

Glossary of Broadcasting/Broadcast News Terms

General

Affiliate - A local station that subscribes to the services and programs of a network.

Anchor - The newscaster who hosts the studio portion of the newscast. The anchor is the dominant voice in the presentation of the news to the audience. S/he must be proficient in writing, producing, and editing the news.

AP Wire - Associated Press news service that supplies international, national and regional information and stories. These are almost always rewritten before airing.

Back timing - A convenient way of counting down the length of a newscast. This tells you when each story must run in order for your newscast to end on time.

Beats – specific public institutions or areas of concern for which specific reporters in a newsroom are responsible watching. (e.g.: county reporter, health reporter, education reporter, courts reporter)

Beat Checks - Using a telephone to search for and tape news stories from a list of agencies. A good beat check would be comprised of the sheriff's offices, fire department, local police, state highway patrol, DNR, local hospitals, and other government agencies that routinely handle breaking stories.

Break – place designated within broadcast programming during which commercials run.

Bumpers – small teasers (with or without audio/video) that come at the end of one newscast segment often previewing what is coming up in the rest of the newscast.

Call Letters - A station's legal ID (for example, WBIZ-EAU CLAIRE) is a legal ID, Z-104 is not a legal ID).

Cold Copy - aka; Rip-n-Read - A script not seen by an announcer until the moment s/he reads it.

Consultants – firms, groups, individuals hired by broadcast organizations to give advice on presentation, content, trends, viewer habits and preferences

Control Room - Where the technical equipment for putting a newscast on the air is kept and operated.

Cue – usually a physical signal by engineer or other technical person indicting to anchor to perform a task (start reading, wrap up, go to break).

Cue Up - Putting a sound bite, package, wrap, voicer, or other recorded material at its beginning.

Dub - to make a recording of a recording.

Edit - To condense or revise material. For example:

n content - to demand a re-focus or rewrite of a story.

n Non-linear – edit done on computer where segments can be put together out of sequence.

Engineer – Technical personnel who can both operate, maintain and repair equipment.

Feed - A live or recorded report, or a set of recorded reports sent to a station/newsroom via satellite, phone, or other device for inclusion in a news program.

Feedback - An ear-splitting squeal or howl caused when sound from a loudspeaker is picked up by a microphone and reamplified. Feedback can also happen when the output for a given tape deck or other device is fed back into its own input.

“Happy Talk” – the casual banter that goes on between news anchors and other “on-air” people. Mostly considered light hearted.

Headlines – A kind of "tease" read at the beginning of a newscast.

Kicker - An offbeat or humorous story that typically is used to mark the end of the news segment and the beginning of the sports/weather segment. The kicker can also be used to end a newscast.

News feeds - feeds of stories/actualities sent to affiliates by networks for air on the individual stations.

Lead – first line/paragraph of body of story that summarizes/indicates most important information.

Lead-in – broadcast term for beginning part of story news anchor reads introducing the story and/or person reporting story.

Lead story (aka Lead) – first story in a newscast or segment (in broadcasting) or a story that is above the fold in print-this considered the most important news story of the day.

Outcue – usually the last thing a reporter says in either a live or recorded news story (i.e. PKG) indicating the piece is ending. (Example: “FOR UPDATE NEWS, I’M BILL SMITH.”)

Outro – usually the “Goodbye” or end segment of a newscast often during which news/wx/sports anchors engage in “happy talk.”

Producer/Editor – Plans and supervises newscast. Can also work with reporters in the field planning and gathering information for stories.

Pronouncer - Phonetic spelling of a difficult word or name (i.e. Greg Louganis = Greg loo-GAY-nuss).

P-S-A - aka Public Service Announcement - An advertisement for a not-for-profit organization such as the American Heart Association, Partnership for a Drug-Free America, etc..).

Reader - A story read by anchor without any audio/video.

Ratings – measuring units used to tell broadcasters how many households and/or viewers have their stations/programs on at a particular time. This information is used in determining how much station will charge advertising for commercial time.

Rundown -aka; Lineup - A chronological outline or order of stories or segments to be used in a newscast. This is the producer's blueprint for the newscast.

Running Time - Refers either to the estimated time or the actual time of a newscast. Producers/editors should always estimate the running time of the newscast based on the actual time of each recorded report and her or his best guess as to the time of each intro and each story to be read by the anchor.

Satellite feed – can be either news or programming feed that is generated from a distant remote location and transmitted via a satellite. Very often live interviews with news makers or other news people are conducted this way.

Sound Bed - aka: natural sound (natsot) A type of background audio that complements the news report. For instance, the sound of protesters is played underneath the reporter's in-studio story concerning the opening of a nuclear plant.

Spots (aka Commercials) – individual commercials that run during breaks.

Spot News – An unexpected event that can be covered in various ways

Story Tag – Closing to a story package, live shot, or on-set piece usually read by the story report but can also be read by an anchor.

Upcut - Turning on the microphone after the anchor has begun speaking or before and anchor/reporter has stopped speaking.

Television

B-Roll – video that is shot for a TV news story and used to visualize the script the reporter/anchor has written.

EZ News – the newsroom computer software. It allows you to create news rundowns, write stories for newscasts, print scripts, have teleprompter all from the same location/server.

Natural Sound - aka Nat Sound, Nat S-O-T, or Ambient Sound - Background voices, music, machinery, waterfalls, and other environmental sounds that are recorded on-scene and used to create a sound bed for a recorded or live report. Primarily used for setting a mood or providing atmosphere for a report. This technique is frequently overused, but when used properly it adds immeasurably to a story.

Nielsen – service primarily used in determining television ratings.

Live shot/Live Report – A TV news story during which a news anchor or reporter is live at a remote location. Within this report can be included a SOT, VO/SOT or PKG.

On-Set Appearance – Reporter appears on set and is introduced by a news anchor. The reporter can then introduce his/her news package or report his/her story from there.

Package (PKG) - A report from a correspondent that contains a sound bite inserted between the introduction and the epilogue (usually inserted after the reporter's second or third sentence). These need an in-studio lead for the anchor.

Sound bite (SOT) - edited slice of a newsmaker speaking. Similar to actuality in radio except the person can be seen. Often several SOT can be spliced together with the edits covered with video. These can be included in PKGs and VO/SOTs or can stand alone.

Stand-up – part of package with reporter on screen reading/presenting information.

Voiceover (VO) – A TV news story during which a news anchor or reporter reads a script live as video is played.

Voiceover-to-sound(VO/SOT) – A TV news story during which a news anchor or reporter reads a script live as video is played up to a place when a news maker video/audio sound bite is played. At the end of the SOT, the reporter or anchor resumes reading with or without additional video.