

By Gary Pruitt
President and CEO
The Associated Press

More than half the world sees news from The Associated Press every day, but few know exactly what AP is.

Every hour of every day, AP journalists in all 50 U.S. states and in more than 100 countries gather the news, from statehouses to war zones in the Middle East, and distribute it to thousands of news outlets in the U.S. and across the globe.

That is AP's mission: to inform the world. Fairly, objectively and accurately.

AP is unique, both in our mission and in how we carry it out. No one owns AP. We are truly independent, neither part of a corporation nor funded by any government. We are a not-for-profit cooperative – not a charity, but run like a business. Any revenue we generate must be invested right back into AP to help us produce the most comprehensive news report in the world.

Each day, AP produces 2,000 text stories, 3,000 photos and 200 news videos. Our customers, which span the ideological spectrum from left to right, and serve both domestic and international audiences, choose AP because they trust that our coverage is straight down the middle. And it is.

Our bread and butter is breaking news, but we are also known for other reporting that makes a real impact, such as our investigation into labor abuses in the seafood industry in Southeast Asia that freed more than 2,000 slaves in 2015, and persistent efforts to unseal court documents related to Bill Cosby, which were key to the reopening of the criminal investigation against him and resulted in his prosecution and ultimately his conviction. Most recently, we won our 53rd Pulitzer Prize for exposing the humanitarian crisis consuming Yemen amid the country's civil war.

We hold our journalists to rigorous standards and we are transparent about our news values and principles.

AP journalists always strive to identify their sources in stories, using anonymity only in carefully defined circumstances. We avoid behavior or activities that might create a conflict of interest or compromise our ability to report the news fairly and accurately. We do not misrepresent ourselves to get a story, nor do we pay newsmakers or sources for interviews. Above all else, our journalists embrace the idea that they must be unbiased, accurate and fair. These have been our guiding principles since the AP was founded in 1846.

Our mission to inform the world comes at a steep price. Thirty-five AP journalists have died in the pursuit of facts, most covering wars and conflicts, beginning with Mark Kellogg at the Battle of Little Bighorn in 1876. Four of AP's journalists were killed in 2014 alone.

We are not perfect. No news organization is. When we make mistakes, we move to correct them swiftly, completely and on the record.

We believe in fighting for access on behalf of the public who have a right to know what is happening behind the closed doors of their government, in holding the powerful to account, in advancing the power of fact-based reporting. Every year we participate in dozens of legal actions, all focused on protecting free expression.

Perhaps less well known is how we support the journalism of our customers. We distribute rich data sets that yield hundreds of local stories for our customers to tell. We promote innovation in the industry by

working with startups that explore emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence. And we provide technical support for our video customers so they can produce programming and broadcast live from the far corners of the world.

News, though, remains our true north. It has been for 173 years, since AP was founded by five newspapers that funded a pony express route to bring news of the Mexican-American War north quicker than any other source. From acquiring faster horses to the advent of the teletype to broadcasting live from the depths of the Indian Ocean in 2019, AP continues to take the lead in investing in advanced technology to gather and distribute news.

While times may have changed, one thing remains the same: AP's commitment to advancing the power of facts. As Mark Twain once said, "There are only two forces that can carry light to all the corners of the globe – only two – the sun in the heavens and the Associated Press down here."