## ----FOCUS

# Crafting the News in a Digital Age

CENTURY and a half ago covering international news was straightforward wait for a ship to arrive from overseas, interview the passengers, then run as fast as possible back to the newsroom and try to beat the competition to print. Communications between countries involved physical presence. A reporter literally had to be there to hear the news and had to get back to the newsroom to file.

Journalism has changed dramatically since then, as technology, starting with the telegraph and telephone, has made it possible to find out about events without actually being there.

The Internet, of course, makes it possible to peek into many places without that physical presence, and while that is a boon to journalists and their audiences alike, it also carries certain risks.

The Internet connects uncounted computers around the world, making it possible for an elementary school student in Akron, Ohio, to read files on a university's server in Berne, Switzerland, or a journalist in Tokyo to see the latest news release on a government file server in Washington

This makes the Internet an unparalleled research and reporting tool. A reporter today can, with a few minutes of searching on the World Wide Web, find information that would have taken hours of expensive long-distance telephone

calls just a decade ago. In addition, the Web has made it possible to interview someone without actually having a conversation. If a news source can't be reached by telephone, he or she can always be e-mailed.

Interviewing someone on paper isn't new, of course Mark Twain famously told The Associated Press by telegram in 1897 that "reports of my death are greatly exaggerbut in today's world, the ated" question and response can be exchanged in minutes, not the hours required for hand-delivery of a telegram, or the days it takes for an exchange to occur through the mails.

All this convenience has its drawbacks. How does a reporter know that the person receiving or answering the e-mail is the person they purport to be? There's no voice to recognise, no face to see only an e-mail address, which the reporter may have obtained from a colleague, from a Web site, or from a news release

The same problem arises when a reporter or researcher goes to a Web site for the first time. All the person sees is what the people who created the site want to be seen. So.

The digital age has created an entirely new medium for journalists. Just as they did during the earliest days of radio and television. journalists explore this new medium, learning how to find and present the facts in cyberspace.

### by Brad Kalbfeld

for example, a person sitting in This is not to say that everything on the Web is untrustworthy or their garage could create a site that purports to represent a giant even that a majority of sites are. corporation. Because the reporter But it does mean that, with more information available to the gensees nothing more than the site after all, the whole idea of the Web eral public (and journalists) than at is that they don't have to physically any time in human history, the be there he or she has no way of skills that journalists practice factknowing whether the corporation checking, identifying and qualifying their sources of information, has one employee or a thousand. and displaying a healthy skepti-

In 1996, a site with the URL cism about appearances are more ww.dole96.org looked, at first glance, like the official site of important than ever. Republican presidential nominee Edward R Murrow once said Bob Dole. A casual observer would that "a loud voice which reaches not have noticed that it was, in fact, from coast to coast is not necessar a parody site surely not something ily uttering truths more profound the Dole campaign would have than those that may be heard in the chosen to put on the Web itself. classroom, the bar, or country store." an idea that clearly applies While no one can be certain of the motives of the author of that particto the Internet. In an age of ubiquiular site, the use of misinformation tous information, the integrity of the information assumes central to influence voters is nothing new political history is full of examples importance. Consumers need to of "dirty tricks" that rely on hiding sort fact from gossip, and want to the identity of the author. The Web know that they can trust what they raises the possibility of anonymous see. They will rely more heavily troublemaking to new heights than ever on the journalistic practices of news organisations such as because it provides so few obvious The Associated Press to identify clues to the identity of a site's sources of information and to proprietor.

verify facts.

that "being there" to cover news

stories is more valuable than ever

because of the premium put on

having rock-solid facts. Few com-

panies can afford to invest in in-

Web consumers. And without the

costs of newsprint, without the

time limitations of television and

radio, journalists on the Web are

free to present those facts in

and-click format makes it possible

to present this depth in "layers." If a

reader wants more depth, links are

provided to sidebar stories, biogra-

phies of people quoted in the story,

and transcripts of events. As digital

technology progresses, viewers

will be able to see the video of

events as well as read the tran-

News sites even provide links to

newsmaker sites, enabling readers

to see for themselves, in great

depth, the information provided by

the people covered in the story,

This has transformational

implications for news consumers

and the journalists who serve

begin at 23th 43m 33s BST and will

end at 04th 57m 37s [the next

date]. The local circumstances of

unfiltered by journalists.

