about, Cory Bergman, he was talking about years ago, when the newspaper industry was doing really well, you had Google and Craigslist come up and they created these new business models enabled by the technology and the scale of the Internet. And, we later found out that Craigslist would really replace a lot of local advertising and take that away from newspapers.

And so now, we're at that time again in journalism where we are at this place where there's a great opportunity to take advantage of mobile and, frankly, social media sites like Facebook and Twitter are already really taking advantage of mobile in terms of distributing content on mobile devices and advertising on mobile devices. And so, if news organizations don't really catchup or really start to think more about mobile than these other news or social media sites could potentially have a bigger role in things than they do now.

Michael O'Connell

When we talk about the disruption that occurred when the Internet came along and you started out your answer by saying, "Oh well, that people generally will create content for their newspaper or whatever and they'll just put it online or they'll put it on mobile." When newspapers first started having websites and designing websites, their thinking

was, "Well, we're just going to imitate our frontpage, but it's going to be on the platform, the Internet platform, whatever it is. That's going to be our website."

And people discovered that those sites were very unattractive. They were very difficult to understand where the priority of the news story is because it's not the same thing as holding a piece of paper or a magazine. That they had to change the design and their thinking for how they were going to present online. No we have a new thing. It's mobile. And the websites that we've built to use on our laptops and our computers are not responsive design. They're not delivering that mobile content in the quickest, most efficient manner. So, what challenges do you think that creates for people who are planning websites, who are designing things like that?

Mallary Jean Tenore

Right. I think that's a good question and that's a great comparison in terms of thinking about putting the print product online. One of the things to think about is trying to think about hiring or having people in your newsroom develop skills that are mobile related so that you can be thinking more creatively about how you're putting your content on mobile devices. Because, a lot of times when you go to a website on your phone, you can tell whether or not that site is optimized for mobile. Oftentimes, if it's not, the dimensions aren't quite right or it just isn't as user friendly. And so, you want to be thinking about how you can make the experience as seamless for readers as it would be if they were to go to your regular desktop website.

Michael O'Connell

I sometimes feel that the newspaper was designed not so much for the ease of the reader but maybe the ease of the printing press. This is how we're going to create this thing, so people are going to have to deal with the size and shape of this. But once you get into a digital environment, it's really the user experience that's driving a lot of the thinking about story priorities, layout and design of our website. Certainly, going into mobile, just being able to have all that functionality in your hand as opposed to sitting in front of you, again, it's creating sort of these challenges in how we present our material to our readers. Ease of being able to do things is so important.

To go back to the story you wrote about advice for young journalists and your decision to crowdsource. Can we talk a little bit about crowdsourcing and what's your thinking behind that?

Mallary Jean Tenore

Sure. I think crowdsourcing is a great tool for journalists. A lot of times I've used it in my reporting and I've seen other reporters use it as well. So, sometimes a reporter might be working on a story, sometimes they'd even use it if they're interviewing someone who is really high profile. And so, a reporter will say, "Oh, I'm about to interview so-and-so, what questions should I ask that person?" And then they're able to see what their audience is interested in and what they're curious about. And so, sometimes those journalists will then take those questions that they've heard and they'll actually pose them to

the people they're interviewing. Other times, news organizations will use it for, say, storm coverage. Maybe there's a storm in the area or Hurricane Sandy. News organizations want to be able to get people involved in that news gathering process. So, they'll sometimes create a hashtag, meaning something that groups tweets or groups photos together. And so, some will create a hashtag on Instagram or on Twitter and say, "Send us your pictures using this hashtag." Then they'll be able to put those together in a Storify or somehow they can compile them in their story that they're working on.

One thing to keep in mind with crowdsourcing is that, I mean, you don't necessarily want to make it seem as though everything that people are telling you is fact. I always say that social media is a great starting point. So, it's such a great place to find ideas and potential sources. But you always have to do your followup reporting and rely on your traditional journalism skills to actually verify whether the information you're getting is correct. So, a lot of times, what I use crowdsourcing for is not so much to get factual information, but it's to get people's opinions on something or to get their advice on something, similar to the advice that I got in the piece for young journalists.

