

DAN KENNEDY

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EDUCATION

Master of Liberal Arts, Boston University, May 1984. Field of study: American history.
Thesis: *The Boston Massacre and the Press*.

Bachelor of Arts (with highest honors), Northeastern University, June 1979. Major:
journalism; minor: American history.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

I am a professor in the [School of Journalism](#) at Northeastern University and have held my present rank since 2020. I am also an affiliate faculty member with the [Center for Transformative Media](#) and co-founder and co-leader of a project called [What Works: The Future of Local News](#), both of which are part of Northeastern. I joined the School of Journalism faculty in 2005.

Before that, I worked as the media columnist for *The Boston Phoenix* from 1994 to 2005, having served in several editing positions during the three previous years. Between 1989 and 1990, I published the startup *MetroNorth Magazine*. From 1979 to 1988, I was a reporter, editor, and columnist for *The Daily Times Chronicle* in Woburn, Massachusetts.

SCHOLARSHIP, RESEARCH, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Books

Talking about What Works: Conversations with Entrepreneurs, Publishers and Thought Leaders about the Future of Local News. In progress. Co-authored with Ellen Clegg. A compilation of [interviews from our podcast](#), *What Works: The Future of Local News*. This may be published as a book or possibly as a report issued by the School of Journalism.

[What Works in Community News: Media Startups, News Deserts, and the Future of the Fourth Estate](#). Boston: Beacon Press, 2024. Co-authored with Ellen Clegg. An examination of more than a dozen independent local and regional news organizations across the country — nonprofit and for-profit, digital startups, legacy print newspapers, radio stations, and a television newscast. Critically praised by *Booklist*, *Poynter Online*, and *The Boston Globe*, and favorably cited and featured by *The New York Times* and

numerous other venues. Longlisted for a 2025 Mass Book Award by the Massachusetts Center for the Book.

[*The Return of the Moguls: How Jeff Bezos and John Henry Are Remaking Newspapers for the Twenty-First Century*](#). Lebanon, N.H.: ForeEdge, 2018. An examination of how Bezos (at *The Washington Post*), Henry (at *The Boston Globe*), and other wealthy newspaper owners are working to revive the business of journalism. Critically praised by *Journalism, Editor & Publisher*, *The Boston Globe*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Library Journal*, *Choice* (a publication of the Association of College and Research Libraries), and *Publishers Weekly*.

[*The Wired City: Reimagining Journalism and Civic Life in the Post-Newspaper Age*](#). Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013. *The Wired City* traces the story of the *New Haven Independent*, a nonprofit community news site, as well as several other for-profit and nonprofit digital news startups, and places them within the context of the economic and technological challenges facing journalism. Critically praised by the *Columbia Journalism Review*, *The Boston Globe*, *CommonWealth Magazine*, *Journalism, Choice*, and *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*.

[*Little People: Learning to See the World Through My Daughter's Eyes*](#). Emmaus, Pa.: Rodale, 2003. Partly memoir, mostly an extended work of narrative journalism that explores cultural, historical, scientific, and philosophical topics related to dwarfism. Critically praised by *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Boston Globe*, and *The Providence Journal*, and the subject of interviews by NPR, *Child* magazine, and *Salon*.

Articles (2025–26)

The vast majority of my work is in journalism, mainly media criticism or commentaries on the local news crisis. A full listing of my articles for *The Guardian* (for whom I wrote a weekly column on media and politics from 2007 to 2011), GBH News (for whom I wrote a similar column from 2014 to 2022), *Nieman Lab*, *CommonWealth Beacon*, and other publications [may be found here](#).

- ["Ending the Requirement That Legal Ads Be Published by News Outlets Would Harm Democracy and Journalism."](#) *CommonWealth Beacon*, June 3, 2026.
- ["Journalism Students Are More Skeptical of AI Than You Might Think."](#) *Poynter Online*, March 31, 2026.
- ["As Jeff Bezos Dismantles *The Washington Post*, Five Regional Papers Chart a Course for Survival."](#) *The Conversation*, February 10, 2026.
- ["Even Amid Setbacks, Public Funding for Local News Is Expanding at the State Level."](#) *Poynter Online*, January 22, 2026.

- [“At a Moment of Crisis, Boston’s Top Two Public Media Leaders Argue That Building Community Is the Way Forward. They’re Right.”](#) *CommonWealth Beacon*, August 21, 2025.
- [“Why the Rise of Social Media Has Given Us a Less Happy, More Polarized and Dangerous World.”](#) *Poynter Online*, June 18, 2025.
- [“Powerful Forces Want to Dismantle Libel Protections. History Warns Us Why.”](#) *Poynter Online*, March 31, 2026.

What Works: The Future of Local News

In 2021, Ellen Clegg, a retired *Boston Globe* editorial page editor who is now a Northeastern faculty associate, and I started a website called [What Works: The Future of Local News](#). Our idea was that it would simply serve as a promotional tool for our then-in-progress book, *What Works in Community News*, but we have built it into a project that reports on and offers solutions for the local news crisis. What Works is part of the School of Journalism and is affiliated with the Center for Transformative Media and encompasses a podcast, a blog, conferences and webinars, and public advocacy.

Digital self-publishing

I am the author and creator of *Media Nation*, a nationally recognized blog that I began writing in 2005. It is online at [dankennedy.net](#) and deals with issues related to local news, media, politics, and culture. More than 2,500 subscribers have signed up to receive new posts by email. *Media Nation* is one of the oldest media blogs in the country, as earlier iterations date back to 2001. I write approximately three to five times a week.

