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Media Standards Trust calls on news organisations to adopt consistent news formats for online content

LONDON -- The Media Standards Trust has today (Friday 10 July) called on news organisations to adopt consistent news formats for online content. The call comes as The Associated Press and the Media Standards Trust launch a new proposed news microformat.

The new proposed microformat, created by AP in association with the Trust, effectively encapsulates content and metadata so that critical information about every news story is available, including:

- what the story is about,
- where it was written,
- who wrote it,
- where it was published,
- the news principles it adheres to (if any), and
- any usage rights associated with it.

The proposed news microformat is non-proprietary, open source and intended to become a standard to be used by anyone producing news content. It is already being piloted by openDemocracy.net – the human rights and democracy news forum.

The proposed microformat is now being tested on all AP text content. News stories are available in the new format via the AP Developer API, which also is in beta testing, and AP's Web Feeds platform, an internet-based distribution platform for AP. The Associated Press (www.ap.org), a not-for-profit organization headquartered in New York, is the world's largest global news agency. More information on the microformat can be found at <http://www.valueaddednews.org/technical/techspec>

Martin Moore, director of the Media Standards Trust said:

“Signposting online news consistently is good for news organizations, and good for the public”.

Todd Martin, AP vice president of Technology Development said:

“We think this news format extends microformat efforts to date, by applying the basic principles of simplicity, reuse and semantic presentation specifically for news content”.

Ends.



For more information, contact Martin Moore at the Media Standards Trust on +44 (0)207 608 8149 or martin.moore@mediastandardstrust.org or Jack Stokes at AP at +1 212 621 1720 or jstokes@ap.org

Notes to editors:

1. In May, Google announced that it would be supporting microformats and using some of the additional metadata in its search snippets.
2. The Media Standards Trust has launched the Value Added News site, www.valueaddednews.org, to coordinate discussion of the proposed news formats, host technical specifications, explain the benefits and detail how other organizations can integrate news formats into their own content.
3. openDemocracy.net is currently running a live pilot of Value Added News
4. The Media Standards Trust is a non-profit research and development organization based in the UK. It is a registered charity that finds ways to foster high standards in news on behalf of the public.
5. Value Added News is part of the transparency initiative, a joint project with Sir Tim Berners-Lee and his Centre for Web Science (the WSRI). The transparency initiative is funded through grants from the MacArthur Foundation and the Knight Foundation.