

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB), Voice of America (VOA) forged a partnership which has developed an interactive CD-ROM for teaching health, medical and environmental reporting. UNAIDS, the Pan American Health Organization, Merck, Sharp and Dohme pharmaceutical company and others are partners in this global health journalism initiative. They are lending their expertise and resources by continued support and enhancement of the Health Journalism CD-ROM. The result is an excellent tool for reporters and students of journalism to improve their reporting on issues critical to the health and well being of global audiences.



Partnerships are welcomed. Contact us at:

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HEALTH JOURNALISM CD-ROM

HEALTH JOURNALISM CD-ROM ►► overview

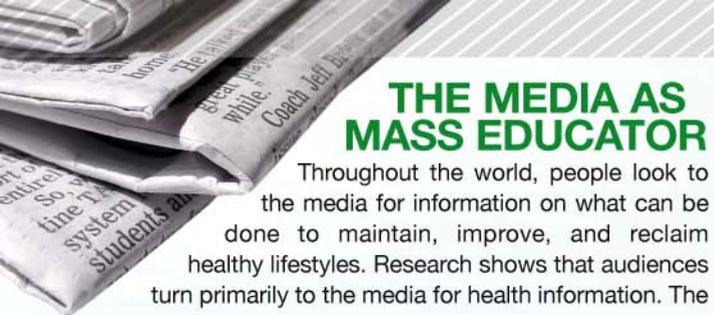
AWARD WINNER

This CD-ROM prototype has received two CINDY awards—coveted Cinema in Industry distinctions in international and national competitions. The CINDY award is presented by the International Association of Audio Visual Communicators, a nonprofit organization representing theatrical, broadcast, non-broadcast and interactive media professionals throughout the world.



OUR PARTNERS





THE MEDIA AS MASS EDUCATOR

Throughout the world, people look to the media for information on what can be done to maintain, improve, and reclaim healthy lifestyles. Research shows that audiences turn primarily to the media for health information. The public consistently mentions health as one of the three topics in which they are most interested.

MEETING THE NEED

Though the public turns to the media for information on health and other social topics, tools do not presently exist to teach journalists to report on these complex issues. Teaching tools, academic courses, or classroom instruction are largely unavailable for journalists, students of journalism and journalism educators. The Health Journalism CD-ROM helps to fill this gap in training.

EDUCATING JOURNALISTS

Health Journalism is designed to educate journalists and journalism students to meet the health needs of their audiences around the world. Journalists must be trained specifically on how to report on health and medical issues. This is essential for information to reach the public in an effective, timely and cost-effective way. Poorly written stories, or inaccurate stories, can confuse and can hurt more than help. Health Journalism seeks to ensure that the public receives the quality information that it needs.

Journalists need to know where to find the most accurate, credible, up-to-the minute information about health issues. They need to understand the constantly changing demographics of epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, and how to report on natural disasters like those caused by El Niño. Journalists must be able to discern fact from fiction. They must be equipped to do investigative reporting when it is needed. And they must know how to write compelling stories that grab the attention of mass audiences.

COST-EFFECTIVE TRAINING

Health Journalism makes it possible to train journalists on a large scale that is cost-effective. It can be used in a classroom setting or by individuals at home, or in the workplace.

The program is adaptable. Individual journalists may work on their own to develop and strengthen skills in health reporting. They will find that this program is user-friendly and comprehensive both in journalistic skills and specific background materials on health issues.

The CD-ROM is being given out free of charge. Updating the information in the CD-ROM is inexpensive, and copies may be reproduced in large numbers at relatively small cost. Subsequent investments for expansion and future development of the CD-ROM and its programs allow for reaching large audiences at low per capita costs.

HOW HEALTH JOURNALISM WORKS

Journalists enter the offices of the World News Service, a virtual media organization, and follow step-by-step instructions to craft health-related news and feature stories. The presentation of technical information on a CD-ROM format combines text, graphics, audio, video, and animation in self-paced teaching.

After an orientation, the program takes journalists to the Assignment Editor to choose an assignment. Users may access and master background and reference materials in the "Library" before traveling to the virtual site to write and submit the assigned story. "On Site" in the CD-ROM, journalists can find news sources such as press releases, interviews, and speeches. These materials are the equivalent of what journalists on the job gather and have on hand if actually doing reporting at the scene.

Health Journalism has everything, including a "Journalistic Notebook," background reference materials, and sources needed to write an original story. Journalists may write the story and print it from this program. Hyperlinks to resources on the Internet are also available.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Journalists can more aggressively cover issues such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic and natural disasters. They can create an environment in which culturally and politically sensitive issues are treated with more openness and in greater depth. In many parts of the world, journalists can more effectively focus the public's attention on health issues.

They have the ability to expand the impact of their reporting beyond the traditional political sphere by delving into the public health arena. Reporting can cover health, political, social and economic underpinnings and deadly consequences of ignorance or inaction. This attention, brought to bear by journalists, will create an atmosphere of public expectation around the performance of public officials and institutions in dealing with various aspects of the pandemic and its consequences.

It's a great teaching tool to help journalists sharpen their skills as medical reporters, and I plan to use it in our training programs.

*Rob Taylor,
Director, Science and Environmental Programs
International Center for Journalists*

The "Health Journalism CD-ROM" will be of great assistance throughout Latin America and the Caribbean to support journalists and media houses to incorporate information on health, which will in turn increase media audiences.

The Pan American Health Organization

UNAIDS intends to use "Health Journalism" as a basis to develop further interactive training programs and curricula for journalists in African countries. It will help to strengthen several current efforts by the United Nations, not-for-profit organizations and the private sector in educating the media better on HIV/AIDS and other development projects.

Bumni Mackinwa, UNAIDS Official

