

2010

Thriving and Surviving in a Multimedia World

University of Montana--Missoula. School of Journalism

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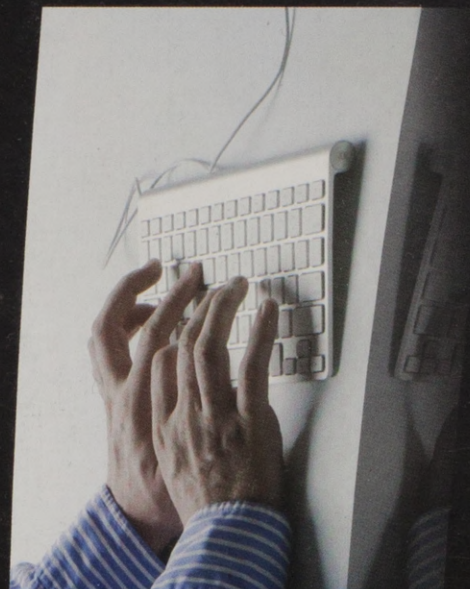
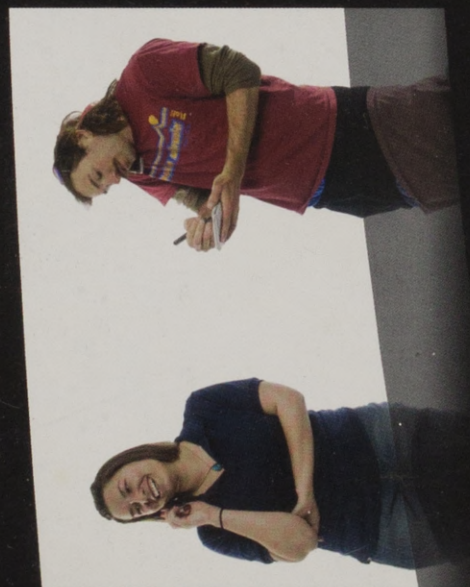
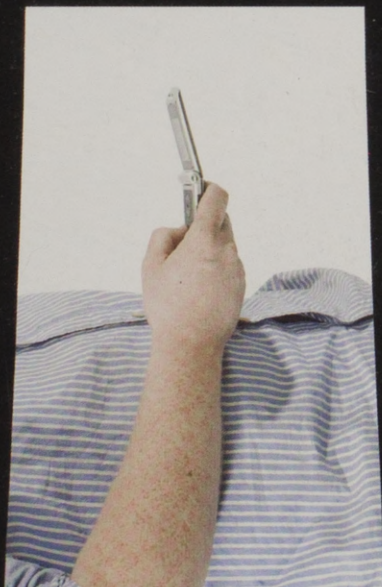
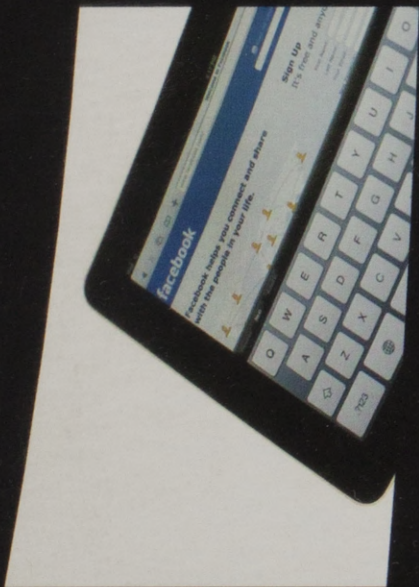
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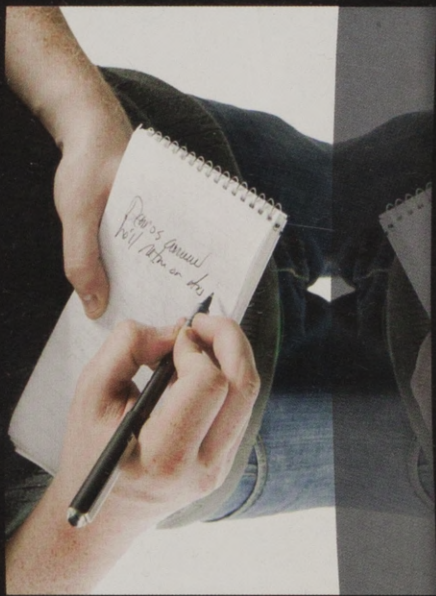
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Montana Journalism Review



