Automated Sports Journalism

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Sports journalism as content

- Game recaps
- Interviews
- In-depth analysis
Sports journalism as content

- Statistics feature prominently
- Uses game-related jargon
  - Eg. Grand Slam, Strikeout
- Uses stock phrases and lingo
  - Eg. "blowback", "comeback", "nail-biter"
Game recaps

- An ideal format for automation
- Statistics as the core content
- Style and analysis minor factors
- Easy to generate
Game recap generation

- Focus on statistics-based facts
- Requires a feed of statistical data
- Data must be accurately submitted
- Available data limits content
Features of automated game recaps

- Stock phrases repeated
- No personal style or analyses
- Formulaic
"The Houston Rockets were like an unwary couple pulled over on the highway for going 3 miles over the speed limit by a burly Georgia cop with the mirrored sunglasses. It wasn’t their day."

—Reporter Bob Ryan

"Vincent Jackson doubled twice and singled, driving in two runs in the win.

State College took advantage of some erratic Brooklyn pitching, drawing a season-high nine walks in its victory."

—Wordsmith, NLG program
Companies and products

- **Automated Insights**
  - Creator of Wordsmith
  - Formerly known as StatSheet
  - Notable customers: Gannett, AP

- **Narrative Science**
  - Creator of Quill
  - Background in the creation of StatsMonkey
Wordsmith

- Template-based
- Templates feature use of synonyms and conditional branches
Wordsmith UI example

Edit branch
Add conditional logic to your narrative:

1. If this happens:
   sales > sales_previous
   Then write:
   risen

2. If this happens:
   sales < sales_previous
   Then write:
   fallen

3. Or if none of the above are true, then write:
   stayed the same
StatsMonkey

- Created in Northwestern University
- Writes baseball stories from raw data
- Searches for key moments based on three baseball statistics
- Journalistic prioritization based on complex game-related algorithms
The Associated Press (AP) case

- NLG was employed to cover Minor League Baseball
- Automated Insights was hired by AP
- Increased coverage rather than replaced human reporters
Conclusion

- Automated sports journalism is focused on simple recaps
- Automated sports journalism does not have a high profile yet
- Automated Insights is currently the key company in the field