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NEWS NARRATIVES OF TRAUMA: WWW confronts MSM

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Abstract:

The Internet era has brought any number of crises to American mainstream media (MSM) beginning with a re-thinking of terms such as deadline, publication and narrative and extending to the multiple challenges presented by the web itself. The coverage of traumatic stories has not escaped these reconsiderations. Indeed, it is often precisely in these large scale reporting efforts that procedures and precedents crystallize what might be called evolving professional practice. Coverage of Hurricane Katrina as well as the school shootings at Columbine and Virginia Tech are used to illustrate how established MSM codes have been repeatedly challenged by the very different distribution options and decision-making dynamics of the web. User generated content including self portrait home videos, as well as issues of verification and framing are considered.