What's more, the Web's point-

greater detail than ever

scripts.

them.

shadow.

tude is 1.9468.

observe this eclipse you should go

erson news coverage, but those

The Web might be used to subvert the democratic process, or to promote a freer society. During the political upheaval that eventually led to the downfall of Yugoslavia's

President Slobodan Milosevic, the independent station B-92 took on a new Internet identity, B2-92, to keep information flowing after the government seized its radio and television studios.

From political debated to the investigation of airline crashes, Internet hoaxes have made their way into mainstream news reports, potentially damaging the reputation of the reporters and certainly misleading the public. During a 2000 election debate in the state of New York, the moderator asked candidates Hillay Clinton and Rick Lazio about their views of "bill 602P" which was described as a proposal for the US Postal Service to impose a five-cent tax on every email sent on the Internet. Both Clinton and Lazio voiced strong opposition to such a tax. But there no such bill. The television sta $tion \, that \, sponsored \, the \, debate \, says$ the question was received via e-

mail in response to a public solicitation for ideas. The question made it to the debate even though the Postal Service had sent out an advisory in May 1999 saying that the bill was fictional.

Despite its depth and extensive use of text and still photographs, Web journalism is not newspaper journalism. Even though it uses audio and video, and reports information in real time, Web journalism isn't broadcast journalism. either. It's something in between. On the Web, the consumer is in

control of how much depth he or she sees on a story, and whether the story is "experienced" through audio or video, "described" by a reporter's prose, or both. It's like a newspaper on steroids: Just as a reader can decide which stories to read, in what order, a Web viewer decides which stories to read and which links to click on. With so many choices, each consumer experiences each story in his or her own way

How will all of this choice affect the news consumption habits of the public? It's too early for anything conclusive, but a June 2000 study by the Pew Research Centre asked Americans who regularly get news online what kinds of news they seek when they log on. World news ranked fifth on the list, at 45 per ent, behind weather, science and Paradoxically, this also means health, technology, and business news. Political news ranked eighth, being sought by 39 per cent of those who regularly get news online. (1) Web viewers are clearly taking advantage of the ability to target specific kinds of informawho do provide a vital service to

> The biggest, most visited Internet sites have links to general news coverage, giving consumers the opportunity to navigate through the top stories or click down to specific topics. There are. of course, editors for these information pages, people who make decisions about what stories to display most prominently (just like the lead in a newspaper or on a newscast), how much detail to put in, and what multimedia elements to link to each story. Most important. Web editors must bring to their sites the same journalistic standards of accuracy and objectivity that they bring to newspapers and broadcast stations. In a sense, that makes editing a Web site more difficult than editing a newspaper or a newscast, since the same high standards must be applied to the depth of a newspaper with the speed of a television or radio station.

With all of this work on the part

totality. If you are an amateur

astronomer you can do some valu-

able work. Here are some tips:

of journalists in-person reporting; gathering video, audio, and still photos; making graphics; verifying facts; and applying professional news judgement and standards of accuracy and objectivity newsgathering companies are making significant investments in Web journalism. The technology makes it work available to everyone. But the same technology also makes it possible for unscrupulous Web sites and other media outlets to misappropriate the results of a competitor's original work. It is possible for someone sitting in a garage in an American suburb or a flat in a European city to make a Web site resemble a legitimate news site by swiping stories from others.

This, of course, is illegal, and harms the newsgathering organisations that make the investment to send reporters to cover stories and to check facts. But this sort of cyber theft is hard to police. That is why copyright notices,

and specific licenses regulating how information on the Internet may be used, are so important. Web viewers often think that, if they can see something, they can use it. Before downloading a photo or sound bite or article, the copyright terms so easy to ignore should be read and respected.

