

Anthropology & Media

A (Nearly) Pain-free Guide
to Working with the Press



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Introduction

What is “media”?

When you hear the word “media,” what do you think of? Newspapers and your local evening newscast? Or do you also think film, books, video games, the Internet?

By definition, “media” simply means the vehicles through which information is communicated. It is important to make a distinction, however, between media in general (aka “*mass media*”) and “*news media*” (aka “the press”), as this distinction is relevant to understanding how to get news coverage of your work and how to work with journalists.

Mass media encompasses all vehicles of mass communication, including not only the news media but also theatrical films and documentaries, Web sites, computer and video games, billboards, books, CDs, DVDs, tapes, etc.

News media include newspapers, magazines, television and radio programs, and Web sites (such as Salon.com and Inside Higher Ed) that report news and are staffed by professional journalists. Blogs can be considered news media provided that they are affiliated with a newspaper, magazine, etc., or are otherwise administered by professional journalists. (In other words, a blog for comments or discussion on the Washington Post or BusinessWeek magazine’s Web sites would be part of the news media, while your cousin’s My Space page would not.)

Sometimes documentaries and nonfiction books can be vehicles through which a news story is told in greater depth. However, documentarians and book authors may go a step beyond other news media to take advocacy positions or favor particular viewpoints. As such, they often fall into the gray area between what is

news and journalism vs. what is entertainment.

Meanwhile, **professional journalism** involves the collection and dissemination of information about current events, trends, issues and people to the public. A professional journalist is one who works within this collection and dissemination process. Such journalists may include reporters, editors, columnists, photographers, graphic designers, copy editors, editorial cartoonists, news anchors and hosts, correspondents, producers, assignment editors or directors, videographers, nonfiction novelists, and filmmakers.

Professional journalism carries with it an expectation of standards and professionalism in reporting; consideration for the truth, fairness and accuracy; and ethics. (Note that talk show and talk radio hosts are not necessarily journalists. For example, Larry King, although he may speak to newsmakers and discuss news topics, is not a journalist. He interviews personalities for their entertainment value and opinions without necessarily seeking a balance of opinions. As such, he does not practice the fairness standard of a professional journalist.)

Should you wish to explore further, two resources that provide more information about professional journalism, including its ethics and standard, are the Society of Professional Journalists, <http://www.spj.org>, and the Poynter Institute, <http://www.poynter.org>.

The AAA Media Relations office also can provide answers to many questions regarding media, news and journalism — including more information and advice on any of the topics discussed in this guide.

Chapter 1

Value in Publicity

Why publicize?

While media exposure might not help you land grants or gain tenure, there are clear benefits to communicating information about your work to the public via the press.

News coverage can raise public understanding and appreciation of anthropology and your research. Greater public awareness, in turn, can lead to the following:

- An increase in the number of people who wish to study anthropology and/or your subfield, leading to a higher student census that impacts departmental funding.

- Greater respect for and interest in cultural heritage — whether that be one's own or that of another group. This increase in public interest may be noted by local and national lawmakers who set policies and budgets that affect institutions providing research funding and jobs for anthropologists, such as the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, museums, universities, government agencies, etc.

- Public acknowledgement of your work that favorably impresses book publishers, who can provide you with opportunities to get your research into print and distributed to wider audiences; and book reviews in mainstream press that boost sales and expand your audience.

- Greater visibility for you and your department with deans, who influence funding and other support.

Additionally, if you've used public funds in your research (e.g. NSF, NEH grants), you are repaying a public that has invested in you by sharing your knowledge and findings, especially where they have a direct impact on people's daily lives.

Is it newsworthy?

Journalists are constantly looking for new material to interest their readers. While science writers at nationally distributed daily newspapers (e.g. New York Times, Washington Post) or magazines (e.g. Time, Discover) may be looking for information or sources who can answer questions about broader themes (such as human origins, human health, social trends, major archaeological excavations), local news media are also hungry for story leads, particularly if they shed light on a local issue or involve local people, activities or history.

Your local news media may include newspapers and magazines that are published daily, weekly or monthly and that cover

general or specific topics. You may also find TV and radio news programs — especially public broadcasting — in or near your town.

And you may find a branch of the Associated Press operating in your state — typically located in your largest metro area (a bureau locator menu is available on AP's contact Web page: <http://www.ap.org/pages/contact/contact.html>). AP is an international news service that reports and distributes news stories, photos and other content to print and broadcast news organizations worldwide. As a result, stories that start locally may receive wider circulation through AP.

Regardless of the size or nature of the publication, program or service, all news organizations respond to similar triggers in determining what is news and deciding what to cover.

