

In the Story: Curation Guidelines

[INTERNAL FACEBOOK USE ONLY]

Product Overview

In the Story (ITS) is a module that appears on [Trending](#) topic pages, highlighting relevant content from credible Facebook profiles and pages related to the topic. In the Story content is researched and curated by Facebook's editorial team with the goal of providing a balanced variety of high quality content on the subject from applicable sources. A second team, the Search Ranking Analysts (SRAs), works in tandem with the editorial team to research and surface potential content for the ITS module.

Product Goal

In the Story showcases quality posts from relevant subjects and credible experts on all Trending topics so Facebook users can learn more about a story. Success is measured by:

- User engagement metrics on curated ITS posts, and time spent on topic pages
- The review efficiency rate of individual curators, and as a team

Tool Overview

[Single Review Tool \(SRT\)](#) (*primary*): This is the primary tool used to review and curate content for ITS. It automatically queues feeds for the curator based on importance level.

- **It is drag-and-drop:** Click and drag posts in or out of the center column to approve as vital. Click the "X" on a post to unvital.
- **New (left column):** Posts flagged for review show here. A choice must be made for every post before you can save and move on to the next topic.
- **Current (center column, vital):** Any post in this column is considered vital, and appears in the ITS module on a topic page once saved.
- **More Backend Results (right column):** This is a utility column with content automatically scraped based on the topic name. No decisions on any posts in this column need to be made.
- **To save work and progress:** Hit 'Return' on your keyboard when you've completed reviewing a feed. This checks your work and loads the next topic assignment if all appropriate conditions or met.

[Curated Topics](#) (*secondary tool*): This lists all topics currently configured for ITS. Use this to quickly load topics in the SRT that need immediate updates or corrections.

[Top 1000 publishers](#) (*reference tool*): This automatically configured database of websites includes all the publishers we may use as references for snippets and unverified users. Reference links used in SRT or Trending Review Tool V3 are automatically checked against this list before approval.

Review process

1. From the SRT dashboard, click “JUST GO” to begin.

- The tool will automatically assign you a topic for review.
- It will continue to automatically feed you topics as you progress.

2. Evaluate the story.

- Take note of the topic name and description in the upper left corner to grasp the story.
- Consider the topic’s priority based on the review status (silver text in the upper left), and the state of posts already approved in the center column.

3. Evaluate all posts positioned in the left and center columns, if there are any.

- All posts in the left column were flagged by an SRA and require journalist review. These posts are not currently live.
- All posts in the center column were previously approved by a journalist and require re-review. These posts are currently live.
- Using the guidelines below, evaluate whether these posts should be moved to, or remain, in the center column.

4. If there are posts to review, evaluate the author’s importance to the story.

- **The author must have a direct relationship to the story that can be corroborated by reporting from a [Top 1K media site](#) or in some instances a Wikipedia reference.**
 - **Note on using Wikipedia:** We should only point to Wikipedia if the connection is obvious, like the topic being mentioned in the top paragraph in Wikipedia. (Example: Tim Cook is Apple’s CEO)
- **The author’s page or profile must be verifiable.** If the profile or page is not [verified by Facebook](#), it must be corroborated by reporting from a Top 1K media site or in some instances a Wikipedia reference.
 - **For public figures**, organizations or teams who aren’t verified but clearly appear to be the person/organization/team, escalate to Copy Editor and Team Lead for approval.
 - *Sesame Place (public place, unverified page) == VITAL (official Sesame Place webpage links to Facebook page)*