The consumer as editor, the use of technology to misinform, the need to protect intellectual property: it is surely a complicated world for today's journalists. The Internet is a powerful new reporting tool, giving reporters easy access to detailed information on the full range of human knowledge. The Web puts that power in the hands of the audience, too, coupling the blessing of availability with the curse of overwhelming volume

One hundred fifty years ago, most newspaper readers couldn't get to that ship bringing news from overseas, so they needed journalists to do it for them. Todav's new consumer can go directly to the source behind a news story. But even in the Internet age, journalists do more than bring information to the public. We've gone from an age of too little information to an age of overload. With all of the information now at the user's fingertips, Web viewers need context, need someone to verify facts and identify sources, to make sure all sides of the story are told. The newsroom of the future needs to be better than ever at good old-fashioned journalism.

The author is Deputy Director and Managing Editor of the Associated Press, Broadcast Division ---USIS

## PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT Flickering Hope in Sight!

by Mohammad Amjad Hossain HERE appears to be a flickering hope in the

Shimon Peres is likely to be elected the next Premier and the peace process be on the right track as he has been maintaining friendly relations with Yasser Arafat and other Palestinian leaders.

conflict between the Pales-

tinians and Israelis when we

heard that Shimon Peres, former

Foreign Minister in Yitzhak

Netanyahu have been adding fuel

Nobel peace prize with Yasser

Ehud Barak, the present care-

his resignation from the premier-

ship and is forced to call an early

election, stands little chance to be

reelected. Ehud Barak could not

deliver the goods as was

expected of him since he was

elected premier on a peace plat-

years tenure of Ehud Barak there

occurred more violence in the

which caused death to more than

world body for its brutal action on

the innocent Palestinians. There-

fore, if he backs out from the race,

it is better for Israelis, and then

Shimon Peres, 77, who won

to the ignited fire.

Rabin's cabinet, was looking for One wonders why a few Israeli the seat of the premier in the next politicians are behaving irregeneral elections scheduled to sponsibly and irrationally with take place in about 60 days' time. their Palestinian brethren in the Rabin was brutally assassinated first place. The history of Judaism in November 1995 by an ultra points out that Jews in today's rightist element in Tel Aviv fol-Israel were the most persecuted lowing signing of Oslo peace and tyrannized minority in Europe at the hands of the Nazis of treaty with PLO. Shimon Peres, who became Prime Minister after Germany, fascists and commuthe assassination of Rabin, is nists and now they have turned banking on the support of the left out to be perpetrators of genocide liberal Meretz party, which is an arch enemy of Ariel Sharon of against the Palestinians. Instead of directing their fury and resent-Likud Party. Sharon is required to ment against those leaders in secure endorsement of at least 20 Europe they are hitting at innomembers of Knesset (Israeli cent Palestinians whose crime in Parliament) to contest for the Jewish eves is possibly that of premiership. According to Israeli having lived in Palestine for millaw, only sitting members can lennia before and after the compete in the election for the Hebrews had established thempremiership. Therefore, the selves in the territory for a comquestion of contesting by the paratively brief period of its long former premier and a hardliner history. The irony of the fact is that right wing leader Benjamin the Palestinians are an integral Netanyahu does not arise as he is party of the Ummah which not a sitting member of the Parliaacknowledged Judaism as divine ment. It may be recalled that religion, its Torah as the law of Shimon Peres took a bold stand in Allah, and welcomed and proconducting negotiations with tected the Jews wherever Islam Palestinians which ultimately led was predominant. For example, in to the signing of Oslo peace treaty the first constitution of Alin 1993 and for which his stand-Madinah prepared by Prophet ing in Israel was critically low, but Muhammad (peace be upon him) presently Shimon Peres has been himself the Jews were brought gaining popularity because of his steadfast attitude to strike a under one political entity. It would, therefore, be more approdeal with Palestinians to stop priate for Jews to come to term unnecessary bloodshed and with the wishes and aspirations of continuous violence which genthe Palestinians to resolve the eral public in Israel do not want. problem once for all for the sake of Basically hardliner rightwing politicians like Ariel Sharon, who the Jews and Palestinian community both inside and outside occuis the chairman of Likud Party pied Arab territories. and the former premier

