**Fact-checking List**

According to professional journalists, a fact-checking list is an important tool because just reading over a story several times isn’t a reliable way to find errors. Attention to accuracy starts with the reporter and continues until the article is published online, in print or on air.

**As the reporter:**

* Ask sources to spell name and title; then verify what you wrote.
* Transcribe notes as soon as you leave the interview.
* Ask for (and check) source when someone cites numbers.
* Ask “How do you know that?”
* Ask yourself “What don’t I know?” Then try to find out.
* Look for documentation elsewhere.
* Check reliable sources to verify claims.

**As the editor:**

* Numbers (addresses, ages, distances, money)
* Phone numbers (call them)
* All math (calculate again and have someone else do it, too)
* Names (check in reporter notes and directory)
* Titles (people’s IDs, books etc.)
* Locations (logical? accurate? Check a map)
* Check attribution (insert link if from the web)
* Definitions
* URLs (do they still work?)
* Spelling & Grammar (especially for quotes)
* Spellchecker Errors (their/there, it’s its)
* Assumptions? (If you can’t verify, remove.)
* Doubts? Recheck with the reporters or original source.
* Tough topic you’re not sure you understand? (Find an expert who does and read it to him/her.)

*Adapted from “*[*Why Journalism Professors Should Teach Checklists*](http://mediashift.org/2015/02/journalism-professors-should-teach-accuracy-checklists/)*,” by Steve Buttry, MediaShift, Feb. 2, 2015*