Newsroom Trust and Transparency Audit

This Trust and Transparency audit is a series of questions to help journalists and newsroom staff assess their trust-building efforts to illuminate where their time and energy might best be spent when it comes to building trust and demonstrating credibility with their audiences.

We welcome you to reach out to our Trusting News staff at **info@trustingnews.org** if you have questions. For more resources and guidance on how to use this audit, head to **trustingnews.org/trust-transparency-audit**.

>> *If you're interested in the Trusting News team providing an audit and customized training for your newsroom, please reach out for options and pricing. You can contact our team at info@trustingnews.org.*

Questions to assess your newsroom's practices

1. *Engagement: Is the newsroom regularly in touch with its audience and trying to understand their perceptions and feelings toward news? Does newsroom staff routinely seek input on how they could better their coverage? This could include: In-person conversations, engagement events, online forms, social asks, responding to comments.*

   Suggested resources:
   - *Listening to your audience*
   - *How to seek input*
   - *Responding to and moderating comments*

2. *About Us: Does the newsroom have an About Us page that includes the organization's mission and goals, as well as contact information for staff? Do individual staff members have bios that include their mission, information about their experience and credibility, and their connection to the community?*

   Suggested resources:
   - *How to build an effective About Us page*
   - *Writing reporting bios and mission statements*

This resource was created by Trusting News. You can learn more about our work at TrustingNews.org. Have feedback? Suggestions? Reach our team at info@trustingnews.org.

3. **Daily transparency:** *Does the newsroom work to insert transparency about its reporting process into daily coverage? This could include articulating goals with specific coverage, explaining sourcing, coverage decisions, story selection, etc.*

   Suggested resources:
   - *[Inserting transparency into daily coverage](#)*
   - *[How to explain coverage decisions](#)*
   - *[Explaining sourcing decisions](#)*
   - *[Create an FAQ page](#)*

4. **Ethics and policies:** *Does the newsroom have public-facing policies that show the ethics behind its work, on topics such as ethics, corrections and conflicts of interest?*

   Suggested resources:
   - *[Creating a public-facing ethics policy](#)*
   - *[Create a public-facing corrections policy](#)*

5. **Opinion and commentary:** *Does the newsroom clearly label opinion or commentary, in a way that is clear across all products and platforms, to separate it from other news coverage?*

   Suggested resource:
   - *[How to effectively label opinion content](#)*

6. **Demonstrating value:** *Is the newsroom explaining the specific value they offer? Do they show empathy for news consumers' often overwhelming experiences of consuming the news and offer opportunities to help people more easily connect with its coverage?*

   Suggested resource:
   - *[News avoidance section: Explaining your value and extending empathy](#)*

7. **Ownership and funding:** *Is the newsroom transparent about its ownership model, how it's funded and how those factors may or may not impact coverage?*

   Suggested resources:
   - *[Explain how funding influences coverage](#)*
   - *[How to talk to your community about the cost of journalism](#)*

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8. **Fairness:** *Does the newsroom share how the staff works to provide fair coverage? Do they internally examine how a story's framing, sourcing and language may be conveyed to different groups of people, and make changes to make coverage less polarizing?*

   Suggested resources:
   - *[Explain how you work to be fair](#)*
   - *[A checklist to help depolarize your coverage](#)*
   - *[How to make your reporting on guns less polarizing](#)*

9. **Staff makeup:** *Are a variety of lived experiences, values and perspectives represented on the staff? Does the staff work to reach audiences across diverse, complex perspectives?*

   Suggested resources:
   - *[Hiring guide to bring more diversity to your staff](#)*
   - *[Dimensions of Difference: A newsroom culture guide](#)*

10. **Newsroom culture**: *Is the newsroom working to create a safe environment that allows for differences and dissent among staff? Are staff members regularly encouraged and given space to share their experiences and challenge coverage?*

    Suggested resources:
    - *[Dimensions of Difference: A newsroom culture guide](#)*
    - *[How to get newsroom buy-in for trust work](#)*