

**NEWSBANK HOT TOPICS***April 2024***CURRENT EVENTS****ECONOMICS: China's Economic Recovery**

TOPIC: Despite warnings from Western countries about trade issues, economic indicators suggest that China has had a strong first quarter: both the employment sector and consumer spending saw a significant jump. How does the manufacturing industry of China compare to Western countries, such as the U.S.? How has the stabilization of the Covid pandemic impacted China's economy? According to the IMF, how will China's economic recovery impact overall global economic growth in 2024?

SEARCH TERMS: China AND ("economic rebound" OR "economic recovery" OR "boost to the economy") AND covid AND global

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Millions Face Starvation in Sudan

TOPIC: The civil war in Sudan has caused devastation to the masses due to rivalry between two generals. UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths warned that millions are facing food insecurity, and an outright famine is looming – especially alarming as this threat comes during the harvest season. What other regional crises could this upheaval trigger? What types of mobilization efforts are needed, according to the UN representatives? What are the sad statistics about the millions of children facing death by starvation in Sudan?

SEARCH TERMS: "civil war" AND Sudan AND (starvation OR "humanitarian aid")

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE: Forever Chemicals in U.S. Drinking Water

TOPIC: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has released a report of its review of U.S. water systems and found that over 70 million Americans have levels of toxic "forever chemicals" in their water. What are per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAs) and how do they get into the water system? What can be done to filter these forever chemicals out of water systems?

SEARCH TERMS: ("United States" OR U.S.) AND "forever chemicals" AND water AND PFAs AND EPA

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: UNSC Passes Resolution for Immediate Ceasefire in Gaza

TOPIC: The UN Security Council has passed a resolution for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and to continue through Ramadan. The resolution calls for the immediate release of hostages held by Hamas. What other major measures does the resolution call for? What purpose did the United States have for abstaining from the vote? Which country drafted the resolution? How many Palestinians have died during the conflict? Why does Israel disagree with a ceasefire?

SEARCH TERMS: ("United Nations" OR "UN Security Council") NEAR10 (ceasefire AND Gaza AND Israel)

**HEALTH: World: Standard Time v. Daylight Savings Time**

TOPIC: With many countries in the northern hemisphere of the globe changing their clocks and 'jumping forward' this month, and those in the southern hemisphere "turning (their clocks) back," the debate continues as to whether it still makes sense to keep switching the clocks twice a year. According to medical researchers, which is most beneficial to your health: Standard Time or Daylight Savings Time? How does each practice impact your circadian rhythms? How does each practice either support or negatively impact your sleep cycle? What are the sundowning symptoms that can occur when the clocks are changed? Is it better for your mental and physical health to have more morning light or evening light?

SEARCH TERMS: ("Daylight Savings Time" OR "Standard Time") AND (health OR circadian OR sleep)

SPORTS: Climate Change Impacts the World of Sports

TOPIC: The athletics world is feeling the negative impact of climate change more and more, whether it is an alpine ski race being cancelled because of the lack of snow or a surfing competition being moved because of a coral reef being bleached due to higher ocean temperatures, many sports are feeling the effects of warmer, erratic weather patterns. What is the sports industry being encouraged to do to help curb the effects of climate change on their sport? What types of sporting technologies are being developed to address climate change and to keep the particular sport going? What are some adaptations that might help mitigate the effect of climate change on athletics? What are some of the health risks for athletes training and competing during the age of climate change?

SEARCH TERMS: ("climate change" OR "weather pattern") NEAR10 ((impact OR change OR effect) AND sports)

BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

BUSINESS: Justice Department Sues Apple for Monopoly

TOPIC: The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has filed an antitrust lawsuit against Apple Inc. How has Apple violated antitrust laws according to the DOJ? What is Apple saying in its defense?

SEARCH TERMS: (DOJ OR "Justice Department" OR "Justice Dept" OR "Department of Justice") AND (sues OR suing OR lawsuit) AND Apple AND (antitrust OR monopoly OR noncompetitive)

BUSINESS: Threat to Ban TikTok in the U.S.

TOPIC: U.S. legislation H.R. 7521 will ban TikTok in the United States unless the social media app divests itself of the Chinese company ByteDance. What is ByteDance and why is the U.S. worried about its investment in TikTok? What are some of the strongest arguments being made for and against banning TikTok in the United States unless ByteDance sells its shares?