Michael O'Connell

It provides you with that interconnectivity with your audience. Take the temperature, take the pulse of your reader and find out what interests them. And that can sometimes open up new questions for you and new ways to guide your story. What are your thoughts about the challenges of young journalists coming into the industry now? You're fairly young, yourself, but what advice would you have for somebody coming into a newsroom now?

Mallory Jean Tenore

This is always a challenge when I'm asked to give a speech to young journalists or to talk with young journalists. I always want to be realistic, but I also optimistic.

So, one of the challenges, of course, is that news organizations aren't necessarily hiring as much as they were, say, 10 years ago, so the number of positions for young journalists is more limited. And sometimes I've had young journalists come up to me and say, "Well, should I even become a journalist? Should I get into journalism?"

I always encourage them to still go into journalism. I mean, I think that journalism is a really noble field, and I think that we increasingly need smart people to be in the field to keep it going and to help us think about new ways of telling stories and distributing news. But, I think that journalists have to be smart and realistic about the fact that space is limited in newsrooms and newsrooms are having challenges.

Even though there are layoffs and there are challenges, though, there are a lot more opportunities for new positions like I was talking about with the social media managers and the mobile managers. And so, I think the extent to which journalists can be open to not pigeonholing themselves is really important. So, there's the young journalist who knows she really wants to be a reporter. That's great. But what I try to do is encourage

that young journalist to say, "OK, I like reporting, but what else can I do to advance my reporting skills. Maybe I should take on photojournalism. Take some photojournalism classes in college or try and do some photography at an internship. Maybe I want to learn more about video?" Anything that you can do to make yourself more marketable and develop more skills is going to help you in the long run as a journalist.

Michael O'Connell

And I think it's sort of important for us to encourage young journalists to rethink their expectations about what types of jobs are out there.

If you watch "All the President's Men," that's a certain type of newsroom in the 1970s. A lot of those jobs, they may still be there, but they're very different now and the way to get into them is very different. That you have to be very creative thinking about what your skills are, what you want to do and, as you said, there are a lot of new types positions out there that require different things.

On the one hand, I think you want to be a generalist, but we've had people on our podcast who said, "Well, yeah, be a generalist up to a point, but concentrate on something. Concentrate on photography." Like you were saying. "Or, concentrate on something you're really good at and make that the thing you want to pursue and develop a career around."

Tell us a little bit about Poynter and what resources it offers, not just for young journalists, but journalists in general.

Mallary Jean Tenore

Right. Just for those who don't know, Poynter is a non-profit journalism school. We own the *Tampa Bay Times*, which is the local paper here. So we have a close affiliation with them, although we work independently of each other.

So, the Poynter.org website is basically a media news website for journalists. And so, we have two main buckets of content on the site. We have media news, which is the news of the day. And then we have How To's, which are craft-based pieces that help journalists get a better sense of how they can do their jobs better. So that's sort of the resource that I spend my most time in terms of writing and editing stories.

But then we also have News University, which has a lot of great webinars and also free courses that journalists can take, just to develop more skills, either based on editing or reporting or video or programming, they have several different course. They also have online group seminars, which last for several weeks. So, if you really want to delve into a topic, you can take that course for an extended period of time online. So those are sort of our two main online offerings.

But then we also offer in-person training. And so, we have several faculty members at the institute to lead seminars, specifically week-long seminars in which journalists who

are already working in the field come to Poynter for more training, either on leadership and management or on reporting, editing and writing, or on mobile journalism. And so, we hold those seminars and we are also sometimes on the road. So our faculty will actually give sessions at colleges or different places. We're actually having a seminar in Chicago in April, I believe, that's geared toward helping journalists improve gun coverage and their coverage of gun control. Sometimes we'll see something that's in the news or that's happening right now, like the Newtown shooting, and then we'll build a seminar based off of that.

Michael O'Connell

One of my coworkers actually is taking a Poynter seminar on SEO, search engine optimization. She's really loving it and it's a topic I'm interested in. There are all these topics. The more you get into digital journalism, the more you get into journalism in general, you start finding all these little aspects of it, things that you'd like to know and it's good to be able to know there's a resource out there besides just searching on Google.

