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Connecting

October 21, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this the 21st day of October 2020,

Today's Connecting brings first responses to our call for your stories of unusual and challenging elections you've covered – and thanks to **Scott Charton** and **Gene Herrick** for getting the ball rolling.

I look forward to hearing your own stories.

We also bring you the style of elections terminology as outlined in the **AP Stylebook**. Click [here](#) for highlights of the new Topical Guide and an invitation to a Twitter chat on presidential terms.

WRITTEN A BOOK IN THE PAST YEAR?

We've heard from a dozen colleagues thus far with descriptions of books they've written in the past year. Connecting will feature them in our annual listing of books authored by Connecting colleagues. The book issue will appear in a couple weeks – so this is an invitation to send me the following: Name of book, jpg image of the cover and your headshot, and 300 words on the book including where it can be purchased. Send along the information soon.

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy.

Paul

Exclusive: AP to call elections for Alexa and other Big Tech channels

By Sara Fischer

Axios

Many of the world's biggest tech and telecom companies, like Google, Amazon, Microsoft and AT&T, are licensing the Associated Press' election results to power their voice, video and search products, executives tell Axios.

How it works: Because tech firms need to answer millions of unique voice commands and search queries in real time, the results will be coded through an API — an interface that a computer program can read — designed to handle "not enough results in yet" and "too close to call" cases.

"The context is different when providing results for tech companies. You have to consider not only, 'What is too close to call?' but also 'How do you program to that?'"

— Brian Scanlon, AP director of election services



Why it matters: Many election outcomes are expected to be delayed for at least a week. Given the enormous growth of smart home devices and voice assistants during the pandemic, users are going to expect accurate, real-time updates via those platforms.

The big picture: The uncertain nature of this year's election and the pandemic-driven shift to mail-in voting has put more pressure on companies like AP — as well as their decision-desk counterparts at TV networks — to proceed with caution when calling races. Some media companies have opted not to predict election results at all.

Details: AP provides tech companies with election updates via a proprietary API that tech companies can plug into with a subscription.

The tech companies define their own use cases for the data and then code their algorithms, routing the results to different products in real-time, like voice assistants or search engines.

Some tech companies will use very granular data to address very narrow queries; others will use broader data sets to power general results pages.

Some of these companies have been partnering with AP for many months to provide data on primary election results. Those partnerships have helped AP refine its efforts for the general election.

To address new use cases, AP had to not only convert all of its election data into easily-accessible code, but also to consider different types of math and data sets when determining results.

"Tech companies helped us get to this idea that all of this has to be programmatic," says Scanlon, who's been working in elections for AP since 2006.

"They're thinking about it almost in an equation rather than thinking about it as a political scientist or a reporter writing a story."

An example Scanlon notes is that a user may ask a voice assistant on election night how many votes are expected to be counted on election night. That's the sort of data AP has always had but hasn't always published in a world where it was predicting races, not answering users' questions.

"It's changed our approach in thinking about things we provide to our own decision desk and anything we can signal for other companies."

Details: Each tech company will route the results to different products.

Google will use the results to power its Google Search queries and all of its voice-enabled devices, like the Google Home and Google Nest Home Hub. The firm, which has used AP results in previous elections, will feature results via a dedicated feature on its search results page, but results will not be featured in Google News. The results feature on Search will be available in more than 70 languages.

Amazon will use the results to power voice search queries via Alexa.

Microsoft will use AP's data to power results for Microsoft News and Microsoft Bing. The data on both platforms will refresh every minute. The results will power a real-

time map on Microsoft News and will be available in English across MSN, Microsoft Bing, the Microsoft News apps, and Microsoft Edge browser.

AT&T will use AP data feed to power a special channel on DirecTV with real-time election results alongside video coverage from different networks.

Between the lines: For years, AP provided election results mostly to media companies for them to publish to their audiences. But today, any company that delivers information is expected to provide answers.