Despite cycle of violence in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip one came across a news item, which speaks of progress made in the new round of negotiations in Arafat, is currently holding the Washington. According to Israeli portfolio of the minister of newspapers as reported by AFP regional cooperation. If Shimon news agency, the Jewish state has Peres is backed by Meretz party, agreed to negotiate on the basis of the June 1967 borders (of the date taker premier as he had tendered when Israel captured the West Bank and the Gaza Strip along with other territories including the eastern sector of Jerusalem). They are reported to have come closer to an agreement on Jerusalem as well. This remains as a vital issue to the crux of the conflict form. During the one and a half between Israelis and Palestinians. The issue of return of Palestinians, who were expelled from West Bank and the Gaza Strip their territory after the establish-ment of Jewish state in 1948 300 people, mostly Palestinians. And Israel was condemned by the should not come as a possible hurdle for negotiations. Palestinians, who left their home in 1948 were settled in Europe, America and Arab countries and are apparently enjoying better life there. I met a number of Palestinians in Germany, who became the citizens after marrying German girls and are maintaining a comfortable living standard and there was no reason for them going back to Palestine state in the near or distant future. But there should be option for them to return to their homeland, which is an inalienable right of the Palestinians as has been the case in respect of Jews.

The Palestinian refugees of the 1948 war think to return to homes in areas west of the armistice lines those parts of Palestine. The PLO's decision to give assent to a twostate solution is implicitly acceptance of the principle that state and homeland can be construed as separate concepts for the Palestinians. Meanwhile, President Bill Clinton of America, who seems to be little desperate in his effort to seek a solution to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians in order to have his name registered in history as a peacemaker before he leaves office on 20 Januarv 2001, floated a compromise idea which reportedly involves Israel turning over control in Arab neighbourhoods of occupied East Jerusalem to the Palestinians along with the Al-Aqusa Mosque compound while in return Palestinians would waive the right of return of refugees, with only a small number allowed back to Israel for family reunification. President Clinton also suggested that Israel would withdraw from 95 per cent of the West Bank and 100 per cent of the Gaza Strip territories it has occupied since 1967 Arab-Israel war. The idea sounds logical and it seems to be an improvement over Oslo accord except the right of return of refugees. As pointed out in the preceding paras most of the refugees would not return after 52 years of exile. Therefore, the idea floated by President Clinton should be acceptable to both parties in the conflict. Israelis should be told that Palestinians have made practically supreme sacrifice in accept ing the existence of the state of Israel in spite of strong opposition from radical Arab countries. If necessary, Israel can also conduct a referendum on the proposal floated by President Clinton in order to resolve the question of final status of Palestinians in the occupied Arab territories allowing both Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace. This longdrawn man-made crisis could have been resolved long time back had both the sides in the dispute showed

sign of a give and take policy. The 1994 Gaza-Jericho agreement between the PLO and the Israeli government is a shining example of cooperation.

#### First Total Lunar Eclipse of the Century he first Total Lunar Eclipse to a dark place where from the of this century will take western part of the sky is clearly place today (January 9). The visible. Also take a low power bineclipse will be visible throughout ocular fless than 20x). The Moon will be at the western sky during the whole country. The eclipse will

Dr. Rubaiul Murshed

All health information to keep

Total Lunar Eclipse of 2001 Jan 09 ttic Conjunction = 20:18:50.1 UT J.D. = 2451919.346413 Greatest Eclipse = 20:20:36.0 UT J.D. = 2451919.347639 Penumbral Magnitude = 2.18707 P. Radius = 1.3203\* Gamma = 0.37186 Umbral Magnitude = 1.19468 U. Radius = 0.7673\* Axis = 0.38019\* Sams Series = 134 Member = 26 of 73

by Syed Ashraf Uddin

planets. During this eclipse the winter Milky Way and constellations will be well placed for viewing. Castor and Pollux lie 8-10 degrees north of the eclipsed Moon, while the Beehiv cluster (M44) in Cancer is 17° to the east. Jupiter, Saturn and the Pleiades from an attractive trio in Taurus about fifty degrees west of the Moon Recording times of contact of the Umbra with Lunar craters: Crater timings are used to determine the enlargement of the umbra due to the effects of refraction of the upper atmosphere of the Earth, investigating the geometry of the Umbra, especially it's oblateness, and to determine the change in the height of the atmosphere throughout each eclipse. The values of % umbral enlargement and umbral oblatness are used to form an improved lunar eclipse ephemeris for application to cannons of lunar eclipse. The desired accuracy of the timings is  $\pm 6$  seconds, but should be reported to one second or better if possible. To assist in your umbral edge estimate and recognition of features to be timed, use a low magnification so that a full image of the Moon is seen in your telescope's field of view. In your report, mention your full name, teles aperture, magnification, and sky conditions. Just before the eclipse.

