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'burg Blogs : 2013 : 03 : 07 : Being Objective in a Subjective World

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'burg Blogs »

Being objective in a subjective world

Posted March 7, 2013 at 4:18 pm by [Chelsea Tatham '14](#)

Being a human being and a journalist at the same time can sometimes be difficult. Learning to suppress basic human traits and emotions to be neutral and objective can be one of the hardest things to learn.

How do you report on something when you have a strong opinion about it? How do you interview and write about someone that you completely disagree with?

Even design must be neutral: What is the best way to visually present information on a page while remaining objective?

It is human nature to have an opinion and want to express it. As a journalist, you have to know where the line between opinion and fact must be drawn.

It is easy to be objective about topics like reporting on students who were successful in landing a job right after graduation or covering the closing of a local restaurant. Other topics, like elections, gun control and healthcare, can be rather difficult.

As the creative director for *The Crow's Nest*, the editors and I had to make sure that we covered the student government elections fairly and remain unbiased. It is important to write stories fairly, but also to visually present the information objectively. The graphic designer, Justin Duplain, and I had to make sure the photos were of equal size and that an information chart featured unbiased information.

When one candidate bought a full-page ad, the editors wanted to make sure it didn't come off as endorsing a candidate. To do this, the editors and I decided to take off *The Crow's Nest* URL and the section title from the corners of the page. We even placed "advertisement" at the top of the page. By doing this, the page looked more like an ad than a regular news page.

I still struggle with quashing my opinion with almost every story I write and almost every piece I have to layout. I may think a story is silly or unimportant but I can't let those opinions show in my designs. I have learned the best way to remain objective is to put myself in the other person's shoes and try to understand how they feel. I think by attempting to understand where an opinion is coming from makes it easier to put myself in the neutral zone.

About the blogger



I'm a senior majoring in Mass Communications. As a student journalist, I work for The Crow's Nest student newspaper as the Creative Director. I enjoy anything and everything that has to do with journalism, especially design and feature writing. Having been born and raised in Florida, I enjoy the beach, native wildlife, and learning about Florida's history. I'm also left-handed and an only child so I'm sort of an oddity.