MJR 2010

Thriving and Surviving
in a Multimedia World



The University of Montana



**You know that life in Montana is extraordinary,
varied and endlessly fascinating.**

**You should expect the same
from your local newspaper.**

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Independent
Free Thinking

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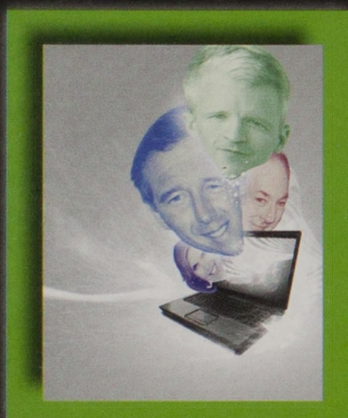
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The Unreachables

How print media is coping with Generation Y

Story by **KIMBALL BENNION**

Photo illustrations by **STEEL BROOKS**

In June 1996, the online news magazine Slate.com launched its inaugural issue amid a flurry of optimism. It boosted itself as a pioneer of sorts, and it had a right to. Slate was a new kind of animal: a news magazine born entirely from the Web. Traditional print media had a Web presence too, but it was pretty bare bones.

Slate, on the other hand, was owned by Microsoft, easily one of the most influential names in the brave new world of the “digital revolution.” It had also partnered with Time magazine and (just in case you forgot this was 1996) Starbucks. Time had exclusive permission to reprint Slate’s articles in its own publication, and for only \$3, readers could buy the monthly Slate on paper at any Starbucks location in the United States.

The content itself would be snappy, conversational and timely, all for a yearly subscription fee of \$19.95. It would capture the attention of the newly emerging Generation Y, who showed much more promise for advertisers than their slacker, politically inactive Generation X predecessors.

GenY kids would grow up right alongside the Internet with their affluent Boomer parents’ cash in their hands. In 10 years, these Reagan-era babies would be in college and in the workforce, they’d turn to the Web as their source of smart, timely news and analysis, and they’d pay money to get it.

This is what founding editor Michael Kinsley wrote in his inaugural column: “We intend to take a fairly skeptical stance toward the romance and rapidly escalating vanity of cyberspace. We do not start out with the smug assumption that the Internet changes the nature of human thought, or that all the restraints that society imposes on individuals in ‘real life’ must melt away in cyberia ... Part of our mission at Slate will be trying to bring cyberspace down to earth.”

Translation: You know how you can get everything for free off the Internet? Well not from us.

Fast forward two and a half years to an announcement from Kinsley on Feb. 14, 1999. Slate certainly made a name for itself in that time, but it faced stiff competition from other upstarts like Salon.com that didn’t charge a penny. It seemed as though Kinsley and the rest of the Slate team realized that their utopian vision of paper — Bill Gates and lattes — wasn’t exactly panning

out like they’d hoped. It was time for Kinsley to bow to the inevitable.

“Effective today,” he wrote, “all current editorial content will be free.”

Of course, there was the “why?” Why can’t this exciting new breed of online journalism break even? What’s the missing ingredient? Kinsley offered up an explanation that got to the heart of it: People don’t read news on the Internet like they do when it’s printed. They surf, they jump and they don’t hang around for long, even if it’s a website they like, Kinsley explained.

“This appears to be in the nature of the Web and not something that is likely to change. And it makes paying for access to any particular site a bigger practical and psychological hurdle,” he wrote.

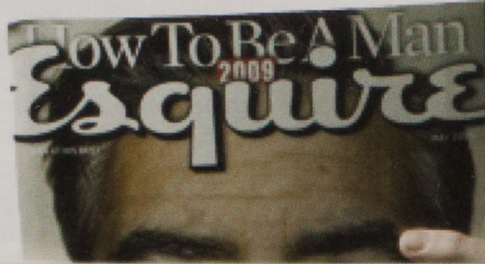
Which brings us to today, and to those Generation Y kids everyone was so hopeful about. They grew up remembering a scarce amount of news that was anything but free. And as this group of Americans, around 80 million strong, begins voting, going to college, spending money, and caring about what is going on in the world, they naturally gravitate to the most expedient way of getting the information they care about — for free and in an instant. The bad news is that they’re doing it at the expense of the news sources they get it from.