be sure to set your watch accu-

rately sing radio or telephone time

Photographing the eclipse: To

signals.

meters) by 103. An ordinary camera with a 50-mm lens will from an image just 0.5 mm across which leaves very little room for detail. A telephoto lens or telescope can provide a much bigger image. A 200-mm f/10 telescope (focal length 2,000mm) will form a

Moon image 19 mm across, easily

centered in a 35-mm film frame.

For optimum results, disable the

camera's automatic metering

system. To capture partial phases

of the eclipse on ISO 400 film, try a

1/4-second exposure at f/8 so as to

"burn in" the Moon's bright seg-

ment and reveal the sharp edge of

the Earth's umbral shadow. During

totality you'll have to boost the

exposure to 3 seconds at f/4 if the

eclipse is "bright" and a full minute

or more if it is "dark." When you are

making exposures longer than a

second or two, a star-tracking

camera mount is essential to avoid

a blurred image of the Moon. Above

all, include a wide range of expo-

you up to date

## Aged first

#### Fever may be a serious symptom after 65

If you're over 65 and develop a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenhe or higher, see a doctor immediately, especially of you have diab tes or a lung disorder. You're likely to have a serious illness whic may require hospitalization, such as pneumonia, a urinary tra infection, or sepsis (a bacterial infection which can lead to bloc poisoning, a life-threatening condition). A fever is one of the way your body fights infection. However, older people's immune sys tems are often slow to begin the battle.

When an older person does have a fever (a sure sign the body is fighting off infection), doctors know that something serious is going on. If you feel a little fuzzy-headed or hotter than usual, take vour temperature. If it's 100" or higher, don't worry about whether you should feed a fever of starve it. Just see your doctor immediately

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### Self-help

tube.

How to use eye ointments properly

Wash hands thoroughly

before applying ointment.

Sit with your head tilted backward.

With a finger, pull the •lower lid of your eye down and look towards the ceiling. Squeeze the ointment from the tube along the inside margin of the lower eyelid. Do not touch the eye or eyelid with the tip of the ointment

Blink several times. Close the eye (do not rub the eye)

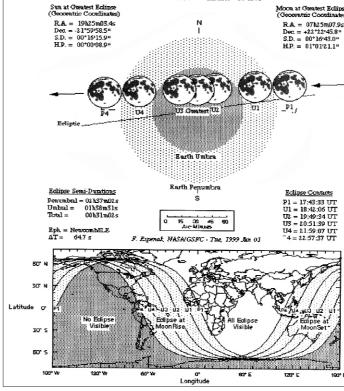
**Tomorrow : Commonly asked questions.** 

the eclipse for Dhaka cir bellow:	0 0	Observing the Umbra: Th Penumbral phase is not so interest		
Eclipse Prediction for BUET	r Dhaka City Prej	pared by Astron	omy Club	
Latitude: 23°42'; Longit	ude: 90°25'; Elevatio	on: 7m; Time Zone:	+6hrs. GMT	
EVENT	TIME [BST]	MOON'S AZIMUTH	MOON'S ALTITUD	
Moonrise	2001 Jan 09 17:00	65.3	-	
Moon enters penumbra	2001 Jan 09 23:43.5	5 108.5	86.2	
Moon enters umbra	2001 Jan 10 00:42	264.3	80.4	
Moon enters totality	2001 Jan 10 01:20.	5 272.2	65.4	
Middle of eclipse	2001 Jan 10 02:20.5	5 274.4	58.5	
Moon leaves totality	2001 Jan 10 03:59.3	1 280.7	36.8	

ing as no appreciable change on About this eclipse: The lunar eclipse occurs at the time of full the brightness of Moon occurs moon when Sun-Earth-Moon lies during this phase. As soon as the in a straight line. At this time the totality begins the Moon falls shadow of the Earth falls over the under the Umbra and a red-orange Moon and reduces it's brightness. colour is seen on the Moon surface Observe whether the edge of the For a total lunar eclipse the Moon must be within the Umbra of the Umbra is sharp or gradual. Also observe the shape of Umbra [it should be circular which is a proof The totality of January 9, 2001 eclipse will last for 62 minutes and of Earth's round shape]