AP licenses its elections data to dozens of media companies, telecom and tech companies, as well as display screens in public locations.

The bottom line: "This stuff was typically prepared by elections researchers for other elections researchers," says Scanlon. "It was never thought of this way when it was built. We have to think about a different end user now."

Click [here](#) for link to this story. Shared by Mike Feinsilber, Peg Coughlin.

Your stories of challenging election coverage

Remembering former Missouri Gov. Mel Carnahan, 20 years after his sudden death



President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary Clinton joined Vice President Al Gore and his wife Tipper Gore for the 2000 memorial service for Missouri Gov. Mel Carnahan in Jefferson City. Photo by Robert Cohen, St. Louis Post-Dispatch.



Jean Carnahan smiles at her son Tom as the family of Gov. Mel Carnahan follows the caisson carrying the casket of the former governor in 2000. From left are daughter Robin, grandson Andrew, daughter in law Debra, son Russ, grandson Austin, wife Jean and son Tom. Photo by Robert Cohen, St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Scott Charton is a communications consultant based in Columbia, Missouri. He retired from journalism in 2005 after 22 years as a politics and government correspondent for The Associated Press. He wrote this remembrance for the Missouri Independent, a new online nonprofit news site.

By Scott Charton ([Email](#))

Today many young people are casting their first votes with no living memory of Missouri's 2000 general election. But it's worth remembering for an outcome unprecedented in American history: A deceased man was elected United States senator.

More importantly, though, it's worth remembering because of the man elected that night back in November 2000: two-term Democratic Gov. Mel Carnahan, who passed away tragically just 22 days before he unseated Republican Sen. John Ashcroft by a margin of 48,960 votes.



Carnahan, 66, his eldest son Roger "Randy" Carnahan, 44, and campaign adviser and close family friend Chris Sifford, 37, were killed the night of Monday, Oct. 16, 2000, when their twin-engine Cessna 335 crashed in rainy weather in Jefferson County, about 40 miles southwest of St. Louis.

They took off just before 7 p.m. from St. Louis Downtown Airport in Cahokia, Ill., bound for New Madrid, Mo., and a banquet organized by Black ministers. Several hundred people were assembled and waiting at the banquet hall.

St. Louis Police Detective Tom Malacek was the last living person to see the three men. He helped close the airplane door from the outside, after driving the governor to Cahokia from a campaign event. Randy Carnahan and Chris Sifford left the event early with Malacek's police protective detail partner to get the plane ready and check the weather and flight plans.

"It was dark out and it was misting a little bit and I said to the Governor, 'Are we able to fly out?' And he said, 'Yeah, I think so...'" Malacek recalled when we sat down recently for an oral history interview about the campaign, which I covered as Missouri statehouse correspondent for The Associated Press.

The veteran cop's conversation with Carnahan then turned to something that seems quaint, 20 years on.

"Gov. Carnahan was very proud of this rain coat he had just purchased," he said. "And he's proud of it because it was a purchase that he made online and back then, online purchasing was just kind of coming onto the scene."

At the airport, Malacek reached for a golf umbrella. "And the governor said, 'I have the rain coat on. You take the umbrella, I'm OK.'"

That anecdote and others about the personal side of Mel Carnahan kept emerging during my interviews – a decent man, thinking of others, quoting Adlai Stevenson about the importance of public service. When Mel Carnahan died, St. Louis Post-Dispatch columnist Bill McClellan wrote: "He was a dignified man in an undignified profession."

Read more [here](#) (Photo of Carnahan above by Charles Krupa/AP)

An election with a background



Sen. Hubert Humphrey, D-Minn., poses with President-elect John Kennedy after a conference, Dec. 1, 1960 at Kennedy's Capitol offices in Washington. Humphrey, a

one-time primary opponent of the President-elect, said one of the topics they discussed during the conference was agriculture. AP Photo | Byron Rollins

Gene Herrick ([Email](#)) - In our series on strange elections, my recollection of the 1960 Presidential election run-up between Democratic candidates Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey and Sen. John F. Kennedy, and later the election of Kennedy as President, was most interesting.