The triggers generally center on the following questions, which you should ask yourself in deciding whether your work is newsworthy:

- Is it **local**? Or does it offer a local angle on a national story?
- Is it **timely**, e.g. is it happening now or coming soon?
- Will it significantly **impact** someone's daily life (especially within a publication or program's audience)? Will it impact many people's daily lives?
- Is it **useful in informing public policy** discussions?
- Is it or an aspect of it **new**?
- Is it **unique, rare, unusual, innovative** or **award-winning**?
- Is your **funding unusually large** or from unique sources?
- Does it involve any of the following?:
 - ♦ **Change** — Does your research change the status quo?
 - ♦ **Challenge** — Are there extraordinary obstacles to overcome in doing your research?
 - ♦ **Contradiction** — Do your findings contradict, or does your research seek to question existing knowledge or beliefs?
 - ♦ **Conflict or controversy** — Are you investigating a subject that is prone to debate? Are you challenging the status quo in a way that will stir criticism or comment?
 - ♦ **Collaboration** — Are you working on a large project with many players? Is your interdisciplinary team a unique combination of researchers, or does it represent "strange bedfellows"?

Chapter 1 continued

If you can answer “yes” to one or more of these questions, your work may be worth publicizing. And the more yes responses you have, the stronger its news value and the better its odds of gaining journalists’ attention.

Another key point to keep in mind is that journalists are people, too. They respond to the same human dramas and interests as the rest of us. As such, you might consider emphasizing the following aspects of your news to them:

- **Emotions** — love, hate, fear, loneliness, sorrow, grief, etc.
- **Common struggles** — illness, overcoming the odds or a

loss, the underdog, beating or exposing the system, war and violence

- **Milestones** — birth, adolescence, graduation, marriage, career/promotion, death

- **Needs and wants** — food, shelter, clothing, safety and security, relaxation, freedom, health care, making ends meet, caring for families

- **Personal stories** — Personal anecdotes can help emphasize the impact or importance of your work to people and their daily lives. Also describing your findings on the scale of a single person or family can make it relatable, understandable. Play up the human experience.

Chapter 2

Getting Media Attention

Once you decide your work is ready to publicize, it's time to reach out to the press. In most cases, journalists will not hear about you or your news unless you tell them. So if you want the coverage, you have to be a **squeaky wheel**.

First, identify the press in your area. This may include one or more newspapers, magazines, TV or radio programs. Do you read a particular paper, listen to or watch a particular news program? Sometimes it's easiest to start with those you already know and build from there. Also, you may look through your local paper for staff writers or reporters who cover science and anthropology-related topics (e.g. public health, urban, ethnic, educational and business issues, etc.). These journalists should be among your key media contacts.

Next, find out who you should talk to at each organization. Many newspapers print contact information for their reporters and editors throughout their pages, and most news organizations have Web pages with information on how to contact them and how to submit news tips and press releases.

When in doubt, call the main number and ask for the following staff, based on the type of news organization:

- **Daily newspaper** — City or metro editor
- **Weekly and other nondaily newspapers** — Editor or news editor
- **Magazine** — Senior editor(s)
- **TV** — Assignment editor or producer
- **Radio** — News director or producer

Any number of guides are also available to help you find news organizations in your community. Check with AAA Media Relations office if you need help finding those guides. Another resource to help you find local news media contacts — if you are a college professor — is the media or public relations office of your college or university.

Once you have identified which news organizations and who your contacts are, it's time to announce your news to the press.

Crafting press releases

The most common **tool** used for announcements is the press release, a one-page written document describing your news.

Keep in mind that your release will be one of many editors and reporters will receive in any given day. As such, it will face stiff competition for their time and attention. Therefore, your release needs to be crafted carefully.

The following are guidelines for how to write a press release:

- **Keep it short** — Releases should be no more than one

page long. Most journalists have limited time to review and choose from the blizzard of releases they receive daily. Rarely will they read more than a page, and most often, they will judge your news based on the info given in the first two or three paragraphs of your release. Also, give your release a short, eye-catching title (ideally no more than five words) to grab attention.

■ **Begin with your conclusion** — Your most important information or point should be stated in your opening paragraph. You can fill in explanations, details, secondary info, etc., in subsequent paragraphs. This writing format is called “inverted pyramid.” Journalists themselves use it to write stories because it is an effective format for communicating key information quickly and directly to their readers. Journalists, likewise, are your readers, so use this format to get their attention.

■ **Provide the basics** — Journalists love facts, so give them as many of the basics as you can. The basics are the **who, where, what, when, how** and **why** of your news: Who is doing the research or work, what are you doing, where is it happening, when is it happening or for how long, how are you doing it and why? Answer as many of these questions as you can. You might also supply them with two or three key facts that have come out of your work. Don't overwhelm them with statistics and data analysis; if they want to know about it, they'll ask. Also be sure to highlight the following wherever possible:

- ♦ **Local connections** — Are you conducting your research in their town? Are you studying a population within their community? Do you work at the local university? Journalists, especially at smaller newspapers and TV/radio stations, respond well to local angles.
- ♦ **Immediacy** — Is your research happening right now? Are you giving a talk about your work on a specific day or during an upcoming event? Will you be in their town to do field work during a specific time? Journalists are most interested in what is happening now or happening soon. Let them know when there is a time-sensitive aspect to your news, and avoid sitting on your news until after the fact. After the fact means old, and old means not news. (Note: One exception is if you're letting them know about an award you received. If you just received it this weekend, it's still fresh enough to be news. If you wait more than a week to tell them, likely it will be considered old and, therefore, be ignored.)

