

LAURA E. DAVIS

lauraeda@usc.edu | lauraelizdavis.com

Summary

I am a journalist who has spent my career making newsroom innovation achievable and sustainable. My expertise is in mobile and social media storytelling; I have developed digital strategy at the Los Angeles Times and Yahoo News, and I helped launch the award-winning BuzzFeed News app. Currently, I am an assistant professor of professional practice at the USC Annenberg School of Journalism, where I built the digital arm of the student newsroom and teach social media, audience engagement and product development classes. At USC, I led students in the creation of an award-winning Instagram show, developed new digital journalism products and spearheaded the newsroom's participation in nationwide research on trust in media. I also launched a first-of-its-kind copy editing chatbot and will present a study on its educational effects at the World Journalism Education Congress in July 2019. Additionally, I am pursuing my master's degree in communication management.

Experience

USC Annenberg School of Journalism

Assistant Professor of Professional Practice / Annenberg Media Digital News Director

February 2016 – Present

- Improved the digital presence of USC Annenberg's student news outlet by implementing industry-leading best practices and creating an award-winning Instagram show
- Developed new products, including an app, Alexa briefing and newsletter
- Launched a first-of-its-kind copy editing chatbot in the newsroom's Slack workspace
- Spearheaded the newsroom's participation in the Trusting News project, overseeing research and the development of strategies to improve audience trust
- Built the newsroom's digital infrastructure nearly from scratch, hiring, training and managing dozens of student editors
- Launched and currently edit a Medium publication for students to share their newsroom experimentation; their pieces have been widely read in the industry
- Teach courses on social media storytelling, product development, audience engagement and narrative gaming
- Taught a class that took students to the 2016 Republican and Democratic National Conventions

Adjunct Professor

August 2014 – December 2015

- Taught Introduction to Online Media to undergraduate journalism students

Trusting News

Coach

February 2019 – Present

- Advise local newsrooms on strategies to improve trust with their audiences, based on my experience participating in the Trusting News project
- Chosen as one of just five journalists who were the liaisons for Trusting News' dozens of newsrooms partners

BuzzFeed News

Editor, Mobile News

February 2015 – January 2016

- Part of the team that developed and launched the award-winning BuzzFeed News app on iOS, Android and Apple Watch
- Oversaw the app's social share user experience
- Improved the app's industry-influencing editorial push alert strategy
- Managed the mobile team in Los Angeles

Los Angeles Times

Deputy Mobile Editor

May 2013 – January 2015

- Daily editor of mobile website, app and social media accounts, overseeing breaking news production across platforms
- Led The Times into breaking news publishing on mobile by developing the organization's inaugural push notification strategy
- Trained editors and reporters on social media and mobile best practices
- Oversaw The Times' social media coverage of the 2014 midterm elections

Yahoo News

Editor

July 2009 – May 2013

- Editor of the Yahoo News politics page and social media accounts, which included 2012 election night coverage, attending the Republican and Democratic conventions and overseeing a crowdsourced feature series on swing states
- Increased Yahoo News' social media audience on Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and Tumblr by millions of fans and followers, including 2 million on the Facebook page alone
- Edited the Yahoo News homepage, one of the most popular news sites on the web

- Reported and wrote original stories, including coverage of a Supreme Court confirmation hearing, same-sex marriage, a Supreme Court case and a profile on a 9/11 survivor
- Editor of two short-term blogs: one on the 2010 election, one on the royal wedding

The Associated Press

National Desk Editorial Assistant

September 2008 – May 2009

- Worked round-the-clock shifts in the AP's headquarters, editing digests and writing short news items for national distribution
- Trained as a story editor for daily and enterprise stories
- Editor in charge of the AP's count of U.S. soldier deaths in Iraq
- Selected to be a member of a committee dedicated to training new staffers

Reporting Intern

May 2008 – August 2008

- Developed a beat by covering same-sex marriage when it was temporarily legal in California
- Wrote enterprise pieces and breaking news stories for the national and state wires