Generation Y is on the brink of being America’s decision-makers and trend setters, and if the election of 2008 was any indication, they’ll be shaping the political landscape for a long time as well, which leaves the Goliaths of print media biting their fingernails and wondering: How are we supposed to make any money off of these guys?

That’s a question that more than just news media has become obsessed with. Generation Y is the most studied age demographic ever by market researchers. The dates tend to vary, but a generous estimate of GenY birth years begins at approximately 1977 and goes through 1997. These are people who were raised in a period of unprecedented parental coddling. They were strapped in car seats, rode their bikes with helmets and got it drilled into them to never talk to strangers. Yet for such a protected childhood, Generation Y also came of age during some pretty uncertain and scary times.

Defining generational moments would be the O.J. Simpson trial, the Oklahoma City terrorist attack, the Lewinsky scandal, the Columbine school shooting, a presidential election that was

Esquire introduced
“augmented reality” last
December. Readers could
access interactive content
by holding up their
magazines to a webcam.



“This appears to be in the nature of the Web and not something that is likely to change. And it makes paying for access to any particular site a bigger practical and psychological hurdle.”

Michael Kinsley, Slate.com editor; 1999 announcement that Slate's content would be free

ultimately decided by the Supreme Court, the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, dual wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the worst economic collapse since the Great Depression.

How do you identify with a group of kids who have already been through so much? It's a losing battle to try and assign one overarching characteristic to an entire age group, but market researchers are giving it their best shot. The consensus seems to be somewhere along the lines of the following generalizations:

Members of Generation Y are affluent and spends lots of their own or their parents' money, even during a recession. They've been raised to embrace community and teamwork more than individuality. Because of this, they're more likely to jump onto trends or embrace products because their friends and peers also endorse it, not because a faceless ad told them to.

Given the staggering realities they've seen growing up, they have a keen sense of authenticity, which makes them very aware of insincere marketing strategies. Most of them have faith in the government's ability to do things, and are more likely to vote Democrat than Republican.

Perhaps the most defining characteristic is their familiarity with technology. They grew up in homes with a computer and an Internet connection. Most of them own cell phones and have social network profiles that they check regularly.

This is an unwieldy group, and many advertisers have ruefully labeled Generation Y as the “unreachables.” But before we go on any diatribes about kids today, let's also remember that the rising generation is far from being disconnected.

A Pew Research Center poll from 2008 shows that 27 percent of young adults surveyed (those born after 1977) said that they read a newspaper “yesterday,” or the day before they were surveyed. Thirteen percent said they read a print version exclusively, and 11 percent said they got it from an online version exclusively. Three percent said they got it from both.

Compared to 2006 data, the number of GenY readers who said they read a newspaper the day before was down, but only by two percentage points. The real difference was in the number of respondents who said they'd gotten their news exclusively from either print or online. GenY readers who read only from print

made up 20 percent in 2006, while online-only readers were at 7 percent.

In only two years, the news media have seen that coveted market and their future readership make a steady migration to Web-only content, where most of the stories are free. Unless, as in the case of the 2008 elections, what's on the newsstands is something they really care about.

The year 2008 was an unusual one for politics, but it was just as unusual for print media. Amid slumping newsstand sales from previous years, weeklies suddenly got a taste of the upward slope during the elections, and a lot of the people buying were college students.

Trade publications were simply buzzing in December of that year when Advertising Age revealed Time magazine to be the favorite magazine — news or not — among 1,000 college students surveyed. The honor went to Cosmopolitan the year before. CNN.com also managed to make it into the top 10 favorite websites, as 2007 favorites PerezHilton.com and CollegeHumor.com were ousted.

The unexpected ranking came as a surprise, said Time Marketing Director Steve Cambron.

"I'm not aware of any specific initiative that drove that status, except to speculate that our coverage of Barack Obama and last year's election engaged a lot of young people who may have been more likely to pick up the magazine than they normally would be," Cambron wrote in an e-mail interview.

