



REPORTER BIOS ALONE AREN'T ENOUGH TO BOOST TRUST

Austin, TX – February 27, 2020 – Providing reporter bios on a news website is a common practice. The Center for Media Engagement has [already shown](#) that reporter bios, when used in combination with other trust strategies, can boost reader trust in and engagement with news. Now we wanted to test how biographies alone influence reader perceptions.

In this study, we looked at whether biographies affect the way readers view the reporter and the news organization. We also examined the effects of using a personal photo and including personal information in a biography. We found that:

- When readers saw a biography that contained both a personal photo and personal details about the reporter, they felt they knew the reporter better than those who saw any other type of biography.
- Reading a specific type of biography, or even seeing a biography at all, didn't significantly affect readers' views of the article, the reporter, or the news organization.

The personal photo and details made readers feel like they knew the reporter better, but the presence or absence of any type of biography didn't affect the way readers viewed the article, reporter, or news organization.

"Despite these results, reporter bios can still have value. Using personal photos and sharing personal details can be a way to humanize reporters and help make connections with readers," says Center for Media Engagement researcher Caroline Murray. As our [previous research](#) suggests, newsrooms should try using reporter bios in combination with other trust strategies to boost trust.

To read more about the findings, access the full report on our website:

<https://mediaengagement.org/research/reporter-bios-and-trust>

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The Center for Media Engagement, part of the Moody College of Communication at The University of Texas at Austin, provides research-based techniques for engaging digital audiences in commercially viable and democratically beneficial ways. Learn more at mediaengagement.org.