■ **The big why** — Besides telling press why you are doing particular work, you should address another “why” question ever-present in journalists' minds: Why should we care? (aka Why should our readers/viewers/listeners care?) This is the key question journalists use to look for relevance in your news. How does

your news impact their audience? How is it relevant to people's daily lives? Why would it be useful, important or interesting to people? What makes it meaningful? Think about those questions as you write and explain to press why they should care.

- ◆ *Personalize for relevance* — Here is where you can use a personal story to illustrate why your news is relevant, useful, etc., to others. Here is where an anecdote or example about the people you're researching can make your news more relatable to your average Joe or Jane.

■ **Be clear, concise and consistent** — Resist the urge to make your release academically palatable; remember you are not addressing an audience of your peers but rather the public, which is an audience of everyone — teen-agers, parents, clerks, doctors, mechanics, neighbors, politicians, etc. Don't use jargon. Be direct and concise in presenting info. Use active voice (e.g. "we found that ___" instead of "the findings of our research were ____"). Use consistent grammar, style and references throughout. Try this trick as you write: Imagine you are explaining your work to an eighth-grader; could he or she understand what you're trying to tell them?

- ◆ *Test it* — To see whether the public could understand your release, show a draft to friends, neighbors, your children, a student, etc. Ask them whether they understand it, and if they don't, ask why they don't. Is it interesting? What more would they like to know?
- ◆ *Proofread* — Do this before sending releases out, especially to double-check facts, grammar and style.

■ **Think visually** — Does your news have an element that lends itself to photos, video or audio? Newspapers like to run photos with stories whenever possible, so let them know of opportunities to come photograph you at work. Let TV and radio journalists know about events or activities that would provide them with images or sound that can be taped for use in stories. Sharing this

information may increase your odds of coverage, especially with broadcast journalists.

In addition to these guidelines, a **press release starter** and a **sample press release** are available for you in **Appendix D**. The starter is a template of components found in most releases, including the standard "for immediate release" phrase with release dates, places for you to fill in your contact info and some key facts (you should still incorporate this info into your text; the bullets at the top are to provide journalists with a quick-reference guide to the essentials they'll find in the text), where to put the title, and where to start your text.

If you are, however, uncomfortable writing press releases, there is another option — calling. You can call your local newspaper, TV or radio station and ask to speak to an editor, news director or producer. Tell them you have a tip or story idea you'd like to share. Journalists are usually receptive, although they are often working under deadlines. If you call during a deadline, they will tell you so and whether they can talk. If they can't, find out when they are free and call back then. For most news organizations, it's better to call earlier in the day rather than later.

Submissions

If you do write a release, make sure you look up or call your contacts at each news organization about what their submissions policies are. They may specify deadlines; whom to submit releases to; and whether they prefer them faxed, e-mailed or mailed. Follow those guidelines.

After you've submitted your release, it helps to follow-up with a phone call to be sure your release was received and offer to answer any preliminary questions. Doing so also improves the odds of it being noticed over the competition. **Remember:** *It doesn't hurt to squeak the wheel a little.*

Chapter 3

Interviewing 101

Regardless of how you gain press attention, once you have it, you must be prepared for interviews and other press interactions. Interviews can range from a journalist posing just one or two questions in order to e-mail exchanges to full-length phone, face-to-face or taped interviews. In all interactions, it's important to be accessible and prompt; this is because journalists constantly work under tight and unforgiving deadlines and often need information at the last minute. It will benefit you to be available and accommodating as much as possible.

In the hot seat

Here are some pointers to help you sail through interviews:

- **Prepare** — Practice for a news interview as you would for a job interview. Review what you want the reporter to know about you and your work, imagine what questions they might ask you and practice how you will answer them. If you can, chat with reporters or hosts beforehand to get a feel for what they might ask you about and how they will focus their interviews.

- ♦ **TV** — TV appearances and videotaped interviews require you to give additional attention to how you look, including dress, grooming and posture. Don't wear stripes, paisley, busy patterns, or the colors white, black or red; these do not translate well on camera or on tape. If you are interviewed in-studio, you may be required to wear some degree of makeup — whether you are a man or woman — so as to not appear “washed-out” under bright studio lights. If you are not experienced in the makeup you need to wear or other preparation, be sure to arrive at the studio that much earlier to allow TV staff time to make you up or otherwise prepare you. If you have a tendency to slouch in your chair, practice interviewing for several minutes sitting up straight; when you lean back or slouch on camera, you end up appearing short and fat.