SEARCH TERMS: TikTok AND (China OR Chinese OR ByteDance) AND (ban OR banning OR banned)

BUSINESS: Bangladesh: Green Garment's World Leader

TOPIC: Bangladesh, despite its past reputation of horrid working conditions, has become an international leader in green garment production. The country has become known for having the most LEED-certified factories in the world and has earned bragging-rights for eco-friendly manufacturing. Why is this recognition important for a developing world country? How do LEED-certified factories establish safe worker environments? What are some other benefits of LEED-certified factories? What does "LEED" stand for?

SEARCH TERMS: ("green garment" OR "green apparel" OR "LEED-certified") AND Bangladesh



BUSINESS: Dave Calhoun Stepping Down

TOPIC: The CEO of the airplane manufacturer Boeing has announced he will be leaving his position at the end of 2024. What have been some of the challenges facing Boeing and how has CEO Calhoun dealt with them? What have been some of CEO Calhoun's key achievements at Boeing?

SEARCH TERMS: Calhoun AND CEO AND Boeing

ECONOMICS: China's Economic Recovery

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ECONOMICS: Collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge

TOPIC: The Francis Scott Key Bridge which spans the Patapsco River, a major trade route to the port of Baltimore, MD, has collapsed after being hit by the container ship Dali that had lost power and was adrift. What message from the ship helped save lives by stopping traffic? Who was working on the bridge at the time of collapse and how many people were hurt or killed? What efforts are being made for disaster relief, bridge repair and security measures for the future?

SEARCH TERMS: "Francis Scott Key Bridge" AND Baltimore AND (collapse OR collapsed) AND Dali

ECONOMICS: Federal Budget

TOPIC: President Biden has signed a \$1.2 trillion dollar spending package that will fund the federal government for the rest of the fiscal year. What have been some of the more controversial items in this package and why? What maneuver did Speaker of the House Mike Johnson apply to get this budget passed and what has been the reaction to it?

SEARCH TERMS: Biden AND ("spending package" OR budget) AND "1.2 trillion"

FINANCE: Retirement Age in the United States

TOPIC: The Republican Party in the United States has announced it is seeking to raise the retirement age from 67 to 69. Why are the Republicans seeking to raise the age of retirement and how would lengthening the time one stays in a job impact Social Security? What has been the reaction of the Democratic Party and the public to this idea? What was the reaction from the head of the Social Security Administration? What are the arguments in support of this idea?

SEARCH TERMS: (Republican OR Republicans OR GOP) AND retirement AND age

FINANCE: World - ESG (Environment, Social, and Governance) Trends

TOPIC: Trends across many worldwide industries including real estate, technology, automobile, and even the sports industry are incorporating socially responsible strategies to invest in sustainability and products that reduce the risk of harm to the environment. These practices are becoming important to stakeholders. What sectors are putting forth some of the more ambitious goals to establish products that, for example, are carbon neutral? Why is ESG a major driver in investment decisions? Why does the financial sector embrace sustainability?

SEARCH TERMS: (ESG OR "Environmental, Social, and Governance") NEAR5 (business OR businesses OR companies OR corporations)



CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: State of the Union Address

TOPIC: President Biden has given his 2024 State of the Union Address. What were some of the major points he focused on in his address? What has been precedent setting when it comes to the different speakers of the House who have attended President Biden's State of the Union Addresses while he has been in office? Who made the rebuttal arguments for the Republicans, what were her major points? What has been the most prominently reported reaction to the address and the rebuttal?

SEARCH TERMS: (Biden OR "Katie Britt") AND "State of the Union"

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Millions Face Starvation in Sudan

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SEARCH TERMS: "civil war" AND Sudan AND (starvation OR "humanitarian aid")

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SEARCH TERMS: ("United Nations" OR "UN Security Council") NEAR10 (ceasefire AND Gaza AND Israel)

HISTORY: Women's History Month

TOPIC: March is Women's History Month in the United States. What are some of the major events in United States history that advanced women's rights? What is the background of Women's History Month and how is it celebrated?

SEARCH TERMS: "Women's History" OR "Equal Rights Amendment" OR suffragette OR suffragettes OR "women's suffrage"

HISTORY: World: International Women's Day

TOPIC: March 8th, for years, has become known as International Women's Day. It is a day when, among many things, there is a celebration of women's past achievements in the world as well as an opportunity to further promote and advocate for gender equality. Tracing back to some of the earliest celebrations of International Women's Day what were the predominant themes of some of the earliest celebrations? How do current day themes of International Women's Day compare between the developed world and the developing world? When did the UN start recognizing International Women's Day, and what are the specific, global themes that the UN has chosen to focus on in recent years that raise awareness about women's rights and challenges in the 21st century? What is this year's theme?