Let's talk a little bit about social media for a second. How do you work social media into what you're doing besides the crowdsourcing?

Mallary Jean Tenore

Basically, there are four people who work on our website full time. Myself, my editor Julie Moos and Jeff Sonderman and Andrew Beaujon, so all of us are sort of working with social media and trying to use it to share the word about our stories and also to get more insights for our stories, such as true crowdsourcing.

One of the things that we've tried to do is think about publishing as the start of a process of sharing. And so, traditionally, whenever you published a story, you'd think, "Well, that story's done. Time to move on to the next one." And it sort of signaled an end, whereas now, when you publish a story, it's just the beginning of your effort is to really share it.

So what we'll do is we'll publish a story and then we'll tweet every story that we publish out on Twitter. And then we also post about three or four of them on Facebook each day. And then, we sometimes using are other social media sites as well, but Twitter and Facebook are our two mains ones. We also all have a little lists set up in Twitter so that we can monitor whenever anyone mentions Poynter.

So, I'm usually monitoring Twitter throughout the day. I particularly use TweetDeck, which is this third party app. I use that just to keep track of what people are saying. And I follow journalists because my beat is the media industry, so all of my sources are usually journalists. So, I try and follow smart journalists and people whose insights I really care about and whose opinion I value.

One of the things you hear sometimes about Twitter is, "Oh, that's just a site to hear about what people had for lunch." And I say, "Well, that could be true, if you're following the wrong people." I mean, there are some people who are tweeting that kind of stuff,

but if you're following people who are tweeting about things of interest to you or who are tweeting about things that you are covering as a journalist, then you're going to get a lot more value of it.

So, I use Twitter really as my modern day police scanner. It's what I'm using to get ideas, to see what journalists are talking about and what they care about. And in monitoring it, I'm able to get a better sense of what we should be covering on the site. So, really it's a way for us to push out our stories, to monitor what people and also to interact with our audience so that we're not simply using it as a promotional tool, that we're using it as a way to build some engagement with our readers.

Michael O'Connell

You say that your beat is the media and that you follow people that you get a lot of ideas from and that they tweet well. Who are some of the people that you follow that you think you get a lot of value from their tweets.

Mallary Jean Tenore

Good question. So, let's see. I'm just looking through TweetDeck right now and there are a lot of people on here. I would say, [Nina Diamond](#). She is someone who really utilizes lists really well. So, you can create Twitter lists, and she actually wrote a piece for us about how to create better Twitter lists. And we asked her because we realized she was so good at creating them. And so, she has several journalists lists that she's created, and a lot of times, I find some interesting information from her.

Another person is [Jay Rosen](#), a New York University professor. He often has blogposts that he's written that he links out to on Twitter. And he also is just sort of looking for other smart content and then tweeting out a link to it and sometimes sharing his opinion about it.

Let's see, who else? I would say [Chuck Todd](#). I've always enjoyed following him on Twitter, an NBC political correspondent or White House correspondent. I've actually interviewed him about his use of Twitter because he does a really good job of using it to generate interest around his work. So those are three people just off the top of my head.

Michael O'Connell

What makes good Twitter user, do you think?

Mallary Jean Tenore

Well, I think someone who makes a good Twitter user is a person who is able to get their point across succinctly. And I wrote this piece about [what Twitter teaches us about writing short and well](#), and I profiled a few different journalists who do a really good job of using Twitter as a platform, not just to get out information, but to get out really well written information.

And, [Jennifer Weiner](#), she's a great example of that. She's a novelist and a former journalist, and she will often tweet out interesting tidbits about the book she writing, or sometimes she will liveblog particular shows, like "The Bachelor" or "The Bachelorette." And her tweets are really snarky and you can hear the humor in them and they're really well written.

Another one is [Joanna Smith](#), who's a reporter with the *Toronto Star*, and when she was covering the earthquake in Haiti, she was actually using it as a tool to report out what she was seeing. And her tweets were really poignant. I mean, it was almost as if you were there with her, watching the devastation that was going on. And so, she was using it really as a serious way to get out information about the tragedy there.