- ♦ **Radio and TV** — If you are someone who speaks a lot with your hands, pounds desks, snaps fingers, etc., for emphasis, practice restraining these habits. Some gesturing while talking is fine, but flailing wildly becomes a distraction on camera. In addition, you don't want to pound, snap, clap, touch microphones, etc., as these interfere with the sound quality of audio and video taping, possibly drowning out your comments.

- **Sound bites** — Journalists, especially TV and radio, appreciate concise, pithy quotes they can use to punctuate their stories. You should prepare three to four succinct comments or

messages you can use to describe your most important points. Rephrase and reiterate them throughout the interview; this reiteration will help you drive home your message. Practice but don't over-rehearse; you want to speak comfortably on your message but not sound scripted.

- **Personality** — Don't be afraid to let a little personality shine through where appropriate. Again, reporters look for clever, witty quotes to enhance stories and to convey your passion for your work. Just as you may want to personalize press releases, reporters seek to humanize stories. Using quotes that show personality is the primary way they do this — give them something to work with.

- **Keep it simple** — Explain concepts in layman's terms. Resist the urge to equivocate or present complex, jargon-laden descriptions. Remember you are communicating to a public audience, not peers. Also, reporters will eventually be tasked with boiling down the info you give them for their stories, which must fill finite amounts of space or time. Give them summaries, not specifics (if they need the latter, they will ask).

- ♦ **Facts and specifics** — If a reporter asks you something you don't know off the top of your head, it's better to say you don't know, will check it and get back to them before deadline. It's better to do this than provide reporters with inaccurate information that can end up in print or on air. (Besides if a reporter learns over time that you can be relied on for information, your odds are better of getting future coverage. If they find you unreliable, they will avoid you like the plague.)

- **Off the record** — Whenever you speak to journalists, it is best to assume anything at anytime — whether during a formal interview or casual conversation — is **on** the record and may therefore appear in print or on air. If you do not want something you say to be used in a story, you must preface your comment by telling the journalist that what you are about to say is “**off the record.**” Once you have declared you are speaking off the record, journalists are required by their code of ethics not to publish what you say. However, confusion or other situations may still arise where an off-the-record comment is intentionally or accidentally used. *The only way to be 100 percent certain a comment cannot be used is to **never say it.*** And if a reporter is pressing you on a question you don't feel comfortable answering on or off the record, remember you always have the option to **decline comment.**

- **Declining comment** — No matter how hard reporters press, you are under no obligation to answer any question or discuss any topic in an interview that you don't want to. Whether you decline is not as critical as how you decline. Refusing comment without explanation can trigger reporters' suspicions. Journalists most often encounter refusals in association with stories of wrong-

doing or controversy — areas where reporters are trained to dig deeper if they suspect either may be in play. Therefore, declining comment without explanation is akin to running when you see bear — it stimulates a reporter's "attack" instinct. To avoid being "attacked," it is best to explain why you are declining. If you are uncomfortable about answering, say so. For example, you could say, "I'm sorry, but that's not really my area of expertise, so I wouldn't feel comfortable speaking to that question." Beyond that, if you know of another person who would be more comfortable or knowledgeable in answering, a good rapport-building tactic is to refer the reporter on to that person; it makes you seem helpful rather than evasive.

After the interview

Once you make it through an interview, here are a couple more pointers:

■ **Follow-up questions** — No matter how thorough or experienced a reporter is, new questions are bound to arise once he or she sits down to write. Editors and producers may pose further questions down the line. They may need to contact you — and very likely in the heat of deadline — to check information. You should make yourself as available as possible, especially as this will ensure they get facts and quotes right. As you end your interview, be sure that you offer them regular and after-hours contact information. If you anticipate being unavailable during their deadline cycle, let them know.

■ **What you see is what you said** — Reporters for newspapers and magazines will quote what you actually said, *not what you meant to say* or what you meant by what you said. Choose your words carefully; think of how readers might interpret them out of context. Also, print reporters largely take handwritten notes during interviews. They may confuse a word or two, just as what you remember saying may be very different than what you actually said; quotation is not necessarily an exact science. Don't sweat the small stuff, but do calmly let reporters know if you have been erroneously or egregiously misquoted. In most cases, it's unintentional and they will offer a correction or clarification.

■ **Lost in editing** — In TV and radio, your comments may be edited for length and snippets of your interview presented out of sequence, depending on how a reporter writes his or her story. Be aware that taped interviews are subject to editorial alteration, although most journalists will do this in a fair and accurate manner. Additionally, for print reporters, first drafts of stories rarely make it to print as-is. Their stories will be reviewed by a series of editors

before publications — all of which may make changes to the story. Sometimes well-meaning editors may inadvertently introduce errors in the process. Keep this in mind when following up with reporters on errors in their stories.