SEARCH TERMS: ("International Women's Day" OR IWD) AND (history OR background OR premise)



SOCIAL ISSUES

CRIME AND LAW: State of Emergency in Haiti

TOPIC: In March, gangs stormed two major prisons in Haiti and thousands of convicts are out on the streets. Major bursts of violence have erupted, a state of emergency has been declared, the prime minister has resigned, and the tiny island is stalled in a disturbing state of chaos. What types of international mediation attempts have been made to get order restored? How much of the country is under gang control? Where have civilians fled for their safety, and how is their safety being managed? What have been the latest developments in Port-au-Prince, which has seen high levels of gang warfare?

SEARCH TERMS: Haiti AND gang AND prison AND "prime minister" AND emergency

CRIME AND LAW: Court Rulings and Texas Police Authority Over Migrants

TOPIC: The U.S. Supreme Court and the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals have been issuing rulings that have allowed Texas to pause and restart Senate Bill 4 which permits police to arrest migrant workers crossing the border without official documentation. What have been the legal challenges to Senate Bill 4, how have the courts ruled on it and why has this law paused and restarted? What are the most compelling legal arguments for and against Senate Bill 4?

SEARCH TERMS: police AND Texas AND (migrant OR migrants) AND court AND ruling

CRIME AND LAW: Russia: Terror Attack

TOPIC: ISIS has claimed responsibility for a massacre that was staged at Crocus City Hall, a famous concert venue in Moscow. While the popular Russian rock band Picnic was playing to a full house, gunmen stormed the concert and started blanketing the place with bullets. AK47 semi-automatic gunnery was utilized, and 4 men slaughtered 140 people in a matter of 90 seconds as is shown on a selfie video that one of the terrorists shared after the attack. Many more were severely injured and burned from a fire that was either set or broke out in the concert hall during the ambush. How has Vladimir Putin responded to the massacre? How has the international community responded to Putin's insinuation that Ukraine is involved in the bloodshed?

SEARCH TERMS: "Crocus City Hall" AND (attack OR terror)

CRIME AND LAW: Sentencing of Sam Bankman-Fried

TOPIC: Sam Bankman-Fried, the founder and CEO of the now bankrupt FTX cryptocurrency exchange, has been sentenced to twenty-five years in prison for fraud and conspiracy. What are the specifics of the fraud and conspiracy charges and what hedge fund was impacted? What kind of economic damage did Bankman-Fried's actions have on the economy?

SEARCH TERMS: "Sam Bankman-Fried" AND FTX AND (sentence OR sentencing OR sentenced) AND (fraud OR conspiracy)

EDUCATION: Schools and Sidechat

TOPIC: The social media app *Sidechat* is very popular with college students, but colleges and universities have increasingly voiced concerns over the rise of hate speech being shared on the app. What is the evidence that has been cited in support of these concerns? What arguments have been made in the defense of *Sidechat*?

SEARCH TERMS: (student OR students) AND (college OR colleges OR university OR universities) AND Sidechat



EDUCATION: Worldwide – The Academic Benefits of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

TOPIC: Research shows that schools that have begun to embed social and emotional learning into the curriculum show improvement in academic performance and higher levels of cognitive attainment in their students. Students who are taught to become competent in self-regulation and social skills show higher levels of success in academic achievement. Environments that embrace SEL lead to students feeling supported, equipped, and empowered to learn. How is SEL effectively blended into classroom academics? What other value does SEL have in school communities? What concerns are there about SEL being taught within school systems?

SEARCH TERMS: (SEL OR "social and emotional learning") AND (academic OR "executive functioning" OR cognitive)

RELIGION: India Celebrates Holi

TOPIC: Holi is the Hindu festival of colors that is celebrated throughout the Indian subcontinent and beyond as winter ends and the new harvest season begins (Vasanta). It is celebrated by throwing and sprinkling vibrant colored powders and water on loved ones. The celebration signifies new beginnings, fertility, the triumph of good over evil, the blossoming of flowers, and the renewal of life. What are some of the popular Hindu mythological stories and folklore that go along with Holi? How is the day of the Holi celebration determined each year? What are some of the other celebratory features of Holi?

