1. Of course, Facebook lets users choose different privacy settings. But that’s no guarantee, since these sites are designed to link not only “friends” but friends of friends—people we don’t even know. If you’ve got something private to say, facebooks are not the place to say it. Still, does that make them okay as news sources? Even before this came up, Facebook reminded me of eavesdropping. I wouldn’t think of using it as a source in reporting, any more than I would report on other conversations overheard in person. In fact, fifteen years or so ago, I found myself waiting for a friend in a restaurant, seated very close to an environmental activist who had just been released from prison. What I overheard about her time in prison would have made an insightful feature. Should I quote what I overheard? It was clear to me then that I shouldn’t, although she was speaking loudly in a public place. I was intrigued enough to try to contact her, but she didn’t return my calls.

2. Critical incidents are generally shaped by discourse about two features: technology and archetypal figures. Technology, or the devices that shape an incident into news, offers a stage for journalism professionals to experiment with new ways of achieving work-related goals. During the Vietnam War, journalists were given the opportunity to append filmed pictures to words in reporting the war on television, even if a certain time lag was involved. At the time of the Kennedy assassination, live television gave the American public its first live televisual experience of a major public event. The shooting of Kennedy’s presumed assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, on television prompted reporters to consider the advantages—and disadvantages—of live coverage. Changes in technology thereby form the backdrop against which a critical incident is acted out, and made meaningful for those involved in its relay. Archetypal figures, or the individuals who successfully use the technology of news reporting, are an instrumental part of a critical incident’s development. They provide the faces behind the technological devices.
Cognitive development is a specialty in psychology that studies how thinking skills develop over time. Theories of cognitive development have traditionally focused on the period from infancy to adulthood. The theory that has dominated this field for the past half-century is Piaget's stage theory of cognitive development. Piaget based his theories on observations of Swiss children. He found that these children tended to solve problems quite differently at different ages. To explain these differences, Piaget proposed that children progress through four stages as they grow from infancy into adolescence. Cross-cultural studies of Piaget's stage of formal operations have found that in some cultures, very few people are able to complete fourth-stage Piagetian tasks. Does this mean that entire cultures are suspended at a lower stage of cognitive development. In fact, those tasks may not be meaningful in other cultures. Besides the issue of cultural appropriateness, there is also the issue of what is being tested.

Media are considered rich when there is a sense of social presence. Leaner media do not carry all types of information simultaneously. The speed of feedback permitted by the medium, the number and types of sensory channels utilized by the medium, and the richness of language used with the medium determine media richness. Interpersonal communication is very rich because there are ongoing verbal and nonverbal transactions. Annual corporate reports, bank statements or other financial documents rank very low in media richness. Newsletters are a little better because they carry some information that might involve the reader. E-mail, telephone, and videoconferences complete the path from financial statements (leanest) to interpersonal (richest). To be effective, we must select the most appropriate communication media for the task. Ambiguous situations, such as a newly forming team or an unresolved conflict, require rich media. Studies of product development teams show the importance of working at one location rather than using information technologies because of the impact of media richness on the development process.