- **For private individuals:** If we cannot verify the authenticity of the page or profile from a Top 1K media org's reporting or Wikipedia reference, it cannot be ranked vital.
- **Tangential authors are not considered vital.** This includes widely recognized politicians, government agencies and advocacy groups who may be widely recognized with a valued position or opinion, but lack a direct role in the story. (3/18/15)
 - *White House condemns terror attack in Tunisia (no Americans involved in attack) ==> White House, Barack Obama, US Embassy are NOT vital*
 - *France condemns terror attack in Tunisia (Tourist from France killed in attack) ==> French embassy and president are VITAL*
 - *Hillary Clinton announces candidacy ==> Rand Paul and Ted Cruz are VITAL, because they are declared candidates. Donald Trump is NOT vital, because he has not declared, nor is he involved in Clinton's bid. (Note 7/23/2015 - written before Trump's announced candidacy)*
 - *Marco Rubio announces candidacy ==> Hillary Clinton is VITAL. Bill Clinton and Robert Reich are NOT vital because they are not candidates or involved in the announcing of Rubio's bid.*
- **Publishers and journalists:** Publishers and journalists are not considered vital for simply publishing or reporting a story. They must be *in* the story, not *on* it. They are considered vital if their role in the story is more substantial, or if their reporting or publishing is part of the story's crux. Escalate questionable cases to shift lead or editor for approval.
 - *Miley Cyrus discusses boyfriend in People interview ==> People is NOT vital (Needs updating)*
 - *Miley Cyrus appears on the cover of People magazine ==> People is VITAL*
 - *Rolling Stone publishes story about campus rapes at UVA ==> Rolling Stone is NOT vital*
 - *Rolling Stone retracts UVA rape story after controversy ==> Rolling Stone is VITAL*
 - *ESPN's Adam Schefter breaks story that NFL has suspended Ray Rice ==> Adam Schefter and ESPN are NOT vital*
 - *Adam Schefter leaves ESPN ==> Adam Schefter and ESPN are VITAL*

5. If an author meets the above qualifications, evaluate the content of the post.

- **The post must be relevant to the story.**
- **The post must be easy to understand.** In general, stick to English-written posts for US topics. But there are exceptions for foreign language posts:
 - **VITAL:** The post contains user-written English translation within post (not the Bing translation).
 - **VITAL:** The post contains a picture or video that effectively communicates or evokes the post's message and the Bing translation reads acceptably.
 - **VITAL:** Non-US topics that are specific to other regions such as India or Canada. Check the Bing translation to get an understanding for the content of the post.

- **The post should be somewhat recent:** Escalate to a copy editor if considering a post that is older than 3 days. Unvital previously approved posts that have gone stale since their last review.
- **No more than TWO posts from the same author:** The max number of posts to consider as vital from a single author is two. Only chose more than one if it adds to the value of the narrative. If it's repetitive, it's not worth including.
- **The post should not violate Facebook's content policy:** Content with profanity, nudity, violence, sexual content is OK as long as it meets [Facebook's Content Policy guidelines](#). Consult a copy editor with any specific questions. Posts that are clear violations of policy should be reported.
- **The post should not duplicate other VITAL posts:** If multiple vital authors post duplicate content with identical or near-identical commentary (common with movie trailer topics), select only the most vital author's post or chose a different vital post from the duplicating author.
 - VIDEO EDGE CASE: If one vital author posts native video, and another vital author posts a link to the video on YouTube, and their commentary text is not duplicate, the post is vital.
- **FOR VIDEO-CENTRIC TOPICS:** The post should not duplicate native video posts curated as Featured Video.
 - If a topic is video-centric (ex: movie trailers, TV clips, etc), a native video post by a vital author should be curated by the Trending team in the native video position, and it should **not be duplicated** in In the Story.
 - If you find such a post, check that the Trending team has curated the post in the featured video position, via the V3 Trending Review Tool.
 - If you find a different native video post from a different vital author with high-quality commentary, it can be considered vital in addition to the Native Video selection.
- **The post should not be a re-share without commentary:** It can be vital if the author writes interesting commentary with the re-share, but in general, use the original author's post instead of the share.
- **The post should not be a retweet ingested from the author's Twitter:** In general, Twitter scrape posts are not preferred, but they are acceptable if the quality is strong.
- **The post must contain more substance than a link to a publisher article.** Posts may contain text, video, photo and/or links to articles or media.
 - **VITAL:** Author posts link with commentary: Author commentary must be more substantial than a copy-paste of the headline or URL. Quoting from article is acceptable.
 - **VITAL:** Author posts link without commentary to a statement on their own website or blog, with or without commentary in post.
 - **NOT VITAL:** Author posts link to publisher (CNN, ESPN, etc) without any commentary.