SEARCH TERMS: Holi AND India AND (religion OR Hindu)

RELIGION: Church Attendance Drops in the United States

TOPIC: A recent Gallop poll shows that church attendance in the United States has declined for most religions. What denominations show the strongest attendance? What denominations show the strongest decline in attendance? According to the poll, which religious holidays do Americans feel most compelled to attend church and for what reason?

SEARCH TERMS: Gallup AND (attend OR attendance) AND (religion OR religious OR church OR religions) AND (poll OR survey) AND (Mormon OR Mormons OR "Latter-Day Saints")

SOCIAL RELATIONS: France Makes History

TOPIC: On International Women's Day, France became the first country in the world to establish in their constitution the right for a woman to have an abortion. Amidst the ceremony to commemorate the right for a woman to decide, President Emmanuel Macron stated that the passage of the constitutional amendment in France was in direct response to the 2022 US Supreme Court's decision to rescind the rights of women to have abortion in the US. While abortion is an extremely divisive topic in the United States, abortions are legal in just about all of Europe. What has been the international response to France's action? What other countries in the world have not legalized abortion? Why did President Macron pursue having abortion established as a constitutional right in a country where abortion rights are not at risk?

SEARCH TERMS: France NEAR5 (abortion and constitution)

SOCIAL RELATIONS: Abortion Pills in the United States

TOPIC: The rate of abortion in the United States has risen since the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (U.S. FDA) loosened restrictions on Mifepristone, a drug used to induce abortions. The Supreme Court is hearing a challenge to that FDA decision. Why did the FDA loosen restrictions on Mifepristone? What are the most compelling arguments on both sides of the case before the Supreme Court?

SEARCH TERMS: Mifepristone AND "Supreme Court" AND abortion



SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND HEALTH

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE: Forever Chemicals in U.S. Drinking Water

TOPIC: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has released a report of its review of U.S. water systems and found that over 70 million Americans have levels of toxic “forever chemicals” in their water. What are per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAs) and how do they get into the water system? What can be done to filter these forever chemicals out of water systems?

SEARCH TERMS: ("United States" OR U.S.) AND "forever chemicals" AND water AND PFAs AND EPA

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE: Australia: Unprecedented Bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef

TOPIC: There has been yet another significant bleaching event of the Great Barrier Reef, the fifth occurrence in just eight years. There is severe damage due to mass coral bleaching of the reefs, particularly in the south. What causes coral bleaching and when did bleaching start? What happens to coral ecosystems when bleaching occurs? Why do humans rely on the ongoing health of coral reefs? What types of preservation efforts are underway?

SEARCH TERMS: "Great Barrier Reef" AND bleach

HEALTH: World: Standard Time v. Daylight Savings Time

TOPIC: With many countries in the northern hemisphere of the globe changing their clocks and ‘jumping forward’ this month, and those in the southern hemisphere “turning (their clocks) back,” the debate continues as to whether it still makes sense to keep switching the clocks twice a year. According to medical researchers, which is most beneficial to your health: Standard Time or Daylight Savings Time? How does each practice impact your circadian rhythms? How does each practice either support or negatively impact your sleep cycle? What are the sundowning symptoms that can occur when the clocks are changed? Is it better for your mental and physical health to have more morning light or evening light?

SEARCH TERMS: ("Daylight Savings Time" OR "Standard Time") AND (health OR circadian OR sleep)

HEALTH: Other Benefits of COVID Vaccines

TOPIC: A recent study published in the *British Medical Journal* shows that COVID vaccines from Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson can, in addition to help prevent contracting COVID, strongly reduce the risk of heart failure and blood clots. How does the vaccine help lower these risks and for how long does it work? What was the research process of this study?

SEARCH TERMS: COVID AND (vaccine OR vaccines) AND "blood clots" AND "heart failure"

SCIENCE: Pi Day

TOPIC: Pi Day was founded by Larry Shaw in 1988 to celebrate and honor the mathematical constant of pi. What is pi and how is this number useful in math and science? How is Pi Day celebrated? What was Shaw's profession and what drew his interest to pi?

SEARCH TERMS: "Pi Day" AND "Larry Shaw"



SCIENCE: Iceland: The First Geothermal Energy Station

TOPIC: Iceland is positioning itself to make scientific history by becoming the first country to drill directly into a volcano. A team of geologists will drill into the magma bed of the Krafla volcano located in the northeast of the country to release a limitless amount of geothermal energy – enough to heat buildings and homes throughout the country. Why are the researchers confident that the drilling will not cause an eruption? How does the process of utilizing geothermal energy as a heating resource work? How is Iceland already tapping into geothermic reservoirs and why is drilling a bore hole into a volcano considered to be more “efficient?”