I would also say that [David Folkenflik](#) from NPR, he's also a great Twitterer. Because what he does is he actually uses Twitter to create mini-serial narratives. So, a lot of times if he's writing about something, he will tweet out something and he'll say in parentheses at the end of the tweet, "1 out of 4." Meaning that he's going to have four tweets about this particular topic or this particular idea. And so, in that way, he is not necessarily limited by those 140 characters. I mean, each tweet is 140 characters, but he's able to use several tweets in sequence to tell a story. So, he does a really good job with that as well.

Michael O'Connell

People on Twitter, you started out this talking about how people were, "Oh, Twitter's only for people who talk about what they had for lunch." I also heard a criticism, several different times, that, "Well, we're just talking to 'us,' that journalists are much more obsessed with Twitter than the average person is." I think, you know, maybe that's true, but I think a lot of things you just said are maybe some of the reasons why. We recognize that it's a communications medium. It's something that's really powerful and immediate and we're using it not just to track what each of us is having for lunch, but actually breaking news, interesting stories, and it's great to see when some of the people you mention are actually using it to tell stories in a very different way. I know that's exciting. And us being journalists and talking to ourselves and everything is just a good thing on the side. Do you think that we're the ones who're a little bit too obsessed with it?

Mallary Jean Tenore

Well, yes, and I think that, especially as I'm thinking about covering journalists, I'm lucky in that my sources are using Twitter a lot, but I know that that's not the case for many journalists.

Increasingly, people are using Twitter and using different social networking sites. So I always encourage journalists to be on these different sites like Twitter and understand how they work and use them regularly, because even though some of their audience may not be on these sites right now, eventually they very well may be. So, I think that rather than having to play a catchup game when your audience does get on these sites, it's better to already be on them and to have an understanding of how they work, so that

you can be better equipped for when more readers or more listeners are actually using these sites.

I think that some news organizations have found that they are able to use Twitter and that they get some traffic from Twitter, but that Facebook is where they get a lot of their traffic. So, part of it is figuring out which platform is best for your news organization and which one your audience is actually using.

One other thing too that with some of these newer social media tools, I've seen some news organizations actually have a little tutorial for their audience. So that way, they're not assuming that their audience knows how to use these tools, and instead, they're actually showing them how to use them.

So, for instance, *The Wall Street Journal*, they decided that they wanted to do a crowd-sourcing project with Pinterest. They were doing this for the Fashion Week. And so what they did was they wanted their audience to show them sort of what their fashion is like by creating a fashion related Pinterest board. So, on their site, they created this five easy steps to let people know how they can create these Pinterest boards, which I thought was really good because it was a small step that they took to really help their readers understand what this tool is and how they could use it.

Michael O'Connell

One of the other things that we've talked about in the past and that I sort of wanted to get your take on is corrections. If you send out a tweet that has an error in it, either factual or spelling or whatever, how best to deal with that.

Mallory Jean Tenore

One of the things that we found and there's been some research on is that when there is a correction, usually the misinformation is spread a lot more than the actual correction is spread. So, one of the things that's good for news organizations to do is to think about how they can correct information and distribute it on all their platforms. So, rather than just putting a correction at the bottom of a story, tweeting out that correction and putting that correction on Facebook or on their mobile platform, wherever that may be, so that the chances that people will see that correction are higher.

Typically, with Twitter it's tough, because you can't really delete a tweet. You can delete it, but it's already out there and people are retweeting it and sharing it still. I actually talked to Twitter about the possibility of creating a Twitter correction tool, which they weren't all that excited about. I've talked to them about it and they said it's something they had thought about, but it's not something they have actually created. But I think it could be useful for journalists, just in terms of trying to stop the spread of misinformation.

But, typically what we do is if we have a correction then we will put a correction at the bottom of the story, and then if the correction is substantial enough, then sometimes we'll tweet out that correction, or it may be as something as small as having an incorrect

link in a tweet, in which case we'll send out the new link with a correction. And we'll just say, "Corrected link."

