



# **Build It and They Won't Come** **The Rules of the Audience Game Have** **Changed and How You Can Play to Win**

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# Reconceptualization of the audience

- “The people formerly known as the audience”
- “Thanks to the rise of social media, news is no longer gathered exclusively by reporters and turned into a story but emerges from an ecosystem in which journalists, sources, readers and viewers exchange information.”



# Stefanie Bothelho on the 2011 Yale Publishing Conference (Folio, 7/14/2011)

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“But the biggest thing, prevalent in how speakers addressed the crowd and the audience pressed the presenters for immediate solutions to admittedly complex problems (the transition to digital, etc.), was not listed in the printed program.

It was fear.

And that current may be the largest issue the publishing industry is facing today: fear of the present, fear of the future, **fear of the audience and, perhaps the most crippling, fear of change.**”

Instead we must re-conceptualize what we do

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Vegetables or cupcakes?

One of the key questions

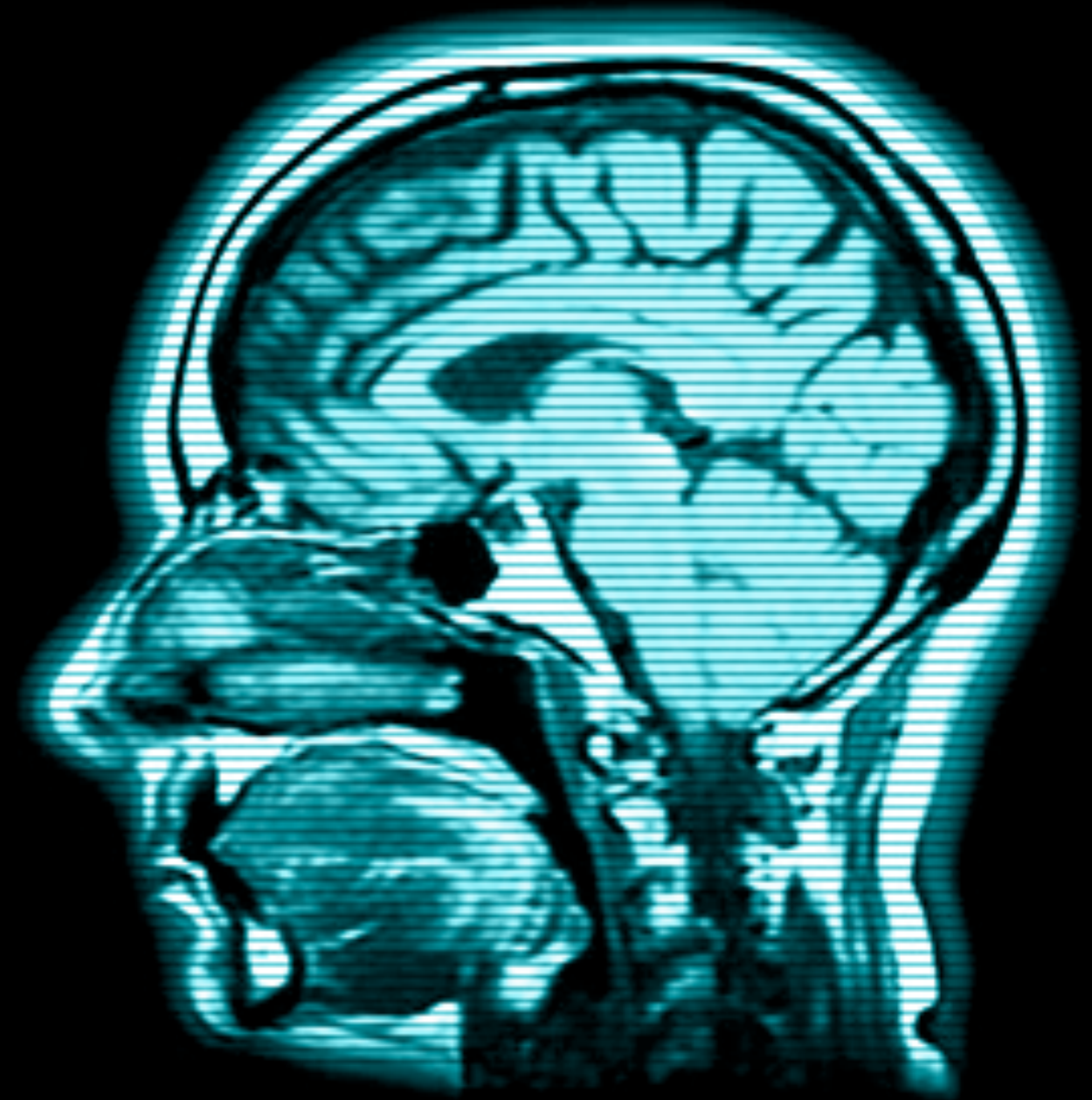
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Why do we think about **news** this way?

# In fact, there is a scientific reason

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- Emotional and cognitive resources are limited.
- People only become informed about an issue when they are motivated to do so.
- Self-interest, social identification and values all precede motivation.