will be observable from Eastern Estimating Brightness of the Hemisphere [Europe, Africa and Asia]. The Moon will not pass eclipse: The relative brightness of the lunar eclipse is determined visually by using a simple scale through the centre of the shadow axis but north of it. At the time of established by Danjun. This scale is mid eclipse the southern limb of based on both the brightness and the colour of the eclipse. This scale is based on both the brightness and Moon will pass 6.1 arcminutes north of Moon. In contrast, the Moon's northern limb will lie 6.5 the color of the eclipse. This estiarcminutes from the northern mate should be made at the time of edge of the umbra and 39.5 mid eclipse [about 02h20.5m for arcminutes from the shadow cen-Dhaka], by observing the Moon's tre. Thus, the northern sections of disk either with the naked eye or the Moon will appear much with very low magnification [7x50 brighter than the southern part binocular being ideal]. The Moon's that will lie deeper in the shadow. brightness varies greatly from The Penumbral magnitude is eclipse of eclipse, which would tell a lot about the state of the Earth's 2.18707 and the Umbral magniupper atmosphere if only we What to do: If you want to understood it better

The Danjun scale is given below:



Number Appearance of the Moon Very dark eclipse, the Moon

Dark eclipse, with grayish

to brown colour. Dark red or rusty colour, details are difficult to see in

> Brick red, the umbra often has a brighter, yellowish border.

Bright orange or coppery 4 eclipse, with bright bluish border.

is very difficult to see

the disk

binocular so that the Moon appears almost point-like. This allows Moon's magnitude to be compared more easily with nearby stars or

Another method of determining

the brightness of an eclipse is to estimate the apparent stellar mag-

nitude of the Moon, again at mid

eclipse. The simplest way is to

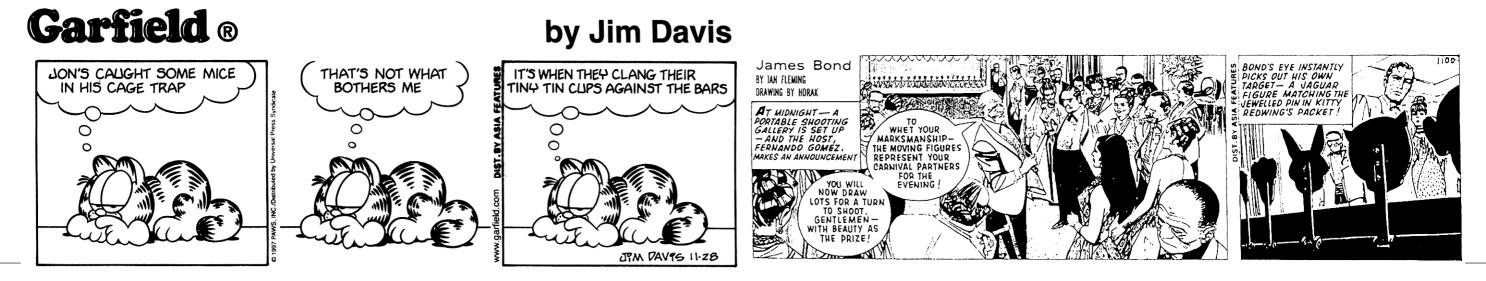
observe the Moon with reversed

sures on either side of these starting points. **Observation camp:** Members of Astronomy Club of BUET will observe the eclipse and will perform scientific experiments. Besides Bangladesh Astronomical Association will arrange a public observation camp at Kalabagan playground.

Your observation report can be sent to: saushuvo@aitlbd.net

<b>BST of Immersion</b>	Crater name	<b>BST</b> of Emersion	Crater name
00:45	Grimaldi	03:02	Aristarcus
00:49	Billy	03:05	Plato
00:57	Kepler	03:06	Grimaldi
01:04	Tycho	03:13	Billy
01:26	Plato	03:29	Menelaus

anticipate the Moon's size on film, The writer is Moderator, Astrondivide the focal length of the camomy Club of BUET. era lens or telescope (in, say, milli



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