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Rising Star: Colin Campbell

By [Kirsten Ballard](#) July 11, 2017



Avoid words that make the average person's eyes glaze over. This is Colin Campbell's journalism advice. It might be easier said than done, especially as the Raleigh *News and Observer*'s state government and politics reporter. The meetings he covers are full of bureaucratic jargon and intricate bills.

So each time he sits down to write a story, he aims to make it easily readable. If a simple word or phrase doesn't suffice, Colin includes an explanation in his story.

Jordan Schrader, State Government Editor for the *Observer*, nominated Colin as a News Media Alliance Rising Star, saying Colin is a dogged reporter who breaks news, juggles multiple stories and digs deep. He's well known for his Twitter presence and behind-the-scenes details.

And Colin is usually at the scene. His days are spent juggling legislative meetings and writing at the capital, averaging between three and five meetings a day.

One of his favorite projects was the 2016 election. "It was post-election madness," he says. The Governor's race was too close to call and it stretched out the election year.

He didn't start out as a government reporter. In fact, he started out in radio. The summer after his freshman year in high school, he took an internship at a community radio station assuming it would be a paper-pushing job. Instead, he became a morning newscaster. From there, he was hooked.

He was involved with the school paper in high school and college, always jumping into a new topic. From college, he became a general assignment reporter, covering everything under the sun. That's part of the allure to him. "Important, exciting things are happening. It never gets dull," he says.

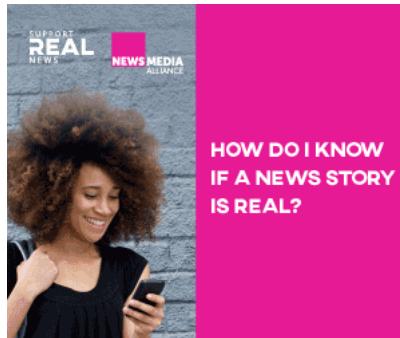
Even when covering developing legislation, he aims to make each piece different and easily digestible. When HB2, the notorious "bathroom bill," was in the news, he says it was a challenge to come up with different angles. He wrote almost daily stories on the bill. "I tried to make sure whatever I did continued to jump into specific aspects of bill and what it really did and didn't do," he says.

It was an emotionally charged subject, and he worked to dispel some of the myths produced by zealous supporters and protestors.

He credits his young age for his fresh ideas and adaptability. “I’m not too accustomed to doing things a certain way,” he says. “I adapt to new things as they come along.”

Moving forward in his career, he wants to stay at the front of innovation. He predicts we’ll see a lot more startups covering a single subject and non-traditional models funded by grants. “It’s going to go beyond newspapers or radio,” he says.

Kirsten Ballard



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