

Automation in the newsroom

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“Automation”

Writing scripts or programs to *streamline* the story process and increase productivity.

Things we should focus on automating

1. Finding your stories
2. Collecting data
3. Writing short stories

General Criteria

- I will have to repeat this action in the future
- It's clear and straightforward what I'm looking for
- It doesn't involve much interpretation
- The information is consistently presented the same way

Finding Stories

- Alerts
 - Agencies uploading new documents
 - Updating data
 - Twitter feed
- Essential methods for those organizations who focus on breaking news
- Example: Propublica using IFTTT for Nonprofit explorer
 - Tracking updates for new documents, RSS Feed

Collecting Data

- Write parsers for data that is easily grab-able
- Example:

`<p>Name</p>`

`<p>John Smith </p>`

Collecting Data

- *Don't bother* with text that isn't straightforward
- Example: Anything interpretive
 - Assigning Yes/No to a longer answer
- Machine Learning
 - By the time you train it, you could've read it*

Writing Stories

- Not going to be anything long winded
- Focus on the facts that you can provide
- Example: Quakebot by Ken Schwencke with LA Times
 - Process for collecting data was consistent
 - Eliminates the time it takes to gather the information
 - Frees up reporter's time
 - Important info was already out the door

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