From Redlining to Robots: How newsrooms apply technology to the craft of journalism

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Abstract

The use of technology in newsrooms is nothing new: Journalists have been applying sophisticated data analysis techniques to find and tell stories for at least a half century. In 1972, journalists at the Philadelphia Inquirer borrowed time on a mainframe to land a story about unequal sentencing. In 1989, the Atlanta Journal Constitution's series about redlining won a Pulitzer Prize – the first for a piece of data journalism. And in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew in 1992, the Miami Herald used GIS to show how shoddy workmanship — not wind — was likely to blame for much of the damage. Although journalism isn't thought of as a high-tech profession, journalists have been among the earliest adopters of new techniques and technologies to find and report stories. This talk will cover how journalists have embraced technology in the past, and how they might in the future.

Biography

Aron Pilhofer is the James B. Steele Chair in Journalism Innovation at Temple University. In addition to teaching, his work is focused on new business models, digital transformation and innovation in news. Before joining Temple, Pilhofer was executive editor, digital, and interim chief digital officer at the Guardian in London. There, he led the Guardian's product and technology teams as well as heading visual journalism - including pictures, graphics, interactive and data journalism. Before coming to the Guardian, Aron was associate managing editor for digital strategy and editor of interactive news at The New York Times. He also was a reporter at Gannett newspapers in New Jersey and Delaware, headed data journalism at the Center for Public Integrity in Washington, D.C. and served on the training staff of Investigative Reporters and Editors. Outside the newsroom, Aron co-founded two news-related startups: DocumentCloud.org, now housed at Temple University's Klein College of Media and Communication, and Hacks & Hackers.