

Center for Investigative Reporting - Media Giraffe Profile

Center for Investigative Reporting

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About

From the CIR website:

Removing Obstacles to Investigative Reporting

The democratic process requires well-informed citizens to hold society's most powerful institutions and individuals accountable. Too often the actions of these institutions and individuals are hidden from public scrutiny, inevitably leading to injustices or abuse of power.

Certainly, investigative reporting remains one of our democracy's most important tools for providing citizens with the information they need to hold powerful people, governments and corporations accountable. When conducted with seriousness, fairness and tenacity, investigative reporting motivates policy makers and the public to act, hopefully, for positive social change that benefits everyone.

Regrettably, this type of investigative reporting is in short supply these days. The problem, as a rule, does not rest with the major city newspapers such as The New York Times and Washington Post, which continue to devote significant resources to investigative reporting. Rather, resources for investigations and related in-depth journalism have dried up for television - America's No. 1 source for news - and smaller newspapers, and remain near non-existent for radio, most magazines and the Internet.

The major reason for dwindling funding for investigative reporting can be traced to a new demand for increased profits by news organizations, which now largely are viewed as just another profit center within massive media and entertainment corporations. Investigative reporting requires long lead times and an investment in people to produce results that, in the end, are not guaranteed. Managers looking to cut costs have turned to investigation units first, with a predictable outcome: less original, in-depth reporting which the potential to trigger change, and more inexpensive fluff filling airtime or space.

Other obstacles to investigative reporting include: fear of controversy or litigation, lack of truly qualified reporters, poor marketing of stories, and insufficient attention to the craft of journalism, including narrative storytelling, that is so crucial to modern news.

CIR addresses these obstacles, providing media outlets with in-depth stories that reveal new information and deepen the public's understanding of complex issues.

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