Awards and Acknowledgements

BEA Disrupt the News Challenge / Third Place

I was named as the faculty lead of a team of students who received this award for creating The Rundown, a news show on Instagram Stories

Webby Award / BuzzFeed News app

The app I helped develop at BuzzFeed News won one of the only awards it is eligible for

MediaShift's 4th Annual J-School Hackathon / First Place

Mentored a team of students who pitched a chatbot idea to a group of journalists, developers and entrepreneurs

Outstanding Undergraduate Print Journalism Student / USC Annenberg

One of just a few students honored at Annenberg's graduation in May 2008

Education

**University of Southern California / Master's Candidate,
Communication Management**

Expected graduation: May 2021

University of Southern California / B.A., Print Journalism and English

May 2008

Published Work

More access, but not that kind, Nieman Lab, December 2018

Can we please move on from "multimedia"? There's a better way to think about your newsroom's digital production, Medium, Sept. 18, 2018

Shutting down your chatbot? OK, but here's a tip for when you start it back up, Medium, Aug. 15, 2018

Writing answers before you know the question, Nieman Lab, December 2017

Introducing Amy the Stylebot, Medium, Nov. 28, 2017

Dear news media: Here's what your future audience wants you to fix, Medium, Feb. 21, 2017

Show your work, Nieman Lab, December 2016

Meet the Bots Reporting on the Republican and Democratic Conventions, MediaShift, July 27, 2016

Why How You Do What You Do Matters, BuzzFeed, Jan. 14, 2016

Just tell a story, Nieman Lab, December 2015

The Word You Should Think About When Sending A Push Notification, BuzzFeed, June 5, 2015

Important To Us Doesn't Have To Mean Important To You, BuzzFeed, April 15, 2015

A news app isn't a new homepage. It's a social media account., BuzzFeed, March 26, 2015

As trail reopens, we recall edits to the Hollywood sign: Save the Pood?, Los Angeles Times, Jan. 5, 2015

The story behind the viral photo of the '1 Minute Parking' sign, Los Angeles Times, June 27, 2014

Sochi Olympics: Things I learned as a competitive figure skater, Los Angeles Times, Feb. 19, 2014

Supreme Court considers gay marriage in wake of ballot box breakthroughs, Yahoo News, Nov. 30, 2012

In debate prep, student stand-ins for candidates resemble real thing, Yahoo News, Jan. 7, 2012

First responder fights back after losing foot to 9/11 accident, Yahoo News, Aug. 16, 2011

Gay couples use weddings to wage ballot fight, USA Today via Associated Press, Aug. 4, 2008

Speaking

Storytelling on Mobile: Making Smart Choices (trainer)
NewsTrain Phoenix, April 7, 2018 and NewsTrain Seattle, Nov. 11, 2017

Technology, Social Media and the Forces that Move Them (moderator)
Jesse M. Unruh Institute "Un-Civil War" Conference, Los Angeles, April 4, 2018

We're ~Journalists~ Too: Embracing Your New(ish) Newsroom Role (panelist)
Online News Association Conference, Washington, D.C., Oct. 5, 2017

Millennial Voters: The Future (panelist)
Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics' Race, Gender and Millennials: The New American Electorate event, Los Angeles, Sept. 28, 2017

Media Literacy in the Age of Algorithms, Big Data and Artificial Intelligence (panelist)
National Association for Media Literacy Education conference, Chicago, June 26, 2017

Journalism and the Internet (panelist)
Berkeley Forum, Berkeley, Calif., April 27, 2017

Media and Politics: Traditional, New Media and Social Media (panelist)
Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics' Road To The White House Series, Los Angeles, Oct. 11, 2016

Preparing for the Next Jobs in Journalism (panelist)
Online News Association Conference, Los Angeles, Sept. 26, 2015

Volunteer Work

YMCA Youth and Government / Journalism Advisor

For 13 years, I taught journalism to California high school students in a program designed for hands-on learning about democracy