First was the “Test” between Humphrey and Kennedy over whether a rich Easterner and a Catholic (Kennedy) could get elected to President of the U.S. Humphrey was Protestant and from a rural Protestant section of the Midwest.

I traveled with both of them in Wisconsin before the 1960 primary election. It was a well-fought and interesting battle, but Kennedy won out, thus giving him the “Go-ahead” to run for President.

Which brings me to the other part of the story – Kennedy’s long wait for the ballots to be counted from Minnesota. I was working out of the Minneapolis AP office on election day, Nov. 8, 1960, and had basically wrapped up my picture-taking. However, I stuck around the office “just in case.”

That wait lasted till about mid-night while we waited for some votes from the isolated area in far northern part of the state – on the Canadian border – with the area named the Land of the Lakes.

AP had a man – Adolph Johnson, a veteran political writer and the grandfather of Mr. Accuracy – especially on elections. He knew every nook and cranny of the state and their election voting patterns. The national election tally was so very close, that we had to wait for those votes to come in from the LOLs. Finally, around mid-night the votes got to a telephone. They were delivered by dog sled! Those vote, they said, elected John F. Kennedy in the 1960 presidential race.

Staffer Jim Klobuchar, father of Minnesota U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, wrote the electing bulletin for the AAA wire. Klobuchar later wrote a column for the Minneapolis Star Tribune for three decades.

Connecting mailbox

Memories of 30 World Series

Hal Bock ([Email](#)) - Thomas Boswell's tale of 44 straight World Series (in Tuesday's Connecting) brought back memories of the 30 I covered for The AP.

Hotel lobbies and rooms at 3 a.m. are lonely places where you find yourself wondering if you hit all the right notes in your story. Games that flipped in the last inning (and believe me I had many of those) are difficult, challenging experiences, especially when your story is the first one on the game to hit the wire. I loved the adrenaline flow as I tried to tell the story. My mantra was to get it out fast and get it out right. It is the best feeling in the world when you accomplish both those goals with an entertaining story. And then, the hotel room isn't quite so bad.

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Times change, but WOW

Gene Herrick (Email) - I am old of age, but not old in keeping up with life, but the motor of Father Time seems to be racing.

I've gone through the metamorphosis of the change in the telephone - from the big old thing hanging on the wall, the standup phone, cradle, and now the "Smart" phone. I keep wondering how one goes into the "Smart" phone, to connect to wires, and transmit a picture. Well...that's all changed. Now you can take a picture and transmit it anywhere. Wow. No more processing film, and printing, and sending over a noisy telephone wire, or by radio.

Almost every day, when I print a picture on the computer, I have a hesitant moment when I take the printing paper from a box, AND IN THE DAYLIGHT. Printing paper, in my time, was used in the dark. Same thing with film, except now there is no film. My gosh.

The Smart phone seems to do everything. However, I haven't heard where it stands on sex. Is that in the works?

I'm trying to keep up with time and change, but my mind doth ponder.

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Taking break from pandemic routine



Dennis Conrad ([Email](#)) - Taking a break from the pandemic routine ...From our visit today, Oct. 20, to a state park, Hanging Rock Lake, North Carolina.

AP Road Trip: Racial tensions in America's 'sundown towns'



The moon shines through clouds along a highway in New Columbia, Ill., near Vienna, Ill., on Saturday, Aug. 1, 2020. "Sundown towns" like Vienna were places where Black people were allowed in during the day to work or shop but had to be gone by nightfall. Today, some still exist in various forms, enforced now by tradition and fear rather than by rules. (AP Photo/Wong Maye-E)

TIM SULLIVAN and NOREEN NASIR

VIENNA, Ill. (AP) — Ask around this time-battered Midwestern town, with its empty storefronts, dusty antique shops and businesses that have migrated toward the interstate, and nearly everyone will tell you that Black and white residents get along really well.

