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[Mike](#)

### [More on who we are and what we do: We're reporters \(except when the news is \*really bad\*, right?\)](#)

The answer to the question posed in the headline may surprise you. First, [last time](#) I explained that just like “real” reporters we don’t “spin” like some PR flacks. In fact, we avoid editorializing in our news releases and stories all together. Honest. We know from experience that burnishing a news release won’t necessarily make it newsworthy. (In this regard, the farther newswriting and PR writing diverge, the less credible PR becomes.)

Fortunately, there’s no shortage of newsworthy RIT stories. But even though RIT is great—even the best—at some things, such adjectives should *rarely* find their way into a news release (unless they’re in a quote attributed to someone else). Here’s another example:

A few years ago, I wrote a [news release](#) about the creation of a graduate program in telecommunications engineering technology. By answering “why” RIT created the program, there was no need to spin it as the best (even if it is). As my PR Writing students learned, answering “why”—among the five Ws and the H—is often the most compelling aspect of a news story.

So you got it, right? We’re like real reporters. Oh, but there’s one more thing: We really are PR people. Though we may consider ourselves reporters, we work in public relations. Typically, we don’t break negative news on the front pages of [News & Events](#) (we leave that to [Reporter](#), RIT’s student-published magazine).

That *doesn’t* mean we avoid negative news entirely. A good example was our [coverage of the 2004 armed robbery at Crossroads](#)—reporting for which University News won an award.

Dealing with negative news can pose one of our biggest challenges. When bad news strikes, the key is to avoid spin and adhere to the principle of *transparency* by being *open, honest and straightforward* with the news media and public.

So, we’re newspeople . . . and media relations specialists . . . and PR people . . . but not [spinmeisters](#). (Now you know why I often describe my job with the easier answer explained in [part one!](#))

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Name (required)

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### About us

The Tiger Beat takes you behind the scenes with the members of [RIT University News](#)—the news and public relations division of [Rochester Institute of Technology](#). Get the “story behind the story” and an insider’s look at who we are and what we do to publicize RIT news.

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