■ **Seeing the story** — Because of this potential for change through the editing process, it is usually counterproductive to ask to see a story before it is in print. You can ask, but most journalists will refuse to let you see their stories. The origins of this refusal lies in the founding principles of journalism itself — that a free press should be independent and objective in its pursuit of truth and resist efforts to influence, review or approve its reporting. However, most reporters are understanding of their sources concerns when it's in the interest of ensuring accuracy. To that end, if there is a specific quote or fact you are concerned about and would like to check on, contact the reporter, tell him or her what you are concerned about, and ask whether you could verify the fact or quote. Very often the reporter will review the quote or fact with you.

After the story

Once a story is published or airs, feel free to give feedback as this can be useful in building long-term, professional relationships with the media. Here are two common areas of feedback:

■ **Thank-yous** — Feel free to call, e-mail or write journalists to thank them when you like a story. Do not send flowers or other gifts. Most journalists are ethically bound not to accept them; this practice also relates back to free press principles. A simple thank-you is all that is necessary to make a reporter's day.

■ **Corrections and clarifications** — If you should find errors of fact or interpretation in a story, you should let journalists know so they have the opportunity to correct or clarify erroneous or misleading content. Most journalists will be as eager to do this as you are. The best approach is to first contact the reporter who interviewed you and prepared the story. Let them know what you feel is in error or of concern. Discuss corrections, clarifications or other options. Factual errors should be corrected outright. Beyond that, whether a journalist offers a clarification will depend on whether they agree any content was misleading. If they do not agree to a correction or clarification, you might consider submitting a letter to the editor to voice your view of the content; reporters and editors may, in fact, suggest this option to you. Ask them what the guidelines are for this type of letter to the editor.

Chapter 4

Editorial Options

Press releases and interviews are not the only methods you have to reach out to the news media. Newspaper and magazine opinion sections and TV and radio commentary programs also offer options to express opinions and share knowledge with the public. Online news publications — such as Slate.com and Inside Higher Ed — provide similar opportunities.

Opinion sections

With newspapers and magazines, there are three main tools you can use to directly or indirectly share your opinions with the public:

- **Letters to the editor** — A letter is a quick way to share your views about topics in the news or specific stories. Letters usually are limited to 150 or 200 words and must be exclusive to the publication you are submitting to. Include your name, title (when relevant), home address and phone number for the publication's use in contacting you and verifying authorship. Always check whether a publication offers specific letters guidelines (usually available online) before submitting.

- **Op-eds (aka commentaries or columns)** — These are longer essays of opinion, usually around 600 words, although word lengths can vary widely from publication to publication. Again, check guidelines before submission.

- **Editorial boards** — Newspapers and magazines usually have staff devoted to writing their official editorials. Frequently, staff members and other community representatives meet in

forums called “editorial boards” to discuss editorial topics and choose official positions. You can lobby newspapers and magazines to take particular editorial positions by meeting with these boards. You should be prepared to make a presentation or argument in favor of your position before these panels, as well as answer their questions. Further information and assistance on making editorial board pitches is available by contacting AAA's Media Relations office.

Commentary programs

Local TV and radio stations may offer public affairs and commentary programs with roundtable or town hall style discussions that you could participate in. Often such opportunities can be found within the public television and radio. Contact program producers about how to become a guest. If any programs air taped commentaries, you might also inquire how to do one of those.

Online news publications

Much like their newspaper and magazine counterparts, online news publications also offer forums for publishing op-eds and columns. Additionally, many offer comment forums following news stories or editorials where you can post your thoughts or take part in discussion boards. (*Note that regular print newspapers also may offer such forums on their Web sites.*)

Chapter 5

Resource Guide

The AAA Media Relations office offers assistance and advice to association members on working with the press. If you have questions or need information, call Media Relations at 703-528-1902, ext. 3039.

Other resources of useful information about news media or anthropology and media are:

■ **AAA's Members in the News section** — Online archives offer a sampling of members who have made the news — whether as sources in stories, the subject of stories, guests on TV/radio programs or as writers of columns and opinion pieces published in the mainstream press. MIN gives an overview of the topics news media cover and are interested in. The address to the archives is <http://www.aaanet.org/press/min.htm>.

■ **Texas A&M Anthropology in the News** — This university Web site offers an up-to-date listing of anthropology-related newspaper stories. Visit it at <http://anthropology.tamu.edu/news.htm>.

■ **Center for Anthropology and Science Communications** — Get ideas from this center, headed by a AAA member, on how to present information to the press. The address is <http://www.sciencesitescom.com/CASC/>.

■ **Society for Professional Journalists and Poynter Institute** — These organizations offer guidance and training to professional journalists and others interested in journalism. They can be helpful in exploring journalism ethics and practices. Explore them online at <http://www.spj.org> and <http://www.poynter.org>.