"Race isn't a big problem around here," said Bill Stevens, a white retired prison guard with a gentle smile, drinking beer with friends on a summer afternoon. "Never has been, really."

"We don't have any trouble with racism," said a twice-widowed woman, also white, with a meticulously-kept yard and a white picket fence.

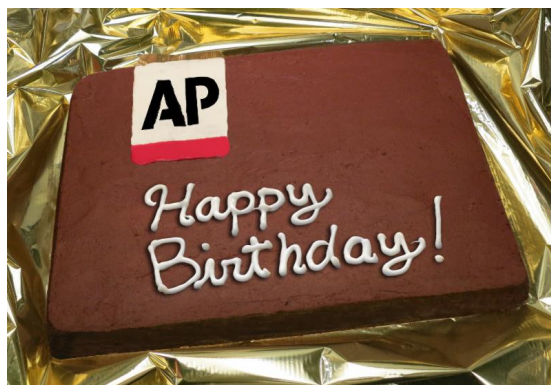
But in Vienna, as in hundreds of mostly white towns with similar histories across America, much is left unspoken. Around here, almost no one talks openly about the violence that drove out Black residents nearly 70 years ago, or even whispers the name these places were given: "sundown towns."

Unless they're among the handful of Black residents.

“It’s real strange and weird out here sometimes,” said Nicholas Lewis, a stay-at-home father. “Every time I walk around, eyes are on me.”

Read more [here](#).

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

John Montgomery - johndmont2@gmail.com

Stories of interest

Trump Taunts Lesley Stahl of '60 Minutes' After Cutting Off Interview (New York Times)

By Michael M. Grynbau and Maggie Haberman

President Trump abruptly cut off an interview with the “60 Minutes” star Lesley Stahl at the White House on Tuesday and then taunted her on Twitter, posting a short behind-the-scenes video of her at the taping and noting that she had not been wearing a mask in the clip.

Mr. Trump then threatened to post his interview with Ms. Stahl ahead of its intended broadcast time on Sunday evening, calling it “FAKE and BIASED.”

The spectacle of a president, two weeks from Election Day, picking a fight with the nation’s most popular television news program began on Tuesday after Mr. Trump grew irritated with Ms. Stahl’s questions, according to two people familiar with the circumstances of the taping.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Dennis Conrad.

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Family of slain Saudi journalist sues Saudi Crown Prince

By ASHRAF KHALIL

WASHINGTON (AP) — The family of slain Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi has filed a federal lawsuit accusing Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of personally ordering Khashoggi's brutal execution in order to silence the high-profile government critic.

The lawsuit was filed Tuesday in Washington, D.C., on behalf of Khashoggi's fiancée Hatice Cengiz and Democracy for the Arab World Now or DAWN, the human rights organization that Khashoggi founded shortly before his death. It names Prince Mohammed and a host of Saudi Ministry of Interior officials, accusing them of a "brutal and brazen crime" that was the result of "weeks of planning" and premeditation.

"Jamal believed anything was possible in America and I place my trust in the American civil justice system to obtain a measure of justice and accountability," Cengiz said in a statement Tuesday.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Adolphe Bernotas.

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When your photograph harms me: New York should look to curb unconsensual photography of women

(New York Daily News)

By JEAN SON

I am a Korean-American native of Queens. Growing up here, the city has often played the role of a third parent in my life. Its museums beckon me in for warmth and beautiful paintings on chilly days. The halal carts on every corner feed me when I am hungry. When I need to talk, a wise cabbie is only a hail away. There's only been a few times in my life when New York let me down, and they all happened in broad daylight in some of our most recognizable public places.