Tom Anderson, the managing partner of Anderson Analytics, which conducted the survey, also attributed this rise in print media's credibility among college students to the 2008 elections. Even during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in previous years, the survey didn't reflect much of an interest in politics or world affairs, he said in the Ad Age article.

"I think Obama just really struck a chord with them," Anderson said.

So he did. In 2008, Obama's face graced the cover of just about every magazine imaginable, from Vibe to Rolling Stone. Time featured him on the cover a whopping 14 times, including as its Person of the Year. Newsweek trailed by only two.

Obama helped spur newsstand sales after many publications put out special commemorative editions after the November election. Of course, this wasn't due to interest in Obama from young people only, but it was no secret during the election season

that the Obama campaign had a firm hold on the youngest voting demographic, and the big news magazines seemed to want a piece of that pie too. In fact, when Time named Obama its Person of the Year for 2008, the issue became Time's biggest selling single issue in its history. It sold nearly five times as many issues as most at around 575,000.

But as the afterglow of the election and inauguration has subsided, publications are going to need a more permanent strategy to keep younger audiences interested. Most magazines are betting on Apple's latest device, the iPad. Released in April, the iPad is an electronic reader with a touch-screen interface and a vast potential for interactivity. Publishers such as Time, Inc. and Condé Nast are already boasting prototype editions of some of their magazines that can be used on the iPad. Some of those magazines include Condé Nast's The New Yorker and Wired and Sports Illustrated. More are sure to follow.

With the iPad, publishers are looking to generate a new kind of experience based on interactivity and reader-oriented control over content, two established habits of the average GenY news consumer.

Nowadays, Slate seems to have caught on to that concept: "Our readers rely on Slate for a perspective they can't get elsewhere. Loyal, engaged and active online and off — they keep us on our toes. Slate users are opinionated, influential, engaged, active, affluent, tech-savvy, political, outdoorsy, film-buff-y, intellectual, literate and green ... Our readers want to engage with our content, with our talent and with each other."

This might seem like a pretty glowing description of just about any metropolitan, left-leaning age group, but this description comes from Slate's media kit, an introduction to potential advertisers about the market they'll be able to reach.

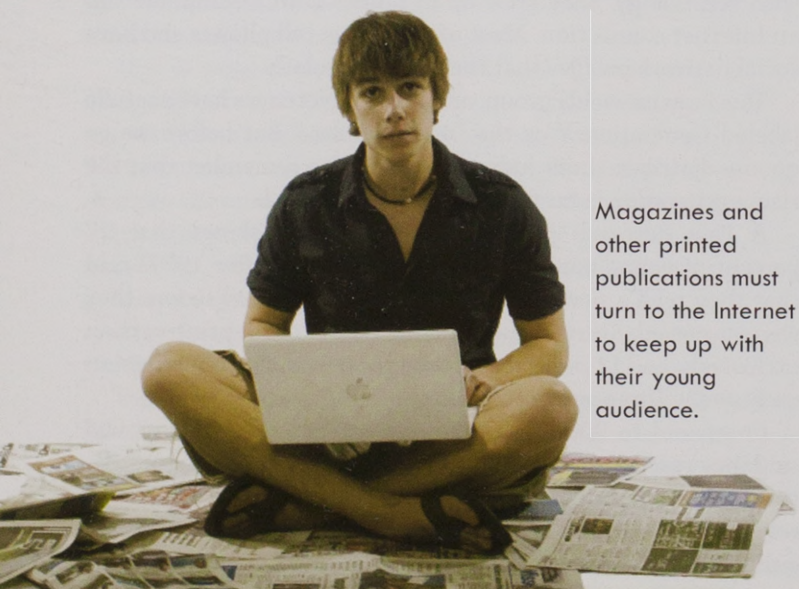
The point of Slate's pitch to advertisers is to attract companies that have done their homework on Generation Y and are looking for a place to reach them.

The digital revolution that Kinsley and company tried so hard to capitalize on has so far established the norm that online news will be free. A few sites, most notably the Wall Street Journal's wsj.com, and, starting in January 2011, the New York Times' nytimes.com, do charge to read some content online, but they're still the exception rather than the rule.