Appendices

Appendix A

Media Tipsheet 1: *Is it News?*

To help you identify whether your work, activity or information is newsworthy, consider the following questions:

- Is it **local**? Or does it offer a local angle on a national story?
- Is it **timely**, e.g. is it happening now or coming soon?
- Will it significantly **impact** someone's daily life (especially within a publication or program's audience)? Will it impact many people's daily lives?
- Is it **useful in informing public policy** discussions?
- Is it or an aspect of it **new**?
- Is it **unique, rare, unusual, innovative** or **award-winning** ?
- Is your **funding unusually large** or from a unique source(s)?
- Does it involve any of the following?:
 - ♦ **Change**

- ♦ **Challenge**
- ♦ **Contradiction**
- ♦ **Conflict or controversy**
- ♦ **Collaboration**

If you can answer "yes" to one or more of these questions, you may have something worthy promoting to press as news. The more yeses you have, the more newsworthy it is.

In addition, your news may further pique journalists interests if it involves any of the following:

- **Common emotions**
- **Common struggles**
- **Milestones**
- **Human needs**
- **Personal stories**

Appendix B

Media Tipsheet 2: *Making Contact*

To help you decide which media you may contact, review the following tips:

■ **Identify the press in your area** — This may include one or more newspapers, magazines, TV or radio programs. Whom do you read or listen to regularly? Are there any local journalists who cover science or anthropology-related topics? Contact those local journalists.

■ **Identify other key contacts at each news organization** — You may be able to find lists of whom to contact on newspaper, TV, etc., Web sites. Otherwise ask for or identify who the following key staff are at each organization:

- ♦ *Daily newspaper* — City or metro editor
- ♦ *Weekly and other nondaily newspapers* — Editor or news editor

- ♦ *Magazine* — Senior editor(s)
- ♦ *TV* — Assignment editor or producer
- ♦ *Radio* — News director or producer

■ **Explore media guides** — Your local library should carry a copy of the News Media Yellow Book or similar directory; ask your local librarian for assistance. Visit NewsLink on the Web, <http://newslink.org/>; this site lists news organizations by type and location. Check your local phone directory for news organization lists.

■ **Ask a media relations specialist** — AAA Media Relations staff can advise you on identifying media contacts; call 703-528-1902, ext. 3039. Also, if you work for a college or university, you may contact your institution's public relations department for additional assistance.

Appendix C

Media Tipsheet 3: *Writing Press Releases*

The most common tool used for announcing news to the press is the press release. The following are guidelines to help you craft a professional press release:

■ **Keep it short** — Releases should be no more than one page long. Give your release a short, eye-catching title (ideally no more than five words).

■ **Begin with your conclusion** — Your most important information or point should be stated in your opening paragraph. You can fill in explanations, details, secondary info, etc., in subsequent paragraphs. This format is called “inverted pyramid,” and it is designed to grab a reader’s attention immediately and communicate key information quickly and directly.

■ **Provide the basics** — Include as many basic facts as you can. These include the who, where, what, when, how and why of your news. Don’t overload the release with statistics and data analysis; if reporters want to know about it, they’ll ask. Highlight the following wherever possible:

- ♦ *Local connections* — Are you conducting your research in the local community? Do you work at the local university?
- ♦ *Immediacy* — Is your research happening right now? Are there any time- or date-sensitive events connected to your work? Journalists are most interested in what is happening now or happening soon. Let them know when there

is a time-sensitive aspect to your news, and avoid sitting on your news until after the fact. After the fact means old, and old means not news.

■ **The big why** — Besides telling press why you are doing particular work, you should address another “why” question ever-present in journalists’ minds: Why should we care? (aka Why should our readers/viewers/listeners care?) Explain how your news impacts their audience. How is it relevant to people’s daily lives?

- ♦ *Personalize for relevance* — You can use a personal story to illustrate why your news is relevant, useful, etc., to others.

■ **Be clear, concise and consistent** — Resist the urge to make your release academically palatable; remember you are not addressing an audience of your peers but rather the public. Don’t use jargon. Be direct and concise. Use active voice. Use consistent grammar, style and references throughout. Try this trick as you write: Imagine you are explaining your work to an eighth-grader; could he or she understand what you’re trying to tell them?

■ **Think visually** — Let journalists know of opportunities to photograph or tape your work in progress. Sharing this information may increase your odds of coverage, especially with broadcast journalists.

In addition to these guidelines, a press release starter is available for you in Appendix D.

Appendix D

Media Tipsheet 4: *Press Release Starter*

The following is a template of standard elements found in most press releases, including places to fill in contact info, date, key

facts, release text and title. Use it to jumpstart a release or develop a format of your own:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

month date, year

Contact: your name, phone, e-mail

- **WHAT:** your news is
- **WHO:** is involved
- **WHEN:** it's happening
- **WHERE:** it's happening
- **ON THE WEB:** address to any Web sites for more information on your research

Title of press release

Fill in text of press release here in paragraph format. Fill in text of press release here in paragraph format. Fill in text of press release here in paragraph format. Fill in text of press release here in paragraph format.

