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## Tom Rosenstiel

### Director of the American Press Institute

Author, journalist, researcher and media critic, **Tom Rosenstiel** is one of the nation's most recognized thinkers on the future of media. Before joining the American Press Institute in January 2013, he was the founder and for 16 years director of the Project for Excellence in Journalism at the Pew Research Center in Washington, D.C., and co-founder and vice chair of the Committee of Concerned Journalists. He is also a non-resident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

He is the author of seven non-fiction books, including *The Elements of Journalism: What News People Should Know and the Public Should Expect*, which has been translated into more than 25 languages and has been described as "The most important book on the relationship of journalism and democracy published in the last fifty years" (Roy Peter Clark, (Poynter), "a modern classic" (Bill Safire, New York Times), and one of the five "essential books" on journalism (Wall Street Journal).

### Subject Area/Topic: **WHITHER THE MEDIA? FAKE NEWS, ANYONE?**

**Highlights:** Social media have changed how news is disseminated and how it is perceived—and the highest users of social media are the most distrustful of traditional media. They have "atomized" news. Facebook is the major source of news for millennials. Formerly, "...the media served as gatekeepers and news was generally on a breakfast, lunch and dinner schedule." "That system has exploded". Now "...news is consumed one story at a time all through the day." Another significant change identified in scientific studies is that "...a story's credibility is related more to the immediate source than to the original creator."

Rosenstiel believes that "...the audience is now in charge [and] if a company believes that it can make an audience believe something, they will lose." However, he said that the idea that the media audience only believes what it wants to believe is generally not true outside the area of politics.

"In 2016, the candidate who lied the most won." Rosenstiel's explanation for this is that those lies touched on deep concerns of the candidate's supporters. For example, while Trump followers may be aware that his claim to having observed thousands of Islamic individuals cheering the destruction of the twin towers may not be factually true, it taps into and reinforces an underlying distrust of Moslems in this audience.

The influence of newspapers has waned with the growth of social media. Nevertheless, newspapers can make a difference. Rosenstiel believes that local newspapers created a backlash that was critical to the failure of the AHCA (the proposed Republican replacement of Obamacare).

Much of modern media is driven by algorithms that are designed to find out what you want to read, hear or watch. "If that works, (Rosenstiel asks) how do you get to the stories that tell you what you need to know?"