



RHODES UNIVERSITY  
*Where leaders learn*



School of Journalism & Media Studies  
Rhodes University, South Africa



Knight Foundation  
[www.KnightFoundation.org](http://www.KnightFoundation.org)



OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION  
FOR SOUTH AFRICA

# CELL PHONE JOURNALISM



**For application forms and information about fees and entry requirements contact:**

**The Registrar**

**Telephone: 046 603 8276**

**Fax: 046 603 8300**

**Email: registrar@ru.ac.za**

**Financial Aid**

**Financial aid is available for students unable to secure bank loans.**

**Should you have any queries relating to financial aid, contact:**

**Financial Aid Office**

**Telephone: 046 603 8248**

**Fax: 046 603 8300**

**Email: finaid@ru.ac.za**

**For more information on Rhodes School of Journalism and Media Studies contact us at:**

**Telephone: 046 603 7100**

**Fax: 046 603 7101**

**Email: [journqueries@ru.ac.za](mailto:journqueries@ru.ac.za)**

**Website: [www.ru.ac.za/jms](http://www.ru.ac.za/jms)**

# CELL PHONE JOURNALISM



A GUIDE TO  
GETTING STARTED



**RHODES UNIVERSITY**  
*Where leaders learn*



**School of Journalism & Media Studies**  
RHODES UNIVERSITY, GRAVESEND AVENUE



**Knight Foundation**  
[www.KnightFoundation.org](http://www.KnightFoundation.org)



**Open Society Foundations**  
FOR SOUTH AFRICA

## Cell phone Journalism

A cell phone is not only for one-to-one talking or texting, or using Mxit. It can be a tool that you can use to get your voice heard by many people. Youth news and views are often left out of the mainstream newspaper, radio and television. You can change that through doing expert cell phone journalism. It's as easy as sms.

### SMS limits in sending:

- You can only send up to 160 characters
- This includes spaces, comas, and full stops.

The smses will be sent to Grocott's Mail who may publish it and or forward it to other interested parties (sms receivers).

We encourage you to take advantage even if you pay, sms – get your message out.

### (1) Professional Journalism

- Usually done as a Full time job
- Journalism institutions like Grocott's Mail, Umhlobo Wenene fm, Tru fm, EP Herald or Daily Dispatch

**BUT:** Journalism can also be done by non-journalists i.e. learners like you

### (2) Citizen Journalism – what is it?

When the people also known as the audience use the tools (i.e. cell phones) they have in their possession to inform one another, about matters which are in

the public interest, that is Citizen Journalism.

### It is NOT:

- amateur, but citizen journalism
- any citizen expressions or content, but journalistic content

### What is a citizen?

A member of a nation, with rights guaranteed by the Constitution and encouraged not only to claim the rights that are due to him or her, but to be aware of the rights of others and to take some responsibility for protecting and fulfilling them.

### What is journalism?

The activity of writing or communicating about matters of public interest, for the benefit of a particular community of people. Journalism uses facts to describe events, ideas, or issues that are relevant to the public. You do not need to be a journalist working for the media in order to do journalism. But you need to respect the principles of journalism like being accurate, honest and ethical about what you are communicating.

### (3) Overview: 3 styles of Journalism

#### (a) News:

Must be fresh, true, brief (straight to the point) and contain the **4 Ws** (Who, What, When, and Where).

- Who: Who's involved, affected or going to benefit?  
The who angle keeps your story real.

- What: is the full stuff that the news is about i.e. the event itself, explain what matters the most to your readers.

- When: A time is important to the story, readers want news stories that are fresh and immediate.

- Where: Where the event happened is important, the closer the event is to your readers the better the chances of your story being read.

#### Note:

- Why and so what can be used. However, it would be a challenge to include this in 160 character sms.

- How: This often requires a detailed explanation of the story. This is hard to do on cell phone journalism for reasons of space.

