News Item

Covering COVID-19 with automated news | Columbia Journalism Review

By Samuel Danzon-Chambaud

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> For all the news organizations that have adopted automated journalism over the last decade or so, the COVID-19 pandemic could have been the perfect story to automate as the technology draws on structured data that can fit into predictable story frames. This report documents the experiences of nine media organizations that have done so and gives an overview of the ad hoc solutions journalists used to work around the challenges of having to rely on external datasets. It shows the importance for media practitioners to be able to solve problems through applying computing skills, a form of knowledge known as *computational thinking* or *computational journalism* in a newsroom setting. This type of mindset has given journalists a considerable edge in deploying automated news quickly and efficiently in the midst of a global pandemic, but may also fuel ideas for the next iteration of these products.
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