# Guy Catches 13-Foot Shark

by Anna Wells, Editor, IMPO

We've had plenty of debates over swine flu in the office over the past week—mostly spurred by the sudden cropping up of alcohol-based hand sanitizer bottles throughout our workspace. The whole floor smells like a distillery. "Apparently there is some virus going around," we joke as we slather this slick substance onto our hands. "That's news to me."

Despite our sarcastic quips over this news that has seemingly taken over the airways, it's odd how much misinformation still exists. I've had a few strange debates on swine flu where it became clear that one or both of us knew next to nothing about the flu's origins and transmission.

One of the most interesting changes in this discussion came with the WHO's push to change the vernacular of "swine" flu to the much more democratic "H1N1"—a move calculated to help stave off the plummeting pork industry, despite the fact that no swine flu cases have been caused by consuming pork products (although, as a vegetarian, I guess I've had an easy out on this one). The media and government's reiteration of the safety of consuming pork products was seemingly not enough. Do we simply not know? Or are we just tired of this, and moving onto other things?

These "other things" are typically what keep me away from the big-name news sites—I think our national obsession with entertainment lets "human interest" pieces shoulder their way into legitimate, necessary news.

A scan of CNN.com this morning says it all. Here are a few of my favorite headlines:

- Fun Trivia About Deodorant

- Letters G-O-D Appear in Fried Salami
- Guy Catches 13-Foot Shark
- How Not to Be—or Date—An Overlapper

It’s not that the right news doesn’t exist on CNN—it’s certainly there; trust me—but that we’ve got too much fluff to look at. Those of us who have dismissed this freak occurrence as a fleeting exercise in caution have simply stopped reading, and moved onto 13-foot sharks and fried salami.

If it feels like we’re beating a dead horse (pig?), it’s because we are. But at the same time, I can’t think of anything more “human interest” than human survival. And if human survival isn’t of interest, how about economic survival? Our sliding indifference towards this media onslaught means the pork industry has taken a significant dive. These are real economic impacts in a time where we, as a nation, can’t abide negative consequences.

I’m tired of hearing bad news too… and contending with the one-two punch of also being able to write about it all day does not help me sleep better at night. This doesn’t mean we can stop paying attention; diversionary news might be as bad as no news. To take it one step further—this H1N1 has sure been an interesting preoccupation from the economic woes of the past months. Have we been caught in our own web of distraction? It’s quite a communicable disease…

Email me your thoughts at anna.wells@advantagemedia.com *[1]*

**Source URL (retrieved on *09/23/2014 - 6:49pm*):**
http://www.impomag.com/blogs/2009/05/guy-catches-13-foot-shark?qt-most_popular=0

**Links:**
[1] mailto:anna.wells@advantagemedia.com