And so, there are some challenges, because there are all these different ways of correcting information on social networks, but I think one of the important things to think about is how your newsroom can create a social media strategy and have social media guidelines. A lot of times, we have these ethics guidelines or different guidelines that we're supposed to adhere to, but we create them and we sort of forget about them. With social media guidelines, they should be living, breathing documents that we're regularly referring to and updating, partly because social media is changing so quickly and also because there are so many challenges associated with social media. So, that's something, corrections, that should be addressed in those guidelines.

Michael O'Connell

I'm glad you said something that you said because it allows me to get on a pulpit here. I'm part of the social media group on Facebook, and at one point, I sort of had put out a point about social media guidelines for news sites. And it caused, it was a little tempest in a teapot. A lot of people we like, "Guidelines, no. There's no guidelines." And then somebody from *The New York Times* mentioned, "Well, we don't have a standard guideline. The newspaper has its own guidelines it's developed over years about sourcing, etcetera, etcetera, we don't have anything written down."

I think people were afraid of writing anything down about social media because that would somehow put a fence around certain things. It just strikes me that if you're relying on people's knowledge and just doing sensible things, then you're going to get screwed sooner or later. That somebody always makes a mistake. Smart people make mistakes and smart people have lost their jobs for making mistakes on social media. Do you think that news organizations should be developing a social media strategy?

Mallary Jean Tenore

I think they should and I think they shouldn't just be creating them just so that they can protect themselves. If there's someone in the news organization who tweets something, you don't want to have a policy just so you can say, "Oh, we told them so, like they shouldn't have done that."

Really, you want to be thinking about how you can create a social media strategy or guidelines that are going to help your staff to be more productive in terms of their use of social media and guidelines that will help them make smarter choices. Hopefully, if you can create guidelines that don't start off with a list of "don'ts," because it can be really easy to fall into this pattern of saying, "Oh, you shouldn't do this. You shouldn't do that."

Instead, it's great to think about, "How can we create guidelines to tell people different ways that they can approach this particular situation on social media." And then, provide case studies. National Public Radio created social media guidelines or [ethics guidelines](#) that have a social media component last year. And they did a great job of incorporating

different best practices that made it easier for people to understand the point that they were making. So, if you can do that using examples either from within your own news organization or other news organizations, then that could be very helpful for staffers.

Michael O'Connell

I know that the newspaper that I used to work for, they had, I think it was *The New York Times* guidelines was their base, but then they had these other additions. And all these other additions were things that were based on things that nobody had ever imagined that they would have to write down. You know, guidelines about what people shouldn't be doing. And all those came from people doing something stupid or making a mistake and realizing, "Well, it hasn't been written down, so maybe we should just write it down so that people might understand that this might be something to think about."

Again, not so much as a "don't," but more of a guideline of things to think about before you write anything. I think that's the same thing with Twitter. It's really easy to write something quickly and not really think about it. But you really should be thinking about everything that you put out there because it reflects back on you. And if you put out the wrong thing, it's going to come back and bite you in the ass.

Mallary Jean Tenore

Right. And it should be a preventive measure rather than something that you decide to put together after something problematic happens.

Michael O'Connell

Right, right. But I think the point I was making is that unfortunately, trying to sit down ahead of time and anticipate the foibles of human nature can sometimes be difficult. At the end of the day, a lot of these rules get written over a period of time because we uncover them as we move forward. I think there was one, somebody got in trouble because they were tweeting about some woman who was in line in front of him at a Starbucks or something and then it turned into a whole big thing.

Well, this has been very fascinating. I appreciate you taking time to talk about social media, crowdsourcing and everything that's going on at Poynter. How can I follow you on Twitter and read your stories?

Mallary Jean Tenore

They can follow me on Twitter [@mallarytenore](https://twitter.com/mallarytenore). If you go to Poynter.org/mallary, then you can read all my stories there. But, I usually am tweeting them out on Twitter, so if you follow me on Twitter, you should be able to see most of them.

Michael O'Connell

It makes everything that much easier. Thank you very much Mallary for talking to us.

Mallary Jean Tenore

OK. Thank you so much for having me. I appreciate it.

Michael O'Connell

No problem.