6. Evaluate vital posts for objectivity and balance

Make an effort to curate credible voices from all crucial sides of the story. It is not always possible to curate a topic with full objectivity because opposing content is not always available publicly on

Facebook. Follow these principles to remain as close to objective as possible:

1. **Do not ignore principles to include an opposing voice for objectivity reasons.** The author and post should be held to the same principles as all others.
2. **For topics with clear 'for' and 'against' sides** (notably: sports, politics): Strive to include vital posts from all sides in an accurate and objective nature. If there is a clear ratio of 'for' and 'against' (ex: votes, teams) in the topic's reporting, the balance of curated authors should be a representation of that ratio if possible. For example: if 20% voted for and 80% voted against, then one 'for' post and two 'against' posts is an accurate representation. Search for and rank in this order:
 - a. **TIER A VITAL:** Subjects mentioned in the trending topic description and summary
 - b. **TIER B VITAL:** If legislation is the subject of the topic, those directly involved in the bill's creation or history
 - c. **TIER C VITAL:** Leaders and speakers of the voting group (ex: Senator Mitch McConnell is vital for topics related to votes in U.S. Senate because he is the senate majority leader)
 - d. **TIER D VITAL:** Subjects who have voted or will be voting on the bill
3. **For sports game topics:** Make effort to include at least one post from winner and one from loser, as well as posts from athletes of both teams. Post from applicable league is also acceptable.

7. Evaluate vital posts for final approval

- **No more than 3 posts should be curated as vital in ITS at a time, except for:**
 - **National/Major/Nuclear topics:** Topics marked above 'Normal' in trending may have up to 5 posts marked as vital (Example: Charlie Hebdo shooting).
 - **Topics with more than 3 primary subjects** (shift lead or editor approval required): Topics with more than 3 key subjects of equal vitalness may have up to 5 posts marked as vital (Example: Bonnaroo announces 2015 band lineup).
 - **Evolving topics that are regularly in the news:** Examples include Islamic State, Same-sex marriage, Ebola, etc. Seek approval or guidance from a shift lead or editor.
 - **Marquee coverage/special cases:** Some topics may go over 5 posts for curation, such as the Super Bowl, Oscars, elections, etc. Specific guidance comes from leadership team for these special cases.
- **After your review, click and drag any posts considered vital to the center (Current) column.**
- **For all remaining posts in the left or center column that are deemed NOT vital, click the X on each post.**
 - Follow the pop up prompt and select the reason(s) the post is not vital.
 - This drops the posts to the graveyard at the bottom of the page, in case you need to reference them again.

8. Search for posts to inject

- **If there are obvious story subjects that you have not yet evaluated, do a search for applicable profiles and pages.**
- **If you find a post that meets the above qualifications, copy the URL of the post and paste it into the injector field at the bottom of the page in SRT.**
- **An injected post will appear in the left column of SRT. Drag it to the center column.**

9. Write a snippet for all vital posts in center column

- **[Follow the Snippet Style Guide for guidance.](#)**
- **A snippet is a short (45 character) descriptive title used to identify an author's relevance to the given story.**
- **Snippets should be direct and written in active voice whenever possible.**
- **All snippets are manually logged by curators in a Quip doc in the [FBNY folder](#).**
- **For questions about previously written snippets on a post, click the silver question mark next to the snippet field to load a history of the curators who have made previous decisions on the post.**
- **Review snippets previously approved by other curators for mistakes or necessary updates.**

10. Find a reference link that corroborates your snippet

- **ALL LANGUAGE USED IN A SNIPPET MUST BE CORROBORATED VIA:**
 - A Wikipedia entry
 - An Article published on a site listed in the [Top 1000 publishers database](#)
- **Reference links display publicly for users who view topic pages.**
- **If a reference link is not Wikipedia or a Top 1K, the tool will prevent you from saving until you find a usable reference.**

11. Flag topic for frequent review if applicable

If the topic matches any of the following criteria, click the “Needs Frequent Review” button. This prioritizes the topic for SRAs and Journalists.

- Topic is set to National, Major or Nuclear status in Trending
- Topic is a live event currently in progress (ex: sports, speech, concert, TV show)
- Topic is an ongoing, multifaceted story (ex: Baltimore riots, Ukraine, Ebola)

If the topic no longer meets any of the above criteria, click the button again to turn off frequent review.