When I was 17, I was sitting in Bryant Park. An older man walked by with two cameras and discreetly aimed one at me. I immediately called 911. A police officer made him destroy one of his rolls. Because he refused to say which camera he'd used, to this day I'm not sure if the photo lives on somewhere. What I do remember, 17 years later, is the violation and fear that I felt as a strange man captured something of mine, my image, without my permission. He got to walk away.

Five years ago, I was walking down 57th St. A man with a long-zoom camera lens pointed it at me and took a rapid series of photographs. When I confronted him, he said it was a "free country." As he tried to get away, I grabbed him and called 911. Four Business Improvement District workers

Read more [here](#). Shared by Paul Albright.

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Here are the newsroom layoffs, furloughs and closures caused by the coronavirus (Poynter)

By Kristen Hare

This article was originally published on April 6, 2020, and has been frequently updated since. It was last updated on Oct. 20.

It's getting hard to keep track of the bad news about the news right now. But we have to. Here's our attempt to collect the layoffs, furloughs, and closures caused by the coronavirus' critical blow to the economy and journalism in the United States. Please send tips. We'll try to keep up.

In most cases, these entries link to previously reported stories. In some cases, where there are no links, we're relying on tips to help show the full impact of this pandemic.

One more note: We haven't figured out a way to track the loss of work for freelancers, but please read more about how the pandemic has hurt their livelihoods here.

Newspapers, weeklies and alt-weeklies

Read more [here](#). Shared by Bob Daugherty.

The Final Word

Harold Holzer on The Presidents vs the Press (The Manuscript Society)

In 1996 Harold Holzer received the Manuscript Society Book Award for his *Dear Mr. Lincoln: Letters to the President*. Our award is only one among many bestowed on Mr. Holzer, which include the 2015 Gilder-Lehman Lincoln Prize and in 2008, the National Humanities Medal. No doubt Manuscript Society members will be familiar with some of the many other books he has authored or co-authored on Lincoln and the Civil War era such as *Lincoln at Cooper Union* and *The Civil War in 50 Objects*. Now Holzer, who serves as the Jonathon F. Fanton Director of the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College, has authored a new book entitled, *The Presidents vs. The Press*. It is garnering avid reviews, including one from presidential historian Michael Beschloss, who deems it “a sweeping, groundbreaking, and important history.” Therefore, we were thrilled when Mr. Holzer consented to devote part of his 2020 Labor Day weekend to respond to interview questions posed by past president Al Ottens. We think you’ll enjoy his candid comments.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Paul Albright.

Today in History - October 21, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 21, the 295th day of 2020. There are 71 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 21, 1879, Thomas Edison perfected a workable electric light at his laboratory in Menlo Park, N.J.

On this date:

In 1797, the U.S. Navy frigate Constitution, also known as "Old Ironsides," was christened in Boston's harbor.

In 1892, schoolchildren across the U.S. observed Columbus Day (according to the Gregorian date) by reciting, for the first time, the original version of "The Pledge of Allegiance," written by Francis Bellamy for The Youth's Companion.

In 1941, superheroine Wonder Woman made her debut in All-Star Comics issue No. 8, published by All-American Comics, Inc. of New York.

In 1944, during World War II, U.S. troops captured the German city of Aachen (AH'-kuhn).

In 1945, women in France were allowed to vote in parliamentary elections for the first time.

In 1960, Democrat John F. Kennedy and Republican Richard M. Nixon clashed in their fourth and final presidential debate in New York.

In 1966, 144 people, 116 of them children, were killed when a coal waste landslide engulfed a school and some 20 houses in Aberfan, Wales.

In 1967, the Israeli destroyer INS Eilat (ay-LAH'T') was sunk by Egyptian missile boats near Port Said (sah-EED'); 47 Israeli crew members were lost. Tens of thousands of Vietnam War protesters began two days of demonstrations in Washington, D.C.

In 1971, President Richard Nixon nominated Lewis F. Powell and William H. Rehnquist to the U.S. Supreme Court. (Both nominees were confirmed.)

