

Annexe 2

WHAT IS NEWS?



Adoratrices

Esclavas del Santísimo Sacramento y de la Caridad

**ADORERS'
GENERAL
PLAN OF
COMMUNICATION**

Summary

0. Introduction	3
1. Of everything that happens, what do we tell?	4
2. From reality to news	7
3. What is news?	8
4. Conclusion: that is news	9



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Introduction:

This morning, surely, each one of us got out of bed, got ready, had breakfast, went out into the street... but none of it is news. Nobody is interested in it and it is of no importance. It's true, it's real, it happened, but it's not news.

Many things happen to each of us every day. And many things happen around us all the time and on the other side of the planet. But not everything becomes news.

We find ourselves in a context that aims to improve communication within the Congregation, that wishes to implement or develop the best way of informing using the possibilities that new technologies offer, and to do so in a coordinated, effective, participative and useful way.

Therefore, to be sources of interesting news at the local, regional, national or general level within the Congregation; to manage well the news that comes from different levels and origins; to receive this information with benefit and, in short, to collaborate appropriately from the place in which we find ourselves in the information system, we are going to ask ourselves what is news.

- First of all, we will ask ourselves what to tell about all the things that happen. What facts do we select to turn them into the news? In other words, what are the criteria of news-worthiness?
- Then we will see how we go from reality to news, that is to say, what is the process of elaboration of the information. What steps are followed to turn the selected facts into the news?
- Finally, by way of conclusion, we will summarise some practical tips to help us in our daily work to determine **what is news**.

1. Of everything that happens, what do we tell?

Criteria of newsworthiness.

First of all, we place ourselves as broadcasters, informers, communicators: what do we want to tell? What deserves to be told and known by others, beyond the direct witnesses? Of all the events happening around us, what should we, what do we want, what can we tell?

We have to place ourselves in the point of view of the receivers. As readers, listeners, spectators: what do we expect, need, want to find in the Order's news? This implies a decision, or rather a continuum of decisions. We have to decide, thinking of our medium and our recipients: **what is news**, what is newsworthy, **when** it should be published, **how** it should be published: in what journalistic genre, in what place and with what scope or breadth at **what level**: local, national, general?...

We begin with the first of these questions: what is newsworthy. To do this, we need to distinguish, with a certain distance and dispassion (even if we have to put passion into the task), who is affected by each event and who is interested in it, by the protagonists, by the subject, by the repercussions and consequences, by the number of people affected... Always thinking about the area in which we move, that is, in our information universe, both in terms of the origin of the news and its field of dissemination, according to the levels that are established: local, national, international, or whatever **is appropriate**.

This means awakening certain fundamental aptitudes and attitudes: knowing how to select and prioritise. In other words, choosing some things and leaving others, and giving more importance to some things than others when it comes to publishing. The important thing is to do this with the right criteria, which are what we call newsworthiness criteria. Some of these criteria are general and common sense helps to apply them. Others may be the result of internal agreements because, in the end, those involved in the communication can determine guidelines according to their purpose or foundational intention.

Veremos aquí cuáles son los criterios habituales de noticiabilidad o, dicho de otro modo, qué características tiene un hecho para convertirse en noticia, qué elementos hacen que sea candidato para ser publicado, que destaque sobre los demás para ser considerado como noticiable:

- **Personalidad de los protagonistas:** Lo importante es la persona que hace o dice algo, más que lo que hace o dice.
- **Actualidad, inmediatez, novedad.** Es una cuestión temporal. Cuanto más reciente, más actualidad; cuanto más novedoso, más noticiable. Las noticias se hacen viejas pronto.
- **Interés general o utilidad.** Hay asuntos que son por sí mismo importantes y son de interés general. Por tanto, noticiables. Otras cuestiones no tienen en sí mismas una gran relevancia, pero su conocimiento facilita la existencia o tiene incidencia en la vida cotidiana. Es lo que llamamos información-servicio.
- **Número de afectados.** Es cuestión de cantidad: número de personas participantes o de afectados por un hecho. La magnitud de un hecho en términos de cantidad de afectados modifica su noticiabilidad.
- **Proximidad,** cercanía geográfica, institucional, afectiva o espiritual. Cuanto más próximo es un hecho, más noticiable es en su nivel correspondiente. La cercanía puede ser física, geográfica, porque lo más cercano a nosotros nos interesa más.
- **Espectacularidad,** originalidad, singularidad, curiosidad. Todo lo que se sale de lo normal porque no forma parte de la rutina diaria tiene más puntos para ser noticia, aunque no se trate de una cuestión muy fundamental. También gusta conocer aquello que, sin ser lo central de nuestra vida, le da color y calor.