12. Click return on your keyboard to save your work.

- Do not use the nav buttons at the bottom of the tool. The arrows will cycle you through your assignments, but only the return button saves your work.
- If you need to return to a previous feed, you can cycle back with the nav buttons or the arrows on your keyboard. Click the refresh icon to load previously saved work.

13. At the end of your shift, click “Dump” to release unreviewed topics.

Curation efficiency

ITS Curators should edit feeds quickly and efficiently, but note that heavier stories require extra care. Prioritize time based on story complexity. Here are some common examples of the types of stories ITS curators review, along with target times for each:

Basic entertainment + gossip: 1 minute

- *What to look for:* Original post from subject(s). Followup commentary from subject(s).
- *Examples:* Movie trailers, viral videos, Ryan Gosling and Eva Mendes have a baby
- *Avoid:* Redundant posts from similar subjects, tangential authors and pundits

Sports games: 1 minute

- *What to look for:* Posts from winner and loser. Post from league. Followup from athletes.
- *Examples:* Results and highlights from matchups (NFL, MLB, NBA, NHL, tennis, soccer, cricket, rugby, etc)
- *Avoid:* Redundant posts from similar subjects, tangential authors and pundits

Contained news story: 2 minutes

- *What to look for:* Commentary from subject(s). Analysis/commentary from experts with role in story.
- *Examples:* India successfully puts aircraft into Martian orbit, NBA star Derrick Rose donates \$1m to charity
- *Avoid:* Journalists, redundant posts, tangential authors

Obits/achievements/resignations: 3 minutes

- *What to look for:* Thoughtful posts from subject(s), colleagues, friends and family. 5 posts are allowable, pending shift lead approval.

- *Examples:* Joan Rivers dies, Derek Jeter’s final MLB game
- *Avoid:* Celebrities and public figures without an interesting or relevant link to the subject

Top news stories: 3-5 minutes

- *What to look for:* Commentary from subject(s). Analysis from authorities with direct link or involvement to the story.
- *Examples:* Elections in Israel, Vikings suspend Ray Rice, Robin Williams dies
- *Avoid:* Journalists, redundant posts, tangential figures without a relevant tie to subject

Evolving topics: 3-5 minutes

- *What to look for:* Less adherence to headline required for major ongoing topics. Curate latest from vital authors and subjects: experts, politicians and organizations who are directly involved in the story.
- *Examples:* Islamic State, Ukraine conflict, Ebola, Ferguson
- *Avoid:* Journalists, redundant posts, tangential figures without a relevant tie to subject

General guidance and edge cases

- **Authors with multiple verifiable accounts:** Some authors have multiple accounts (example: Ted Cruz has 3 accounts, each for different political purpose). Treat these as a single user and select no more than 2 total posts as vital from the applicable accounts.
- **Can’t find anything vital?** That’s fine. The ITS module won’t show on the topic page until we curate a post. Don’t loosen principles to make something fit. There is no harm in a topic page without ITS if there isn’t vital content to curate for it. Remember that we are limited by what content is available and our ability to corroborate it.
- **Deceased authors:** Take care when considering authors who are deceased. It should be obvious from the post and/or snippet that the author is no longer alive, and that their page or profile is managed by family or an estate when applicable.
- **Graphic content:** While Trending needs to cater to a PG-13 audience, ITS can be more inclusive because its posts are behind a click – meaning that a user had to knowingly engage with a potentially risky topic. Content with profanity, nudity, violence, sexual content is OK as long as it meets [Facebook’s Content Policy guidelines](#). Consult your Copy Editor (and escalate to Team Lead and/or Editor) with any specific questions.
- **“Look, we’re trending” meta posts:** Posts about a vital author trending on Facebook are not vital. Posts should offer value and insight into the story, not where it’s published, promoted or highlighted.
- **Unofficial fan pages** are not vital authors or experts unless they are explicitly defined as a subject of the story with proper corroboration.

Additional resources

- [Trending Review Guidelines](#)
- [In the Story Snippet Guidelines](#)
- [Facebook News Team Stylebook](#)