

The KNOWLEDGE FACTORY: Build the Legitimacy You Need Behind Your Voice
Information is POWER—when it's extracted, packaged and deployed strategically!

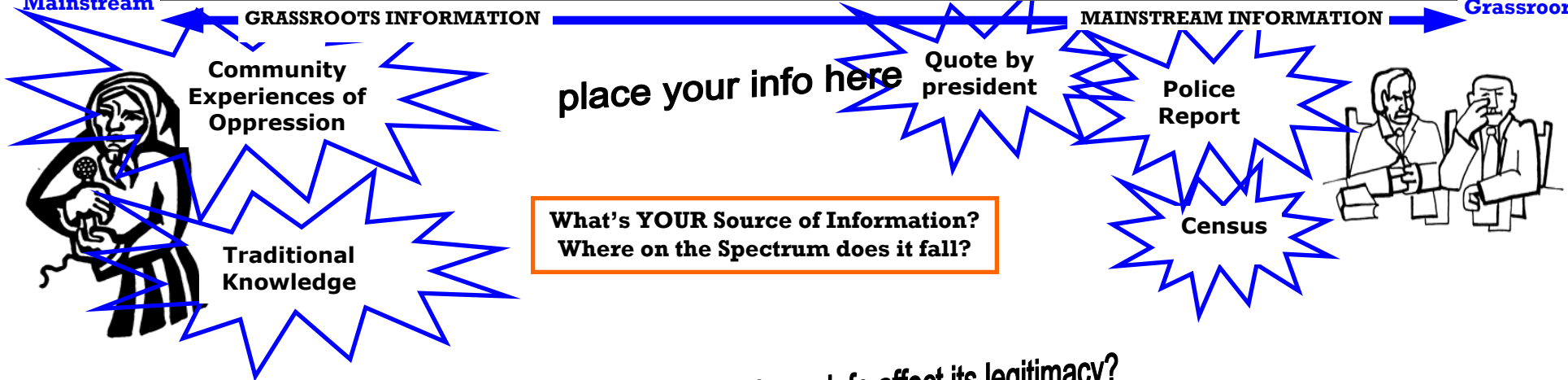
le-giti-ma-cy (noun) - the state of conforming to recognized and accepted rules and standards. (Merriam-Webster, 2006)

“Legitimate information” typically assumes that it’s been deemed genuinely “objective” and “unbiased” from Western scientific perspective, and *only* those who are formally trained in the Western scientific research methods are deemed credible enough to produce worthy information in dominant society . When communities speak Truth to powers-that-be, their opponents challenge their credibility, because community knowledge isn’t produced in *that* way — after all, it’s often felt first-hand and analyzed in the context of their historical experiences of oppression and struggle — and that’s enough to discredit community voices in policy decision-making. But on the other hand, unlike policy-makers, community folks may trust their elders and community leaders, rather than outside researchers with advanced university degrees claiming to be ‘experts.’

Conclusion: Your information needs to carry legitimacy *with your specific target audience*, not every player out there, for it to be an effective political ammunition to achieve your goal. So, be strategic and effective with what you know. Let your information flow through the Knowledge Factory, to produce powerful “information ammunition” for the People!

Legitimate in the Grassroots; Not legitimate, irrelevant, not scientifically valid or accurate in the Mainstream

Legitimate in Mainstream; Not legitimate, trusted, or often understood in the Grassroots



How does the Type of your info affect its legitimacy?

- Living in Memory, in the Hearts and Minds of the People in the Community
- Can exist in form of Testimony

HOW /WHERE DO THE INFO LIVE?

- Research paper
- Publications
- Government- or thinktank-issued analyses
- Recommendations to government agencies by “expert” scientists

- Not accepted by mainstream standards
- Often does not exist in hard copy (intangible) - so it has shelf-life equivalent to a person’s life

ASSIGNED CHARACTERISTICS

- Expensive production in the ‘product’
- Long shelf-life
- Affiliation/association of prestigious institution(s) and recognized ‘experts’
- Uses words people rarely use

- Community members understand this language, and can relate better
- More trustworthy to community folks than white dudes in suits or lab coats
- Human face on the issue, emotional

STRATEGIC VALUE

- Even Your Staunchest Opponent cannot Discredit your Information to convince the mainstream audience.
- Acts as powerful shield from attacks by opponents for officials in government/management

Applying the Info in the Public Domain

Be intentional about which Factory Pipeline the information should travel through—so that when it comes out the other end, it's an ammunition fit to do the job you intended!

GRASSROOTS INFORMATION

MAINSTREAM INFORMATION

- The Arts (community street theater, spoken word, etc.)
- Human interest coverage in the Sunday paper
- Community event—provide forum for grassroots voice to get out

- Participatory research methods (e.g. Community surveys)

WHERE'S YOUR STAR?
'Convert & package' the information strategically; make it understandable and 'legitimate' for your specific audience!

- Factsheets designed to educate community, breaking down gov. data
- Translating docs
- Putting out analyses & other educational materials

- Info is cooked & ready to serve as "legitimate"

identify your audience - then package your information accordingly!

→ Advance base-building, build membership capacity; create space for grassroots voice in public domain; put human face on the issue

→ Turn community knowledge into information that carries "legitimacy" in the world in which decision-makers operate

→ Use as is for decision-makers and their key allies and other mediating agents to use

GRASSROOTS AUDIENCE

MAINSTREAM AUDIENCE

deploy your 'information ammunition' to achieve intended outcome!



Make Grassroots level Impact!



Make Policy level Impact!!

