

The Daily Error - Rules & FAQ

Last updated 8:45am March 25th, 2024

Will it be truly *daily*?

I'm skeptical! Just given ADHD and fluctuating work commitments. But I'm going to aim for most weekdays, and to publish for at least a few weeks for the pilot. Though I won't publish on days where I have a longform story going out.

What's the point of the series?

I think all major newspapers get a lot of things wrong and are too reluctant to admit the scale of the problem. For readers, there's also the issue of [Gell-Mann Amnesia](#) where they say "ok well they got this one story wrong, but surely that's an isolated occurrence". By proving that I can continually find new ones, from a single newspaper, in just an hour, across multiple sections, hopefully that will draw attention to the problem and make it harder to ignore.

I've also historically focused on [longform pieces](#) that take a lot of time to read and write. So trying to mix it up.

Why pick on the New York Times specifically?

Because of how well-regarded they are in many circles, and because of how much influence they have over public perception. It's also more sporting. This series would be too easy to do with most major newspapers.

Why don't you mention reporters by name?

I used to, sparingly, but I stopped. Because it's not about individuals. It's about the system in which they work. Also I strongly dislike sending mobs after people. They don't help anyone or anything.

Will you give the NYT a head's up before you publish each time?

No, just a standing offer to review any concerns they have. Approaching them for each story would slow down publication a lot, and is a bit socially high-friction. But if they want me to, I'd be happy to.

What if they fix their errors?

I'll keep [a tracker](#) on which stories they've corrected, monitoring each story for a week after I write about it. If they don't correct it by then, they likely won't. (If they make me aware later, I'll still update accordingly.)

What about any mistakes that *you* make?

It happens! But to limit the harm I cause, my policy has long been to reward readers who point out anything that's wrong, unfair, or misleading. I keep [a running corrections tracker](#) of my own, and

whenever I publish a new article I include details on how to submit feedback and where to find any submitted corrections requests.

Do you have any political motivation?

Nope. You can read about my political leanings in longer detail [here](#), though the gist is that I'm a boring moderate. That I tend to write more about errors in left-leaning newspapers like the NYT isn't because I have any particular beef with them. The professional class just tends to believe that some newspapers are particularly trustworthy ([example](#)). My aim is showing that this isn't quite true, and why. Those papers just happen to mostly lean left.

Which errors count?

Errors can be of fact or framing. I usually don't try to make judgments about whether the mistakes were honest or intentional. The point is just calling out examples that a better editing process should have caught.

How do you count how long it takes to find and confirm one?

I'll stopwatch from the time I click on the story link to when I find enough evidence to ring the bell. I won't count time I spent writing, doing extra due diligence, or looking through other NYT stories that I opt not to write about. The exercise is just "if I can confirm a big mistake that fast while coming in cold, isn't that a problem?"

Will you be looking for specific stories?

Not really. I'll often look at The Daily first, just given how popular it is. Anything they got wrong there will have reached a very large audience. If I don't see anything there I'll poke around more. I'll mostly try to pick stories from the last day or so, but may sometimes go back further to find something I think readers will find interesting.

For fairness, I won't count reader tips (please don't send them!). And while I may look more in sections that I'm more familiar with, I'll try to mix it up to keep it fresh and challenging.

Do you have any undisclosed financial interests?

Nope. I get modest reader subscription revenues, though I largely do this for the mission. If I ever write about a company or niche where I have some connection via my day work as a comms freelancer, I always disclose it. Though it's rare, as I like to keep the two separate. (Sometimes I get new clients from doing this, who like the approach or style etc. So, sure, it's good marketing. But I don't give my clients any say in what I write.)