In 2001, Washington, D.C., postal worker Thomas L. Morris Jr. died of inhalation anthrax as officials began testing thousands of postal employees.

In 2012, former senator and 1972 Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern, 90, died in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

In 2014, North Korea abruptly freed Jeffrey Fowle, an American, nearly six months after he was arrested for leaving a Bible in a nightclub. Former Washington Post executive editor Ben Bradlee, 93, died in Washington.

Ten years ago: Eight current and former officials pleaded not guilty to looting millions of dollars from California's modest blue-collar city of Bell. (Seven defendants ended up being convicted, and received sentences ranging from home confinement to 12 years in prison.) French police used tear gas and water cannon against rampaging youth in Lyon while the French government showed its muscle in parliament, short-circuiting tense Senate debate on a bill raising the retirement age from 60 to 62.

Five years ago: Vice President Joe Biden announced he would not be a candidate in the 2016 White House campaign, solidifying Hillary Rodham Clinton's status as the Democratic front-runner. Actor-comedian Marty Ingels, 79, died in Los Angeles. The New York Mets finished an NL playoff sweep of the Chicago Cubs to advance to the World Series as the Mets brushed aside the Cubs 8-3. The Blue Jays beat the Kansas City Royals 7-1 to close to 3-2 in the best-of-seven AL Championship Series.

One year ago: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau won a second term in Canada's national elections; his Liberal party took the most seats in Parliament, but fell short of a majority. Zion Williamson, the NBA's top overall draft pick, underwent knee surgery to repair a torn meniscus; he would be sidelined for three months and miss the start of the season with the New Orleans Pelicans. The nation's three biggest drug distributors and a major drugmaker agreed to a \$260 million settlement related to the toll from opioids in two Ohio counties; the settlement averted the first federal trial over the opioid crisis.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Joyce Randolph is 96. Rock singer Manfred Mann is 80. Musician Steve Cropper (Booker T. & the MG's) is 79. Singer Elvin Bishop is 78. TV's Judge Judy Sheindlin is 78. Actor Everett McGill is 75. Musician Lee Loughnane (LAHK'-nayn) (Chicago) is 74. Actor Dick Christie is 72. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is 71. Actor LaTanya Richardson Jackson is 71. Musician Charlotte Caffey (The Go-Go's) is 67. Movie director Catherine Hardwicke is 65. Singer Julian Cope is 63. Rock musician Steve Lukather (Toto) is 63. Actor Ken Watanabe (wah-tah-NAH'-bee) is 61. Actor Melora Walters is 60. Rock musician Che (chay) Colovita Lemon is 50. Rock singer-musician Nick Oliveri (Mondo Generator) is 49. Christian rock musician Charlie Lowell (Jars of Clay) is 47. Actor Jeremy Miller is 44. Country singer Matthew Ramsey (Old Dominion) is 43. Actor Will Estes is 42. Actor Michael McMillian is 42. Reality TV star Kim Kardashian (kahr-DASH'-ee-uhn) West is 40. Actor Matt Dallas is 38. Actor Charlotte Sullivan is 37. Actor Aaron Tveit (tuh-VAYT') is 37. Actor Glenn Powell is 32. Country singer Kane Brown is 27.

Got a story or photos to share?

Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

Here are some suggestions:

- **Second chapters** - You finished a great career. Now tell us about your second (and third and fourth?) chapters of life.

- **Spousal support** - How your spouse helped in supporting your work during your AP career.

- **My most unusual story** - tell us about an unusual, off the wall story that you covered.

- **"A silly mistake that you make"** - a chance to 'fess up with a memorable mistake in your journalistic career.

- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.

- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.

- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?

- **Connecting "selfies"** - a word and photo self-profile of you and your career, and what you are doing today. Both for new members and those who have been with us a while.

- **Most unusual place** a story assignment took you.

Paul Stevens

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