

COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

The Audit: CJR's Business Desk

The business press section of the *Columbia Journalism Review*, The Audit delivers what we believe to be the nation's most thorough, substantive, and timely critique of the nation's financial media, both online and in print. As the nation navigates through its greatest financial crisis in eighty years, financial journalism has assumed an even more central role in the public discourse. The Audit is essential for readers seeking to grasp both today's bewildering business news and the news organizations that produce it.

Since 2007, The Audit has worked to raise the quality and sophistication of business journalism, to widen its scope beyond narrow investor-related concerns, and to bolster an investigative culture that at business publications has been under siege. To do so, The Audit offers a two-pronged approach.

It offers rapid, online reports by former *Wall Street Journal* reporter Ryan Chittum, who sorts through the endless torrent of business news to provide timely and thoughtful analysis of flaws, errors, and distortions, as well as what's new, notable, and valuable. Ryan's experience-laced anecdotes and full-throated style have gained him a wide following, particularly among business reporters and editors.

The Audit prides itself on deep reporting and research that goes beyond observations about individual stories to look at trends and problems in financial coverage over time and across news outlets. Long-form pieces have ranged from warnings against News Corp.'s takeover of Dow Jones & Co. to an exploration of flaws in coverage of Citigroup; from a probe of the business press's messiah complex through coverage of John Thain to the dissection of a feud between *Barron's* and CNBC's Jim Cramer.

Our coverage of the business press and the financial crisis has received wide praise and attention, regularly being linked from major water-cooler journalism sites and cited in news outlets around the world, including the *Financial Times*, *Portfolio*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Washington Times*, and *The New York Observer*. Our staffers have appeared on CNN, NPR, and Al-Jazeera to offer their views on how journalism has met the economic challenge. As New York University journalism professor Jay Rosen wrote of one CJR piece on *The Wall Street Journal's* coverage of the financial bailout, "This is what press criticism needs to be."

The Audit is overseen by former *Wall Street Journal* reporter and Pulitzer Prize winner Dean Starkman, and written by him, Chittum, and staff writer Elinore Longobardi.