Beat the Press

From its launch in 1998 until the end of its run in 2022, I was a regular panelist on *Beat the Press with Emily Rooney*, an award-winning weekly roundtable program devoted to coverage of local and national media on GBH-TV (Channel 2). *Beat the Press* has been revived as a video podcast hosted on the website *Contrarian Boston*, and I am a regular panelist. We have published 10 episodes starting in December 2025 through June 2026.

Book chapters

“Drawbacks of the Digital News Media Environment.” Chapter in Eamon Doyle, *Media Bias and the Role of the Press*. New York: Greenhaven Publishing, 2019, pp. 83–86. Republication of my WGBH News column [“Print Is Dying, Digital Is No Savior: The Long, Ugly Decline Of The Newspaper Business Continues Apace,”](#) January 26, 2016.

“The Return of Independent Media Owners?” Essay in Doris A. Graber and Johanna Dunaway, *Mass Media and American Politics*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2017, 10th edition. My essay, which is about steps that Jeff Bezos had taken to make *The Washington Post* sustainable, appears on pp. 41–42.

[“Political Blogs: Teaching Us Lessons About Community,”](#) Chapter in Stuart Greene and April Lidinsky, *From Inquiry to Academic Writing: A Practical Guide*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2008, pp. 171–174. Reprint of my essay of the same title for the Summer 2008 edition of *Nieman Reports*.

Refereed academic paper

[“The Bezos Effect: How Amazon’s Founder Is Reinventing the *Washington Post* — and What Lessons It Might Hold for the Beleaguered News Business,”](#) Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School, June 8, 2016.

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS (recent)

2025. Ellen Clegg and I were honored by the Massachusetts Center for the Book, as *What Works in Community News* was [longlisted for a Mass Book Award](#) in the nonfiction category.

2023. I received an [Outstanding Eagle Scout Award](#) from the National Eagle Scout Association.

2019. I received the [Yankee Quill Award](#) from the New England Academy of Journalists. This is a career award that “recognizes the efforts and dedication of those in New England who have had a broad influence for good in the field of journalism.”

2019. *Beat the Press* won the Arthur Rowse Award for Press Criticism from the National Press Club for “its persistent scrutiny of local media in Boston.”

2018. I received the James W. Carey Award for Outstanding Journalism from the [Media Ecology Association](#). [More information here](#).

2019. *Beat the Press* won a New England Emmy Award in the interview/discussion category for [our 20th anniversary program](#).

SPEAKING APPEARANCES

I am regularly asked to speak solo and on panels about the state of the media and the future of local news. In 2025 and the first half of 2026, I took part in 10 such speaking appearances, including at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in Cambridge,

Massachusetts, the annual conference of the Alliance for Community Media at Boston University, and at various League of Women Voters and public library events.

MEDIA APPEARANCES, INTERVIEWS, AND CITATIONS

I am frequently interviewed by news organizations about issues related to media ethics, the local journalism crisis, and other journalism topics. Those organizations include *The Boston Globe*, GBH News, The Associated Press, Agence France-Presse, Ocean State Media, the *Boston Business Journal*, and others. In years past, I have been interviewed by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

TEACHING

The courses I most frequently teach are Ethics and Diversity in the News Media (JRNL 4650) and its graduate-level counterpart, Perspectives on News Media Ethics (JRNL 6202); POV: The Art and Craft of Opinion Journalism (JRNL 5460); The First Amendment and the Media (JRNL 3550); and Journalism 2: Intermediate Reporting (JRNL 2201).

During my time at Northeastern I have also created, designed, and taught two courses that have become essential parts of our curriculum (Digital Storytelling and Social Media; POV: The Art and Craft of Opinion Journalism), and am in the process of designing a third (News, Ethics, and the First Amendment).

SERVICE

University

2016–present. Member of the Cadre of Marshals, which volunteers at various commencement ceremonies — not only the university-wide ceremonies but a number of smaller college ceremonies as well.

College

2022–present. Currently in my fourth year on the Tenure and Promotion Committee (formerly the Executive Committee of the College of Arts, Media and Design. In 2023 and 2024, I served as chair.

2019–2021. Served as a member of our college’s Academic Advisory Committee for two years, the second years as chair.

School

2022–present. Serve as chair of the School of Journalism’s Tenure and Promotion Committee.

2014–’15. Served as interim director of the School of Journalism.

2008–present. Serve as head adviser for the School of Journalism.

I perform a considerable amount of other service within our program as well, much of it on an ad hoc basis. I have served on several search committees, including as chair. I serve on our co-op committee, which has been working to identify untapped co-op opportunities for our students; evaluate applications from prospective graduate students; evaluate creative portfolios from prospective undergraduate students; speak with reporters for our independent student newspaper, *The Huntington News*, and our in-house news service, *Northeastern Global News*; and take part in various activities for parents and students when asked.

Professional

In April 2026, I was one of two outside evaluators, along with Professor Teri Finneman of the University of Kansas, who took part in a comprehensive evaluation of the journalism program at the State University of New York in Albany.

Serve on the advisory boards of two journalism nonprofits: *CommonWealth Beacon*, which covers state politics and public policy in Massachusetts; and the Local Journalism Project, which raises money to support the for-profit *Provincetown Independent*.

Take part in the annual gathering of the New England Academy of Journalists to choose winners of the Yankee Quill Award.

Volunteer once or twice a year as a contest judge for the New England Newspaper and Press Association.

Act as a peer reviewer for book publishers of proposals and finished manuscripts.

Community

Serve on the vestry of Grace Episcopal Church in Medford, Massachusetts.

Act as an informal adviser to *Gotta Know Medford*, a startup digital news project in Medford.

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