SEARCH TERMS: "geothermal energy" AND Iceland AND volcano

TECHNOLOGY: Amsterdam: Promising Development in HIV Elimination Research

TOPIC: Researchers at Amsterdam University Medical Center have discovered a process utilizing CRISPR gene-editing technology to remove HIV viral DNA from infected cells within the laboratory setting. What are the next steps in the research to find a cure? At present, what does HIV treatment entail? How many people worldwide have HIV? What other genetic diseases do researchers hope to use CRISPR technology to develop a cure? How does CRISPR gene-editing technology attack diseases?

SEARCH TERMS: CRISPR AND HIV

TECHNOLOGY: Neuralink Patient and Mind Games

TOPIC: A chip implanted in the brain of Noland Arbaugh, who is paralyzed from the neck down, successfully enabled him to play digital games by using his mind and a brain-computer interface (BCI). What games has he successfully played during testing and how do the chip and BCI work? What are the implications of how this technology might develop in the future?

SEARCH TERMS: Neuralink AND ("Noland Arbaugh" OR "Nolan Arbaugh")

SPORTS

SPORTS: March Madness

TOPIC: March Madness is a term used for the NCAA Division I women and men’s basketball tournament. What teams have the strongest record so far in this year’s tournament and why? Who have been the strongest individual players and what are their major strengths? Predicting the games before and during the tournament is often showcased with a drawing of brackets – how is this done and how do basketball fans make these predictions? What have been the “mad” upsets so far in the tournaments?

SEARCH TERMS: ("March Madness" OR "Division I") AND tournament AND NCAA AND basketball

SPORTS: Road to Paris

TOPIC: Olympic qualifiers are happening around the world and there are many athletes training for what they hope to be victorious accomplishments at the upcoming Paris Summer Olympics. How many Olympic sports will there be in Paris? What are some of the new games that will happen? What is the process for qualifying for the Olympics and how does qualification vary from sport to sport?

SEARCH TERMS: (qualifiers OR qualification OR qualifying) NEAR5 (Olympics OR "Olympic Sports")



SPORTS: Canada: 2024 World Figure Skating Championships

TOPIC: The 2024 World Figure Skating Championships have taken place in Montreal and there were a number of beautifully delivered performances. Which skaters were the standouts? What were some of the surprising results? Which skaters showed impressive promise as an up-and-coming skate competitor or skater-pair? Which countries dominated the events?

SEARCH TERMS: "World Figure Skating Championships"

SPORTS: Scottie Scheffler

TOPIC: Golfer Scottie Scheffler has become the first person to win two Players Championships back-to-back. What are Scheffler's key strengths as a golfer and how did his talents show themselves in this year's Players Championship? What is the significance to golf of the Players Championship and how is it structured?

SEARCH TERMS: "Scottie Scheffler" AND "Players Championship" AND golf

SPORTS: Climate Change Impacts the World of Sports

TOPIC: The athletics world is feeling the negative impact of climate change more and more, whether it is an alpine ski race being cancelled because of the lack of snow or a surfing competition being moved because of a coral reef being bleached due to higher ocean temperatures, many sports are feeling the effects of warmer, erratic weather patterns. What is the sports industry being encouraged to do to help curb the effects of climate change on their sport? What types of sporting technologies are being developed to address climate change and to keep the particular sport going? What are some adaptations that might help mitigate the effect of climate change on athletics? What are some of the health risks for athletes training and competing during the age of climate change?

SEARCH TERMS: ("climate change" OR "weather pattern") NEAR10 ((impact OR change OR effect) AND sports)

SPORTS: Caitlin Clark

TOPIC: Point guard for the University of Iowa Hawkeyes, Caitlan Clark, has surpassed Kelsey Plum's record for most points in a single season in NCAA Division I women's basketball history. What other records and awards has Clark won?

SEARCH TERMS: "Caitlin Clark" AND points AND "Kelsey Plum" AND basketball

ARTS AND LITERATURE

FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Richard Serra

TOPIC: Richard Serra was a sculptor known mainly for large-scale abstract works that emphasize the relationship between the viewer and the site of the sculpture as well as the material and shape of the sculpture. What are some of his better-known works and how would one describe them? What other art forms has he worked in and what are some collaborative works he has done?

