Aggregation & Curation

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Read more about it

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What is aggregation?

Aggregation = publication (distribution) of information originally gathered by someone else.
Aggregation gets a bad rap

“I felt so ... aggregated.”

– Bill Keller, New York Times
Aggregation gets a bad rap

“There’s often a thin line between aggregation and theft.”

– Bill Keller again
Aggregation gets a bad rap

Plagiarism is “a perpetual danger in aggregated stories.”

– Patrick Pexton, Washington Post
Who aggregates?

• The Bible
• Public libraries
• My Mom (yours, too?)
• Colonial newspapers (First Amendment & early postal regulations were written for aggregators)
Who aggregates?

- Associated Press
- New York Times
- Washington Post
- The Advocate
- Just about every newsroom
- Lots of online “aggregators”
A range of aggregation

- Algorithm (Google News, TrendMaps)
- Data scraping & organization (EveryBlock)
- Curation (HuffPo, Drudge, AP)
- Re-report (and hopefully advance)
  someone else’s story (every newspaper)
- Original reporting (still may aggregate for background, data)
Ethical aggregation

• Fair use (excerpt unless you transform or have permission to use in full)
• Attribute (by author & publication, not “media reports” or “was reported”)
• Link (even if you get more value, you drive traffic to the original source)
• Add value (comment, context, content)
Copyright “fair use”

4 key factors:
1. Transformative (parody, or what did you add?)
2. Nature of copyrighted work
3. Amount & substantiality (imprecise)
4. Effect on potential market
Court rulings

• Righthaven LLC vs. Democratic Underground LLC: 5 sentences of 50-sentence article was fair use

• Righthaven LLC vs. Hoehn: Copyright cannot be assigned to third party; reposting entire article not fair use

• White vs. Westlaw: Transformative use made republishing in full acceptable
Andy Carvin

“I think curation has always been a part of journalism; we just didn't call it that.” – quoted in The Atlantic by Phoebe Connelly
What is curation?

Museum curator:
• Studies topic
• Chooses relevant content (other sources & museum collection)
• Authenticates
• Groups related items
• Provides context
• Presents exhibit

Journalism curator:
• Studies topic
• Chooses relevant content (social media, blogs, staff)
• Authenticates
• Groups related items
• Provides context
• Presents collected content
Aggregation, curation tools

- Storify
- Spundge
- SAMdesk
- Google
- Twitter
- Advanced Twitter Search
- RSS feeds
Authenticate

• Ask: “How do you (they) know that?”
• Ask careful questions of crowd to help you vet & verify
• Check links, tweets & information on sources
• Attribute & say what you don’t know