Fill in text of press release here in paragraph format. Fill in text of press release here in paragraph format. Fill in text of press release here in paragraph format.

Fill in text of press release here in paragraph format. Fill in text of press release here in paragraph format. Fill in text of press release here in paragraph format.

Fill in text of press release here in paragraph format. Fill in text of press release here in paragraph format. Fill in text of press release here in paragraph format.

The following example (**Appendix Sample D.1**) is a copy of an actual press release created and sent to media by AAA. The purpose of the example is to give you ideas for how the elements above can be incorporated into a release. You can use a similar format and substitute a logo or letterhead of your own making for

that of AAA's.

Use of the AAA logo is generally restricted to official association business — including press releases. All other uses require prior permission of the association. To request permission, call Media Relations at 703-528-1902, ext. 3039.

Appendix Sample D.1



A • M • E • R • I • C • A • N
ANTHROPOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

Media contact:

Susie Bodman
703-528-1902, ext. 3039
sbodman@aaanet.org

WHAT: Ethnographic Praxis
in Industry Conference,
a gathering of anthropologists
practicing in business
and industry

WHO: Sponsored by Intel
and Microsoft corporations;
the American Anthropological
Association; and the National
Association for the Practice
of Anthropology, a section
of AAA

WHEN: Sept. 24 to 26

WHERE: Intel Conference
Center, Portland, Ore.

CONTACT: Ken Anderson,
co-organizer, 503-780-5668

ON THE WEB:
www.epic2006.com

2200 Wilson Blvd., Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22201-3357
Tel 703-528-1902
Fax 703-528-3546
www.aaanet.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug. 21, 2006

EPIC gathering highlights anthropologists' contributions to business

Anthropologists from national and international businesses will gather in September for the second-annual Ethnographic Praxis in Industry Conference (EPIC) at the Intel Conference Center in Portland, Ore.

The conference — scheduled for Sept. 24 to 26 — will bring together anthropologists and other social scientists working in or consulting with business and industry to share information about current research and methods for conducting ethnographic studies in the private sector.

Ethnography is the primary method used by these researchers of consumer-related behavior to investigate human social phenomena and create descriptions that document behavior and social experiences.

In industry, the practice is called "corporate ethnography." And last year, *Technology Review*, a publication of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, dubbed it a "blossoming field."

BusinessWeek, Computerworld and others have also recently recognized the growing contributions of ethnography and social scientists to corporate operations.

However, ethnographic research is applicable to business beyond consumer and product research for corporations.

A key panel discussion — "Considering Ethnography in Various Business Settings: What is Success and to Whom?" — will look beyond the corporate world to emerging areas of practice and what they mean. Panelists include practitioners from Intel Corp., IBM, Luth Research, ReD Associates, BBDO and Veriphi Consulting.

Other conference sessions will include a keynote address by Grant McCracken from MIT's Sloan School of Business, case studies, research practices and new applications for ethnography. A conference program is available on the EPIC Web site, www.epic2006.com.

Those presenting during the sessions come from a range of businesses, including Motorola, Intel, Wells Fargo, IBM, Microsoft, Yahoo! and In-Sync Consumer Insight.

EPIC's mission is to promote the use of anthropological methods and standards in studying human behavior as it applies to industry settings, including helping businesses to create better strategies, processes and products and to enhance and simplify people's lives. The conference also aims to promote the integration of anthropological theory and methods into common business practices.

The conference is sponsored by the American Anthropological Association and its National Association for the Practice of Anthropology. Corporate sponsors are Intel and Microsoft.

For more information about the conference and its sessions, contact Ken Anderson, EPIC co-organizer, 503-780-5668. For information about the practice of anthropology in business or about current research, contact Anderson or Tracey Lovejoy, EPIC co-organizer, 425-707-4624; or National Association for the Practice of Anthropology representatives Alex Mack, alexandra.mack@pb.com, 203-924-3732, and Ed Liebow, LiebowE@BAT-TELLE.ORG, 206-528-3155. For other media inquiries and assistance, contact Susie Bodman, media relations associate, American Anthropological Association, 703-528-1902, ext. 3039, or sbodman@aaanet.org.

Founded in 1902, the American Anthropological Association is the world's largest professional organization of anthropologists and others interested in anthropology, with an average annual membership of more than 10,000. The Arlington, Va.-based association represents all specialties within anthropology — cultural anthropology, biological (or physical) anthropology, archaeology, linguistics and applied anthropology.

Appendix E

Media Tipsheet 5: *Interviewing*

Before sitting down with a reporter, review these interview pointers:

■ **Prepare** — Practice for a news interview as you would before a job interview. Review what you want the reporter to know about you and your work, imagine what questions they might ask you and practice how you will answer them.