The path of least resistance:  
Serve up the cupcakes

# Cupcakes instead of vegetables

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- Pros

- Potentially gets an uninterested audience interested in a news product
- Keeps journalists employed
- It can be fun

- Cons

- “The problem with taking solace in [its] success is that it feel like settling for ignorance.” -Farhad Manjoo, Salon
- This approach panders to the audience instead of arming them with the information they need to be good citizens. -David T.Z. Mindich, author of Tuned Out
- Choice isn't always a good thing

# THE PARADOX OF CHOICE

WHY MORE IS LESS **BARRY SCHWARTZ**

HOW THE CULTURE OF ABUNDANCE ROBS US OF SATISFACTION



"A revolutionary and beautifully reasoned book about the promiscuous amount of choice that renders the consumer helpless. A must read."  
— Martin Seligman, author of *Authentic Happiness*

P.S.  
INSIGHTS

The paradox of choice



The value of audience insight or a deep understanding of your target user's identity is you can create vegetables that taste, look and smell like cupcakes.

Years of journalistic accepted wisdom claims it is wrong, even dangerous, to give people “what they want to know;” journalists should only give them “what they need to know.”

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It is not an either/or proposition.

People will accept more of what they “need to know” from a source that gives them “what they want to know.”

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The best media create identity experiences for audiences.

One size fits no one

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# How to develop a persona

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- Choose the right target individual
  - Should represent the needs of a larger set of possible users
- Helps us know how to prioritize elements of design, delivery and content to address the needs of the target individual
  - But don't want to inconvenience second-tier users



Car design example



Your target persona should be  
at the center of the audience

# Target persona: What to think about first

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Life-stage

# Elementary-school students

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Through schools  
At home with parents



# Middle-school students

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Through schools  
At home with parents  
Teen sections or segments  
Journalism experience  
Social networks



# High-school students

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Teen sections or segments

Journalism experience

Social networks

Mobile

Interactive content



# Living alone or with roommates

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Social networks  
Mobile  
Free distribution



# Living with spouse or partner

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Social networks

Mobile

Print & digital (for the older segment)



# Living with children

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Social networks

Mobile

At home with kids



# Action steps

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Choose a high-potential market segment  
Determine relevant life-stage information

# Target persona: What to think about second and third

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Identity variables and media use behavior

# Personas are represented as individuals

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- Specific individuals--characters--who represent a type of user
- Forces us to think about the difference between archetypes and stereotypes
- Personas must have motivations
  - Life goals
  - Experience goals
  - End goals

# Personas are based on research

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- Interviews with users
- Information about users supplied by stakeholders
- Market research data such as focus groups and surveys
- Market segmentation models
- Data gathered from literature reviews and previous studies

# Research sources

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- Quantitative data
  - Academic and quassi-academic: Media Management Center and Readership Institute; Pew Research Center; Project for Excellence in Journalism; The Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics & Public Policy; The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; The Roper Center; Newspaper Association of America (NAA); Newspaper Association of America Foundation (NAAF); International Newsmedia Marketing Association (INMA)
  - Consumer data companies: Experian Simmons and Mediamark (MRI)
  - Public: U.S. Census
- Qualitative data
  - Focus groups and in-depth interviews

# The process of developing personas

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- Develop a persona hypothesis framework
  - List a complete set of relevant variable continuum (typically 15 to 30)
    - Examples:
      - Service-oriented ----- Price-oriented
      - Spends time at home ----- Spends time away from home
  - Demographics have less relevance at this stage

# The process of developing personas

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- Develop a persona hypothesis framework
- Map interview subjects to the variables
  - Precision is not as important as identifying placement of individuals

# The process of developing personas

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- Develop a persona hypothesis framework
- Map interview subjects to the variables
- Identify significant patterns
  - Look for clusters of particular subjects that occur across multiple continuum
  - Examine logical connection, not spurious ones

# The process of developing personas

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- Develop a persona hypothesis framework
- Map interview subjects to the variables
- Identify significant patterns
- Synthesize characteristics and relevant goals
  - For each significant pattern, identify details
    - Use environment, typical day, current solutions and frustrations, relevant relationships with others

# The process of developing personas

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- Develop a persona hypothesis framework
- Map interview subjects to the variables
- Identify significant patterns
- Synthesize characteristics and relevant goals
- Name your persona and add demographic information
  - Name should be evocative of the type of person the persona is
  - Details help you visualize the person

# The process of developing personas

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- Develop a persona hypothesis framework
- Map interview subjects to the variables
- Identify significant patterns
- Synthesize characteristics and relevant goals
- Name your persona and add demographic information
- Determine persona's goals directly related to your product

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# Action steps

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Develop a target persona

Engage through the right content via the right delivery for that persona

Get feedback

Refine content

Once you have an audience,

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you have to create the editorial product for them, use the correct delivery method to engage them, ask for and listen to their feedback, and continually revise your product for the center of the target.





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James Brewer escaped custody today from DC Superior Court Cellblock.

+ Large Photo

## Suspect escaped by switching identities

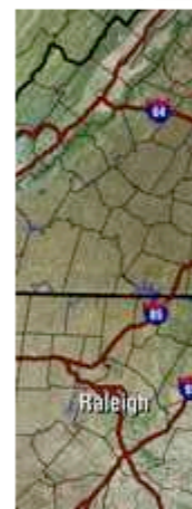
Authorities searched Saturday for a man charged with first-degree murder who allegedly swapped identities with another prisoner and walked out of a Washington courthouse.

- Man rescued after 25 foot fall on ship
- VB rip currents have red flags up
- Murder suspect escapes custody

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