

News Comparison Essay

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MI 101: Understanding and Information

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November 2, 2023

Topic

Writer's Guild of America (WGA) on strike against Hollywood studios.

Interest/Importance

I am interested in this topic as I am an avid film enjoyer and also partake in my own creation of films with my favorite part of the process being the writing. I love to write all sorts of things in my freetime and work to improve my ability. A lot of people I know, such as family and friends, have come to know me as the person to go to if you're in need of a good conversation regarding the writing and development of television and film. I have high respect for the industry of writers who hold the massive weight of brushing stories upon empty canvas to create entertainment for everyone.

Article Selection

Article 1 (Left): "Hollywood writers reach tentative deal with studios that would end strike"

Article 1 URL: <https://www.axios.com/2023/09/25/wga-writers-strike-hollywood-studios-deal>

Article 1 Scores: Bias = -3.84; Reliability = 43.72

Article 2 (Right): "Writers Guild of America reaches 'tentative agreement' with studios to end strike"

Article 2 URL:

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/writers-guild-of-america-reaches-tentative-agreement-studios-end-strike>

Article 2 Scores: Bias = 12.47; Reliability = 34.77

Article 3 (Center): “Writers reach tentative deal with studios to end strike after nearly 150 days”

Article 3 URL: <https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/25/wga-amtp-hollywood-writers-deal.html>

Article 3 Scores: Bias = -1.94; Reliability = 44.36

Topic: Agenda Setting

The major talking points surrounding the strike from the WGA relates to fair working conditions for the members of the union and Hollywood’s response to this. On the left we see a strong resolution to highlight the need for better conditions and security for the writers, while on the right there is an understanding of how the strikes can impact financial success and the economy. The union is on strike due to having problems with how Hollywood and the industry as a whole have treated the working class, also citing an issue with increasing use of AI technology. The left writes this as a strong issue to be focused on and talks about the importance of the strike. The right, on the other hand, more commonly focuses on the demands for better pay and the impact of a higher wage rate. Less important points to mention (but are still there) are the film industry and the creative process relating to the job of the writers to generate stories and ideas.

Left Article

Left Framing

The left article is from Axios, utilizing a larger, clean font with adequate spacing between blurbs and bolded text to indicate sections of information. Within these sections are bullet points of different facts, followed by pictures of tweets from the WGA. In the article's design and content, sympathy and understanding of the union of writers striking against Hollywood emerges. The categories section information, aligning with the side of the union, saying "why it matters" and explaining quotes and tweets directly from the WGA with "what they're saying" (Baysinger & Fischer, 2023). By quoting and explaining the words from the side of the union, you understand their position much better as opposed to quotes from anyone on the other side, like Hollywood higher ups. The union's words and their determination are supported when the article also quotes the Governor of California for supporting the writers and saying how important they are. Using someone as prominent as the governor, the reader better feels for the union and understands their importance, ultimately wanting to support their case for better conditions.

Left Media Literacy

The scoring of bias and reliability seem to accurately reflect the article. It leans left due to its human focus on the union rather than the larger industry, quoting the WGA themselves and the governor of California, who happens to be a part of the democratic party. A right leaning article may not be so quick to quote a democrat and would much rather observe the strike from a much larger perspective of its impact on the industry and revenue for film companies.

Left Source Comparison

I observed the ads on the article from an unbiased perspective using a new private browser, finding only an ad for Meta and one for AT&T. They were located at the top of the page and underneath the article. Both of these ads don't show much bias, as they are both general tech and internet companies that serve everybody and cater to no specific audience. The news source of Axios does have a large technology news section on its page, and these ads could be potentially related to that — people who visit this site commonly are interested in up to date news regarding technology and the internet. These ads, if anything, are marketed towards anyone in early adulthood to middle age, as the technology from Meta and the internet provided by AT&T are both relatively modern concepts and anyone older might not care about it. All together, these two ads show very little about any sort of bias the article tries to hand out and ultimately might be a sign of reliability, for the very lack of ads themselves shows the website is not trying to market to any sort of demographic or audience, but merely inform.

Right Article

Right Framing

The right article regarding this topic comes from the Washington Examiner. The text and spacing are relatively small, with the information reading more like a newspaper than an article with headings, containing short lines of text over and over. The article seems to instill frustration in the reader, with annoyance being directed towards the WGA and their strikes. The article makes note of the length of the strike, calling to attention how it “forced the suspension” of production in studios for “over 146 days” (Hoyt, 2023). In this slight twist of perspective, the article puts the

focus of the strike on the general public and companies who are impacted by the delaying of content due to the writers on strike. It resonates with sympathy towards those who are frustrated with the strike, making note of how certain late night shows and other shows on streaming services have been delayed. It doesn't dive deep into why the strike is happening and doesn't voice much of an opinion from anyone who is a part of the strike or someone who is in support of it. The people who are quoted are the WGA giving official statements as a whole or a random news reporter's tweet covering the topic. By giving no platform to those who are a part of the strike and letting them share what they are intending to do, it gives the reader the sense that the strike is a frustrating, useless concept, and it is something that should be avoided.

