The most basic of the practical and logistical reasons is that our computers, photos, TVs, and 8 x 11 pieces of paper in landscape mode are rectangular rather than square. Most infographics and charts are rectangular, even though we don't think about it much. To fit as much information as possible in a visual display, a rectangle works better than a square.

The other chosen constraint that eventually resulted in the numerical score ranges were the number of categories for reliability; eight, and the number for bias; seven. The categories were constructed first, based on what different types of news and informational content actually exist out there. If you read enough existing news content in our information landscape, from the very best to worst, patterns naturally form around what comprises the content people find good, ok, and bad. After reading enough content and describing what each piece was, the vast majority naturally fell into eight top-to-bottom categories, which are described in our White Paper.

Regarding bias, we decided that seven main categories were ideal for describing sufficiently granular, but not too granular levels of left-right bias. Three or five seemed too few, but nine or more seemed like way too many–it becomes harder to distinctively name categories the more you have.

We chose to have a range of scores within each category to allow analysts to distinguish between content within a category. An opinion article, for example, can range from a well-supported opinion to one bordering on selectivity. An article near the middle could be ever so slightly left or right of the center line, or more noticeably so. We wanted at least several points per category.

Once we arrived at eight categories for reliability and seven for bias,, it followed that to make the categories evenly spaced, the numerical range would have to be divisible by eight vertically and seven horizontally and accommodate a reasonable number of points within a category. The tricky thing is that there are more categories top to bottom–eight–than there are categories left-to-right–seven–but a rectangle on a screen is wider across than it is tall! Therefore the categories would have to be wider than they are tall. The numerical range vertically had to be divisible by eight to be even; reasonable options were 0-40, allowing for a 5-point spread, 0-48, for a 6 point spread, 0-56 for a 7 point

spread. But 0-64, for an 8-point spread, was easiest to draw on gridlines on data visualization programs and looked the nicest, aesthetically. The horizontal categories needed to be a slightly bigger number than 64 (because seven is more categories than eight and the chart had to be wider than tall) divisible by seven and in a reasonable aspect ratio. 84 was the best choice.