SEARCH TERMS: "Richard Serra" AND sculpture



FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Burkina Faso: Francis Kere

TOPIC: Diébédo Francis Kéré is an awarded architect known for design work in several African countries; his innovative work features locally-sourced building materials. Because he knows very well how uncomfortable it can feel to live in a hot, dry climate, his buildings use natural ventilation and other features that ensure energy efficiency and a cool climate for the inhabitants. Where did Kere obtain his architectural education? What notable building projects has he designed? Aside from Africa, where can you find Kere's work?

SEARCH TERMS: ("Kere Architecture" AND (Benin OR "Burkina Faso")) OR (Kere AND (innovation OR architecture))

LITERATURE: Colombia: A Novel that was Never to be Published

TOPIC: Shortly before he died in 2014, Gabriel Garcia Marquez asked that his unfinished novel, *Until August*, never see the light of day. He made his wishes known to his family and asked his sons to destroy the manuscript that he had been working on as he was struggling with dementia. Years later, among controversy, the novel is now out and getting reviewed. What types of reviews is the novel getting? How have Marquez' sons justified their decision to have *Until August* published without the consent of their father, the author? What should readers who have loved and admired Marquez' past work do: read the book, or not?

SEARCH TERMS: "Gabriel Garcia Marquez" AND "Until August"

LITERATURE: The Hunter

TOPIC: A new book by Tana French called *The Hunter: A Novel* is getting encouraging reviews and is popular with readers. What is the book about and why is it getting positive reviews? What awards has French won for her writing and what do critics and readers like about her writing?

SEARCH TERMS: "Tana French" AND "The Hunter"

MOVIES AND TELEVISION: Academy Awards

TOPIC: The big winner at this year's Academy Awards was *Oppenheimer*. Who won Oscars for their work on *Oppenheimer* and what was it about their work that impressed the critics? What other films were awarded this year and what were the qualities in those films that impressed the critics?

SEARCH TERMS: ("Academy Awards" OR Oscars) AND (Oppenheimer OR "Poor Things" OR "The Holdovers" OR "Anatomy of a Fall")

MOVIES AND TELEVISION: Russia: The Master and Margarita

TOPIC: Mikhail Bulgakov's complex novel, *The Master and Margarita*, takes place in early 20th century Russia. Written mostly in the 1930s, and not being released - as a censored publication - until the early 1960s; it was finally published in its uncensored form in 1967 after the author had died. The publishing challenges came from Bulgakov's satirical depiction of Russian society as well as the religious themes. The novel was very popular when it was finally released. Now, there is a movie adaptation of *The Master and Margarita* which is receiving rave reviews and is one of the highest grossing films in Russia in years. Like the novel, the movie is considered controversial. What are the issues that the Kremlin has with the movie adaptation of the novel? What has been done to discredit the film and its director? How are commentators correlating the situation in the Ukraine with some of prickliness that Kremlin officials are airing about the popular movie?

SEARCH TERMS: "The Master and Margarita"



MUSIC: Microgenres of Music

TOPIC: Microgenres are niche subgenres of music that have specific and unique traits; however, they share commonality with an overriding genre of music. Microgenres allow 'music nerds' an opportunity to categorize music in ways they find interesting and unique. Online music communities now can connect, explore, and chat about microgenres with which they are intrigued. Microgenres continues to expand as does the categorization of specific niches of music. What are some of the well-known microgenres and what are their unique blends? How many microgenres does streaming platforms such as *Spotify* have at this point? When did microgenres first begin to appear and what prompted their start?

SEARCH TERMS: (seapunk OR vaporwave OR hyperpop OR "cloud rap" OR chillwave OR microgenres) AND music

MUSIC: Beyonce's Country Hit

TOPIC: Beyonce's new album *Cowboy Carter* is greatly influenced by country music and the hit single on the album, *Texas Hold 'Em* topped the country charts. What musical influences from Beyonce's Houston upbringing did she revisit as inspiration for this album? What has been the public reaction to this album?

SEARCH TERMS: ("Texas Hold 'Em" OR "Cowboy Carter") AND Beyonce

PERFORMING ARTS: Kevin Hart

TOPIC: Comedian and actor Kevin Hart is the winner of this year's Mark Twain Award. What is the Mark Twain Award? What is some of the most acclaimed work that Hart has done as an actor and as a comedian?