Right Media Literacy

I think the reliability and bias score of this article mostly align with my expectations. The reliability is much lower than the left and center articles, which I agree with as the article ignores a lot of information regarding the context and importance of the strike. The only thing I think is a bit unusual is the amount of bias for the article. Although it is very clear this news source is right sided, this particular article doesn't exhibit extremely strong right-winged behavior. This might be simply because the topic of the writer's strike is not as politically charged as something stronger relating to society and our government. It is still ultimately more right than the other articles as it, even in such a narrow topic, tries to spin the focus on companies and the process of production over the demand for fair treatment for real people in the labor force.

Right Source Comparison

I examined the ads on this article page using a new private browser. A lot of the ads I found were quite random, with loud clickbait headlines, ranging from “you need to buy these shoes” to “how to get more money fast” and, strangely, sexually evocative shirt designs modeled by stereotypical attractive women. These absurd headlines seemed to be directed towards middle aged to older men, preying on their vulnerability and loneliness. Other ads were more political, with direct attacks on John Fettermen and support for republican nominee Vivek Ramaswamy. Here we can clearly see a right-winged bias present in the ads on the page, as it attacks left wing politicians and supports those in the republican party. All together, these ads are targeting much older and more right winged individuals, with the ads aiming to keep them on the platform and invested in their articles.

Center Article

Center Framing

The center article for this topic comes from CNBC. The web page for this article has a clean layout, with easy to read text and adequate spacing of text. There are hyperlinks scattered throughout the article to help support the information being stated. Most notably, this article features a “key points” section at the top to help summarize the information for anyone looking at it quickly (Whitten, 2023). The information being laid out this way gives the reader a sense of objectivity, feeling as though the article aims to provide the information as efficiently as possible first and foremost, removing bias that could influence the reader’s opinion. The article also implements a handful of photos of the people on the strike, putting the focus on the event itself

and not any specific debate. It takes quotes from both the WGA and their letter addressing potential contracts and words from President Biden himself. The quotes from the WGA are there to help the reader understand the purpose of the strike, as the WGA themselves are the most prominent figure in this event. In the language used, no feeling of bias towards one side arises, but rather a virtue of fairness by letting the WGA speak for themselves. The quotes from Biden don't appear to be riddled with political intent, but rather understanding that the President and his words have an impact. The article as a whole puts most of the focus on the strike itself and detailing what the WGA demands for and why the strike takes place; it does not dive too deep into the personal experiences and support of unions that the left article observes, nor does it examine the frustrations of Hollywood studios that the right article comments on.

Center Media Literacy

I believe that the bias and reliability scores accurately match my examination of the article. It is scored as a very reliable news source, which I believe to be true as the article puts a lot of focus on the facts and the main points about the event and what's happening. CNBC as a news source leans ever so slightly to the left, which matches with the content of the article. As mentioned above, the article aims to be as clear of bias as possible, but it could potentially encourage one to be more in favor of unions and the strike as someone on the left might when it quotes Biden's support for the strikes. The article is still relatively center, as it makes no comment on the matter or even hints at what it believes in, but it lays out the facts in a way that puts a slightly stronger focus on the WGA than the companies in Hollywood, matching with its score.

Center Source Comparison

I compared the ads on this web page using a new private browser. I found an adobe ad related to the use of AI, an ad on investments and gambling, and an ad for Xfinity. The use of art programs from adobe could be anyone with access to a computer, women or men. The ad on gambling could definitely be geared towards grown men, and the Xfinity ad could be targeting adults searching for internet providers for their house. Going from numerous different products, these are relatively harmless ads advertising things anyone could consume or engage with. As there appears to be no clear or important target audience marketed towards, the article seems to be aiming for strong objectivity in its facts without influencing an opinion of any sort, with the ads being generalized, marketable products anyone with access to the internet and computers can engage in.

Media Ethics

I am choosing my right sided article “Writers Guild of America reaches 'tentative agreement' with studios to end strike”.

Media Ethics Bias Advocate

In this right sided article, we can examine it under the ethical lens of The Golden Rule to justify the bias it holds. The concept of The Golden Rule is that you should treat others the same way you would want to be treated. The article makes subtle comments regarding the frustrations and hold-ups that the strike from the WGA has caused for the production process in film companies in Hollywood. The article shares these frustrations, aiming to highlight to readers the

issues with the strike. Through the article's showcasing of the negative impacts the strike has caused, holding up production of shows the reader themselves might have watched, the reader might feel frustrated by the strike just as companies in the industry feel.

Media Ethics Bias Oppose

To counter the above bias that is being justified, the article, in its ability to instill frustration in the reader, does not consider the ethical concept of Stuart Mill's Utility. This ethic explains that the greatest number of people and their happiness must be priority, sacrificing the few who aren't. Regarding the topic of WGA, the majority of people involved in the strike are the writers themselves. When the article holds a bias towards the companies rather than the people on strike and directs negativity towards the WGA's decisions, it isn't considering the majority and their happiness. It focuses on the minority of the event, the companies in the industry, and therefore is potentially harmful as it could warp public view of the writer's on strike by having misdirected anger towards them.

References

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