

## Tech Journalism and the Real World

Posted on November 28, 2012 by Shawn Wilkins



Today in the tech world, we're being deprived of true journalism. Instead of seeing what it means to be a journalist, we see what it means to have a hard bias toward something.

Bias is most common in politics. As such, a plethora of political websites exist due to a lack of interest and excitement in straight-forward, non-biased news articles. There are news pieces about how great Obama is and how downright destructive he is, how great Romney would've been for the US and how he would've torn the country apart. These sites exist because of bias. There is no profound undercover exposé that's meant to be outed to the public, so these so-called journalists resort to partiality to insure their own brand of readership.

Similarly, this happens in the tech world — the space most of us inhabit when it comes to the Internet.

Sites like Gizmodo feed off of this. They thrive on the idea that when you write a controversial article, you're fulfilling a journalistic duty. While I wholeheartedly disagree with some of their practices and methods, I do respect their idea of transforming tech into something more than biased news. Gizmodo provides insight into how the real world clashes with our perception of it.

Recently, Gizmodo writer Alyssa Berezna posted [an article](#) describing her blind date with a seemingly average young man. So far, a writeup about dating and relationships makes little sense on a tech blog. However, she later explains that he is a *Magic: The Gathering* master card player of sorts. She also clarifies how disgustingly unattractive that is, thus cementing the idea that in a tech world run by men like him, there is an alternate tech world wherein people like her exist. While the article may have been one of the most controversial pieces of the year, it illustrates the tech world's interest in the contrast between nerdy, young, avid MMO players and those who despise that form of entertainment. As a journalist, she brought that idea to the table and presented it in a quick, ruthless way.

The focus on journalism now, it seems, is bias. All sites must have a bias for us to enjoy them. Without being biased towards Apple, you assume the company is biased towards Microsoft or Google. It's always the big three that surface when questioning someone's journalistic ability. You never — ever — hear someone complain that a news site has a Dell, Acer, or Toshiba bias. Unsurprisingly, we are drawn to sites and writers that like what we like. Similarly, if they hate what we hate, we're still able to enjoy their content. The site's overall tone and writing style plays a part in the attraction as well, but those stylistic details are quick to fade when the site boasts about their exclusive piece on an incredible new product that has yet to be released to the public.

The difference between what Gizmodo does and what sites like The Verge, Tech Crunch, and Engadget do is unmistakable. Gizmodo, for instance, pushes out news with a worldly twist on the facts. The writers break down the similarities and the sharp contrasts. Gizmodo is notorious for their iPhone 4 leak coverage, and truthfully, it seems perfectly within the range of what I expect from a journalism website: I had the news and information about a big story completely laid out in front of me. The way they handled it, however, was disorganized and unprofessional. Instead of investing the time to properly find out what was happening on the inside of the device, they hurriedly ripped it open and ended up breaking it. It's clear that their journalistic style is to get the news before anyone else by any means necessary.

The Verge follows a new brand of journalism that I've yet to see elsewhere. They devote time into producing news articles that their readers are interested in — new phone releases, new computer announcements, (sadly) new lawsuits, and recent changes to things that affect us all such as Twitter, Facebook, and their own forums. They get the story, produce it with 100% facts, and push it out. Upon reading one of their articles, you get the basics: the facts, the bit that makes you sit at the edge of your seat, and the closing that successfully pulls it all together.

On top of professional, well-crafted articles, you get exclusives — pieces that only The Verge will cover. Readers will be able to see things like [their visit to a home-factory that brews its own beer through the power of bass](#). By letting the real world take over and seize control of technology, The Verge is able to document creative uses of tech. Then they craft it into a story so everyone can experience it.

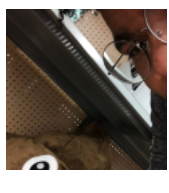
Tech Crunch emphasizes articles that disclose news, but their writing style boasts an opinionated tone that will either discourage readers or make the writer more easily relatable and encourage readership. The idea is that the writer of the article isn't a journalist, he's just a normal person who has access to a keyboard. Therefore, we get angry over their articles in the same way that we'd get angry over a diehard Android fan telling us that the iPhone sucks since it's not open source. Or an Apple fan telling us that Windows phones will fail because the platform lacks an abundant app store.

Lastly, Engadget does something similar but seemingly by accident. Engadget appears to take on the identity of a kid who has grown up to see all of the current technology evolve before his eyes. Like the previous news outlets, Engadget reports the news, but more often than not, the writer's bias takes over, making it a long form opinion piece instead of a news rundown.

On the other hand, news networks like Al Jazeera do things admirably by divulging how news is progressing first hand. Reporters are on the scene in Gaza detailing conflicts. They are inside the houses of affected families, helping them. They deliver non-biased, breaking news instead of using their opinions as a cover story. There's so much that Al Jazeera does compared to these other guys because they are real journalists. They get the story from the front lines. In the tech world, it would be similar to having Jony Ive report on The Verge that he's working on a new iPhone design or Matias Duarte telling us that he's going to start fresh with the Android UI. We need someone there to report the story from the front lines, getting all of the exclusives.

Technology journalism is very different from the global news covered by Al Jazeera. It's not all black and white, news and stories. From its personal interests, its personal biases, its particular writing styles, tech journalism is something that people have been feeding off of for years. Reading something you disagree with and expressing that anger on the Internet doesn't stop the article from being published; it makes it stronger and more viral. You, as a reader, fuel each and every one of these sites with your opinions. You bridge the gap between interesting and uninteresting.

It's a journalist's job to try and please everyone. It's difficult because, as they say, you can't please everyone, but that's what readers want. They want the facts, but they want them to lean to one side. They want them to be biased, but only if it fits their interests. It's often challenging to produce things like this in the tech world, but to see the different angles that each site takes is amazing. Sites that simply report news don't make it. Sites that simply push out opinions don't make it. Sites that do both, on the other hand, do.



### About Shawn Wilkins

An enthusiastic writer who values quality over quantity. The abundance of posts shouldn't make the site, but rather, the quality of them. Aiming for perfection is the goal and anything less isn't acceptable. Long walks on the beach are accepted, however.

[View all posts by Shawn Wilkins →](#)

### Latest Reviews

Unread — RSS for iOS 7 & Giveaway!  
Jared Sinclair is mostly known for his previous offerings in the App Store: Pillboxie is a medication

A Gameboy That Plays 3DS Games  
I bought a 2DS. Upon ordering the handheld, I knew exactly what I was signing

Keep Quiet with the Das Keyboard Model S ...with Quiet Key Design. The essential thing to notice in that title is the emphasis

Limelight — Beautiful Movie Tracking  
Limelight is a new app from the team at 9:42AM that makes tracking movies simple

SurfacePad for iPhone — Designed for Some  
The Twelve South SurfacePad for iPhone is a special accessory made for a specific group

On Mine: Memento App  
Looking back, I wish I had done a lot of things differently. Taken out less

Keep It Light with the Power Support Air Jacket  
Since the launch of the iPhone 5, the arms race to create the best case

Tough as Glass with the Bodyguardz Pure  
There's always a brief period of time wherein I consider applying a screen protector to

Searching for the Perfect iPhone Case  
Many people on the hunt for the ultimate in iPhone protection are realizing how elusive

Twitterrific 5 — Changing the Game. Again.  
Twitterrific is old; Twitterrific is new. Twitterrific is traditional; Twitterrific is innovative. Remarkably, Twitterrific 5