

C'mon now, what breaking news is this?

 By [Thamsanqa Malinga](#) 16 Sep 2014

In these times of speed reporting, the changing face of the newsroom, and the time of the reader who now goes out and digs for 'news' instead of waiting for the paper to be delivered in the morning, can the fourth estate still boldly claim: "BREAKING NEWS"?

The "BREAKING NEWS" puller seems to be the one thing most online and social media reporters have taken to in the scrimmage for the highly sought after reader. From ticker tapes on TV and live tweets, every news bit in these platforms has suddenly found itself being led with this puller.

I have often taken to being a troll every time on Twitter I have come across the "BREAKING NEWS" puller, often asking or making a comment that the news bit is old news or rather of no significance. How come you ask? Here's my take:

The age of pull rather than push information

Internet has allowed for what experts call '*information pull*' meaning the user is the one who actively goes out and seeks information/news by visiting websites and/or social media platforms. This is unlike the old age of '*information push*' when the user had to wait for the supplier of the information. We no longer wait for the newspaper to be delivered but we actively go to the new site to read on what we want. So when we go out to actively seek information and you get that, can news agencies still shout "BREAKING NEWS"? Methinks not.

What significance is the BREAKING NEWS?

I have always contended that "BREAKING NEWS" usually refers to events that are unexpected, such as a plane crash or building fire, the death of a prominent figure. This has led me to always question if an expected event like a soccer match can be regarded as "breaking". The first day of the sentencing of Oscar Pistorius further strengthened my point against the abuse of the "BREAKING NEWS" puller when one news agency reported his arrival in court as... wait for it...'breaking'. Wasn't he expected to be there in the first place?

Just to show my rationale, kindly analyse the twitter posts that follow.



..and the ANN7 parody account shared my sentiment



Redi Tlhabi agreed as well.



Call me naïve but I have come to accept that online and social media news are more and more sounding like Verimark adverts with their "New", "Imported", "First Ever", "Unique" descriptors of their products, and like the Verimark products the "BREAKING NEWS" news bits seems not to live up to the hype.

So in this age of a plethora of news agencies and distribution platforms, no-one can claim to be 'breaking' a story when readers have gone and dug out the news for themselves, by themselves.

This leaves me with the question - *what breaking news is this?*

ABOUT THAMSANQA MALINGA

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