SEARCH TERMS: "Kevin Hart" AND "Mark Twain Award"

PERFORMING ARTS: Hong Kong: Art Fairs that Blur the Line between Performance Art and Visual Art

TOPIC: Both Art Basel and Art Central, art fairs in Hong Kong which bring many viewers to see spectacular exhibits, offer many genres of the artistic experience. Performance, to be seen in a number of exhibits, is embedded within gorgeous visual displays. Exhibits include musical performances, immersive art, emerging art, and experimental video performances to name a few. What are some examples of performance arts that are embedded in other art forms? How has technology factored into new and experimental performance arts' genres?

SEARCH TERMS: ("Art Basel Hong Kong" OR "Art Central" OR ("Art Basel" AND "Hong Kong") OR "Art Basel") AND perform*

PEOPLE

PEOPLE: Joe Lieberman

TOPIC: Joe Lieberman was a longtime Democratic senator from Connecticut and was the Democratic Party's Vice-Presidential candidate on the ticket with presidential candidate Al Gore in the 2000 presidential election. What were some of the top issues that Senator Lieberman championed during his time in the U.S. Senate? What was some of the debated legislation that he sided with Republicans on that caused tension within his party and why?

SEARCH TERMS: "Joe Lieberman" AND (senator OR Senate) AND (Connecticut OR CT)



PEOPLE: South Africa – Jacob Zuma: Political Wildcard

TOPIC: Jacob Zuma, the disgraced former president of South Africa who was sent to prison because of charges of corruption, is now a political wildcard in the upcoming general election. As he campaigns with his newly formed party, the uMkhonto we Sizwe (“Spear of the Nation”) his numerous legal battles continue to mount. What political party did Jacob Zuma lead during his presidency and why has he stepped away from the party? What other parties are considered to be viable contenders in the upcoming election? Why is the acronym name of the uMkhonto we Sizwe – MK – considered to be both strategic and controversial?

SEARCH TERMS: "Jacob Zuma" AND (election OR campaign)

PEOPLE: England – Princess Catherine of Wales is Fighting Cancer

TOPIC: On the heels of a controversy due to a slightly-doctored photo of her and her children, Princess “Kate” has announced that she is undergoing preventative chemotherapy for an incidental discovery of cancer during a recent surgery. What were some of the themes in her message to the public about being diagnosed with cancer? How is the press responding to her ongoing request for privacy for her and her family while they work through the process of her treatments for cancer? When is preventative chemotherapy prescribed for cancer diagnoses?

SEARCH TERMS: ("Princess Kate" OR "Princess Catherine") NEAR5 cancer

PEOPLE: Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

TOPIC: Independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has picked Nicole Shanahan to be his running mate. What political issues is he running on and what in the work of Shanahan adds to the strength of their ticket? What environmental and legal work has he done in the past and on what later issues did he split from his famous Democrat family on?

SEARCH TERMS: “Robert F. Kennedy Jr.” AND Shanahan AND (president OR presidency OR candidate OR candidacy)

PEOPLE: Eric Carmen

TOPIC: Eric Carmen was a popular singer, first in the early 1970s with the Raspberries; later, in the mid and late 1970s and 1980s, he went solo. What were some of the hits of the Raspberries and of Carmen’s solo career? What song of his was inspired by a Rachmaninoff piano concerto?

SEARCH TERMS: “Eric Carmen” AND “All By Myself”

PEOPLE: Russia: The Election of Vladimir Putin

TOPIC: News outlets from Russia say that Vladimir Putin has gloriously won his fifth election for president with a most impressive official result of him attaining 87% of the vote. How long is the president’s term in office? How have the election results been validated? How has President Putin spoken about the future management of the invasion of Ukraine? How has the international community responded to the re-election of Vladimir Putin? Which former leader of the Russian empire have commentators equated Vladimir Putin with?

SEARCH TERMS: ("Vladimir Putin" OR "President Putin") AND election

PEOPLE: Louis Gossett Jr.

TOPIC: Actor Louis Gossett Jr. had many esteemed roles in his career and is often remembered for his Emmy-winning performance in the 1977 television miniseries *Roots* and for his Academy-winning role in the popular 1982 film *An Officer and the Gentleman*. What are some of his most successful earlier roles as a Broadway stage actor in the 1950s and 1960s? What was it about his overall performances that impressed critics and audiences?

SEARCH TERMS: “Louis Gossett Jr.” AND (actor OR acting)