- **Exclusivity.** It is information of our own, which cannot be found anywhere else? In the same way, when deciding what we make news, what is the field that we dominate exclusively or that we cover better than others? Is it not worth using people, forces, resources, which are often scarce, in what is more effective and of greater interest for what we are trying to achieve?
- **Conflictivity**, rarity, unpredictability. The unexpected is news, whether it is pleasant or an accident, a disaster, a misfortune. Curiously, the negative attracts more attention than the positive, but the way it is treated can cover the needs of the news without the need to focus on the drearier aspects.
- **Human, social or spiritual interest.** The facts that touch our hearts, those that move the most human fibres, are of interest. Those that refer to issues of human or social interest are of interest to us as news. We want to be informed. Those that move our spirit, those that motivate us and awaken our deepest feelings, deserve to be known. They can be news.

Once, applying the criteria of newsworthiness, we select an event as news, we have to report on it, to tell what is happening. And do it in the right way. Let us remember that news IS NOT catechesis, formation, exhortation, reflection, essay. News is information, as we will see later.

2. From reality to news

The process of elaborating information.

After the first step - the selection of facts worthy of becoming news - we continue the chain of decisions in the process of elaborating information, the passage from reality to news.

Three phases are followed:

1. Collection: collection of real, true, contrasted data. This is done by going to the sources that are closest to the facts and most reliable, so that all the data is real and verified.

2. Elaboration: based on everything collected in the first phase, this is the moment of processing the information, which includes various tasks:

- The most interesting data are selected, and others are left out if they do not contribute anything.
- The angle of the news item is chosen, that is, it is decided which aspect will be highlighted as the most relevant, which will be the hook that captures the attention, the gateway to the news item.
- The text is written clearly, directly, simply, in the style of journalistic language. Special care must be taken with headlines, because they are what everyone reads. Subject and predicate. Who says what, or who does what.

The design, layout and other graphic elements complete the elaboration of the news.

3. Dissemination. The third phase, dissemination, makes the selected and elaborated fact that we have decided to pass from reality to news reach the recipients, converted into news, with the most appropriate technical means in each case.

3. What is news?

What is news also including the idea of recognising an already elaborated news item as such, that is to say, how is a news item in terms of its form and content. What elements are included in a news item, differentiating it from other ways of dealing with newsworthy events.

Content and form.

Content: the 5Ws.

A news item includes, in terms of its content, what we call "the 5 W's": what, who, when, where, why. Sometimes how is included. That is: what, who, when, where, how, why or what for.

WHAT: what is the event, what is happening. The publication of a book, the opening of an exhibition, the appointment of a new post...

WHO: the protagonist or protagonists of the story, identified with their full name and position or with that feature that makes them the focus of the information.

WHEN: at what time, taking care to make the time reference clear to the reader at the time of reading. Yesterday', or 'tomorrow' or 'last week' only have value in relation to another known time reference. Time has to be viewed from the reader's point of view and the other time references he/she has.

WHERE: the place of the events. Special references also have relative value if deictics such as 'here' or 'there' are used. Indications of place should be clear, identifiable, or seen from the perspective of the potential readers.

HOW, WHY/ WHY FOR: circumstances indicating the manner of events, why and what they happen for, if they can be pointed out; all those elements which are not clearly identifiable.

HOW, WHY/ WHY FOR: circumstances that indicate the manner of the events, why and what they happen for, if it can be pointed out; all those complementary elements that give an answer to the fundamental questions about the reality of the events.

The reader must be able to understand at a glance what happened, to whom, when, where and if there is a why or what for.

4. Conclusion: that is news

In any case, it is quite practical, in order to simplify decisions, to keep a few simple ideas in mind:

- One fact, one news. Two facts, two news.
- If we doubt the interest of a news item, let's move on to what is undoubtedly of interest, and only if we have space or time left should we reconsider the doubtful one.
- If something is deleted and nothing significant is lost, it is a sign that it was not necessary, it was superfluous.

And when selecting the facts, we should briefly ask ourselves these questions:

Is the information of general interest (for the Order, or for a certain sector of it)?

Is it important, is it useful, is it significant?

Is it something new, unusual, curious?

Does it affect many people?

Are the protagonists relevant?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then we can move on to the appropriate level and determine when, how and with what development it should be published.

It is then time to tell the story, and tell it well, because that is news.

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