- Be 100% factual (sure of every fact)  
Some examples: Last night at Ext 6, a man on his way home was robbed and stabbed; money and clothes were also taken from him. Better: give his name

**Weak:** "I think the robbers may have been arrested" that is just speculation, find out...

Big media companies are doing cell phone journalism, sending out news headlines. The EP Herald sends free sms news once a day (<http://www.ep-herald.co.za>).

herald.co.za). The BBC has headlines on twitter.com (a website that also sends to cell phones) at a cost.

#### Some examples:

**Cipriani floored in training row:** England rugby star Danny Cipriani is involved in a training ground bust-up.

**IOC to examine Beijing dope tests:** The International Olympic Committee will retest 5,000 doping samples.

#### (b) Opinions:

An opinion is a strong belief or conclusion that may or may not have facts or solid proof to support it. Opinions often vary from individual to individual. State your opinion in the first sentence of your paragraph

- Try to add some supporting facts.

#### Some examples:

De Makana councillor must b sent 2 prison bcoz he ddnt do it (crash a car) once bt twice and wat he dd was wrng and mayb dat wil stp hm 4rm drinking. Just bcoz hes de Makana councillor he must b treated as other ppl, he must go 2 jail and he mustnt b gven a disciplinary hearing.

The opinion must be truthful, but can be partisan and passionate too. Readers must understand that it's commentary, not news.



### (c) Reviews:

A review is an evaluation of a publication, such as a movie, drama or play, music, a book, a car, etc. the author (reviewer) may assign the work a rating to indicate its relative merit.

#### Some examples:

The movie is pointless; psychological possibilities and beautiful scenes are destroyed by a lack of meaning

### (d) Japanese Haiku poetry:

One can also use the Haiku poetry style to capture a story:

Haiku is a very structured poetry form, initially introduced by the Japanese, it is a:

- three-lined poem, has
- five syllables in the first line,
- seven in the second, and
- five in the third.
- Containing just seventeen syllables

The haiku cannot capture a “big picture”, but depicts tiny images of incredible stories (often it is about) something that might be missed if the writer had not taken the time to point it out.

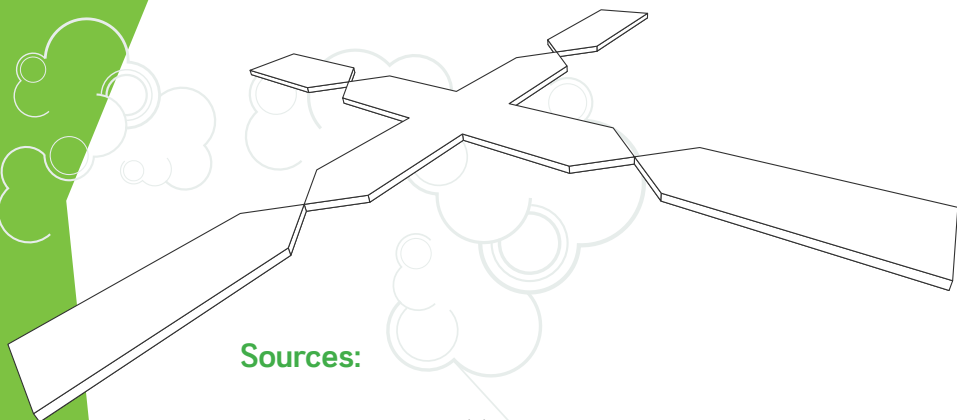
In a haiku, one may depict a disaster, war, crime, death, excitement, poverty, peace etc. Reading a Haiku is like reading a teaser on a newspaper or

watching television headlines or even radio news headlines.

#### Some examples:

Clothes everywhere, blood, emotional sounds – a car accident. on Raglan Road, Tuesday  
On my way home. knives – “give me your phone”, took, ran away.





### Sources:

- Wikipedia <http://wikipedia.org>
- Harrower, Tim. 2007, Inside reporting: A practical guide to the craft of Journalism