♦ **TV** — Don't wear stripes, paisley, busy patterns, or the colors white, black or red; these do not translate well on camera or on tape. You may be required to wear some degree of makeup when appearing under studio lighting. Arrive early to the studio to allow TV staff time to make you up or otherwise prepare you. Don't slouch in your chair; be conscious and conservative in your mannerisms and seated postures. Practice restraint in speaking with your hands; don't flail or make wild gestures.

♦ **Radio and TV** — Don't pound desks, snap, clap, touch microphones, etc., as these interfere with sound quality and may drown you out.

■ **Sound bites** — Prepare three to four succinct comments or messages you can use to describe your most important points. Rephrase and reiterate them throughout the interview. Practice but don't over-rehearse; you want your comments to be concise and pithy but not sound scripted.

■ **Personality** — Don't be afraid to let a little personality shine through where appropriate. If you're clever and witty, show it. If you're passionate about your work, say so. Above all, relax and be yourself.

■ **Keep it simple** — Explain concepts in layman's terms. Resist the urge to equivocate or present complex, jargon-laden descriptions. Offer summaries, not specifics (if journalists need the latter, they will ask).

♦ **Facts and specifics** — If a reporter asks you something you don't immediately, it's better to say you will check on it and get back to them before deadline. It's better to do this and provide reporters with accurate information rather than guess and end up with an error in print or on air.

■ **Off the record** — Whenever you speak to journalists, it is best to assume anything at anytime is **on** the record and may appear in print or on air. If you do not want something you say to

be used in a story, *you must preface your comment by telling the journalist that what you are about to say is "off the record."*

Journalists are honor-bound not to use off-the-record comments. However, *the only way to be 100 percent certain a comment cannot be used is to **never say it**.*

■ **Declining comment** — No matter how hard reporters press, you are under no obligation to answer any question or discuss any topic in an interview that you don't want to. When you refuse, it is best to explain why, otherwise journalists may perceive you are "hiding something" and attack. If you are uncomfortable about answering, you could say, "I'm sorry, but that's not really my area of expertise, so I wouldn't feel comfortable speaking to that question. May I refer you to a colleague better able to answer it?"

■ **Follow-up questions** — New questions frequently arise once a reporter begins to write. Editors and others may pose further questions — often on deadline. Be available to field these questions; as you end interviews, offer journalists regular and after-hours contact information. If you anticipate being unavailable during their deadline cycle, let them know.

■ **What you see is what you said** — Reporters for newspapers and magazines will quote what you actually said, **not what you meant to say** or what you meant by what you said. Choose your words carefully; think of how readers might interpret it out of context. Quotation is not always an exact science; don't sweat the small stuff, but do calmly let reporters know if you have been erroneously or egregiously misquoted.

■ **Lost in editing** — Be aware that taped interviews are subject to editorial alteration and that newspaper and magazine stories are frequently subject to editing. Most journalists will do this in a fair and accurate manner. However, contextual problems may arise. Sometimes well-meaning editors may inadvertently introduce errors in the process. Do let journalists know when an error has occurred so they have an opportunity to correct it.

■ **Seeing the story** — Don't ask to review a story before it is printed or aired; most journalists will refuse to let you do so. The origins of this refusal lies in the founding principles of journalism itself — that a free press should be independent, objective and resistant to efforts to influence or approve its reporting. However, if there is a specific quote or fact you are concerned about, contact the reporter, tell him or her what you are concerned about and ask if you could verify it. Very often the report will be willing — in the interest of accuracy — to review the quote or fact with you.

Appendix F

Media Tipsheet 6: *Editorial Options*

Beyond sharing info about your work through news stories and interviews, you should explore opinion and commentary forums provided by the press:

■ **Letters to the editor** — A letter is a quick way to share your views about topics in the news or specific stories. Letters usually are limited to 150 or 200 words and must be exclusive to the publication you are submitting to. Include your name, title (when appropriate), home address and phone number for the publication's use in contacting you and verifying authorship. Always check whether a publication offers specific letters guidelines (usually available online) before submitting.

■ **Op-eds (aka commentaries or columns)** — These are longer essays of opinion, usually around 600 words, although word lengths can vary widely from publication to publication. Again, check guidelines before submission.

■ **Editorial boards** — Newspapers and magazines usually have staff devoted to writing their publications' official editorials.

Frequently, staff members and other community representatives meet in forums called "editorial boards" to plan the positions their publications will take. You can lobby these boards to take particular editorial positions. Contact the publications to request meetings with these boards, and ask the AAA's Media Relations office for advice in preparing pitches to editorial boards.

■ **Commentary programs** — Local TV and radio stations may offer public affairs and commentary programs with roundtable or town hall style discussions that you could participate in. Often such opportunities can be found within the public television and radio. Contact program producers about how to become a guest. If any programs air taped commentaries, you might also inquire how to do one of those.

■ **Online news publications** — Much like their newspaper and magazine counterparts, online news publications also offer forums for publishing op-eds and columns. Additionally, many offer comment forums following news stories or editorials where you can post your thoughts or take part in discussion boards.