People like Kinsley know all too well that charging for online news just doesn't work, at least not while Generation Y is calling the shots. And unless it's a rare case like a transformative and historical presidential election, you won't see a lot of Generation Y hanging around at newsstands either. But is the choice between dead trees and the glare of a computer screen the only one publications have in capturing this market? What if there's something beyond that? What if it's a mixture?

What if it's the iPad? Or what if it's something like what Esquire magazine did last December: an "augmented reality" issue that featured ads and articles that could interact with readers via their computers if they held the magazine up to a webcam. Some dismissed it as a hokey stunt, but stunts like that have actually caused Esquire's print circulation to grow by about 38,000 in the past decade to 718,000 total, while its Web-traffic stayed pretty low at 362,000. And, as wildly flashy as it seems, it at least moves some issues off the newsstands.

Generation Y is all about the experience, they say. Well, as the print media answer, let's hope we can come up with an experience worth buying. **MJR**





PLAYING CATCH-UP

VETERAN JOURNALISTS TRANSITION FROM PRINT TO MULTIMEDIA



Story by **ALAINA ABBOTT**

Missoulian reporter Rob Chaney produces multimedia stories, but to do it, he relies on one class he took in college — and that was a quarter of a century ago.

The class was in broadcast journalism, not Chaney's print specialty, but it gave him a taste of what awaited him.

A few years ago, that future arrived when Chaney shot the Missoulian's first video. In 2004, while the new stadium for the Missoula Osprey baseball team was under construction, Chaney and a photographer flew over the field at night. Chaney had grabbed someone's home video camera, and with his footage, he produced a three-minute clip of the stadium lights.

"(For video), the principles have remained the same," Chaney said.

Today, he still follows the rule of thirds and takes close-ups and pan shots.

Multimedia has become a driving force in the newspaper industry, and veteran journalists, some of whom have more than 20 years of experience in print journalism, must learn to use audio recorders, digital cameras and video cameras, not to mention the editing programs for all those devices.

Joining reporters, photographers and editors in the newsroom are videographers, who specialize in visual journalism for newspaper websites. However, not all newspapers have the budget to hire such specialized journalists. Those news outlets instead turn to their seasoned print journalists to enhance stories with multimedia.

The Society of Professional Journalists and Knight Digital

Media Center, as well as other media organizations, have led multimedia training sessions. But despite training opportunities, many journalists find themselves learning on their own out in the field, blundering at times but improving their skills as they go.

Understanding the technical side of multimedia is only part of the new job description for journalists.

"Deciding if video will complement a story is a big decision," Chaney said. "It's not just an ornament."

Making mistakes, making progress

With no instruction in video, a journalist might return to the newsroom lacking usable material, much like longtime reporter Peter Johnson.

Last year, editors at the Great Falls Tribune of Great Falls, Montana, encouraged Johnson to shoot video at Showdown Ski Area. He struggled with the settings on his video camera all day, and then he unknowingly botched his entire footage of an interview with the president of the ski resort.

Thinking visually, Johnson had tipped his video camera vertically, a still photography technique, to capture the mountain behind his subject. He figured the scenery provided a more compelling backdrop than the walls of the president's office.

Alas, his video turned out sideways, and therefore, was unusable.

But in some cases, the different backgrounds and interests of journalists mean newspapers are not necessarily starting

from square one with multimedia. Experience with home video cameras and familiarity with editing programs from past jobs have helped ease the transition to multimedia.

Editing is Bill Schwanke's strength. For years, he worked in radio with Adobe Premiere, the same editing program he uses at the Missoulian in Missoula, Montana. Schwanke works on keeping the length of his published videos shorter than two minutes. In the past, he put together videos that were three to four minutes long, but as he's gained experience, he has determined that shorter clips are more viewer-friendly.

Shooting video has challenged Schwanke, who has found his fair share of unusable video when editing footage. Sometimes he discovers an excessive amount of video. That tends to happen when he forgets to stop recording and picks up dizzying shots of the ground, the sky and the rest of his surroundings. Other times, the shoulder strap of his video camera falls in front of the lens, ruining shots.

Those kinds of things don't happen as frequently now. Today, Schwanke has produced more than 300 videos for the Missoulian's website. That's since 2005, when he returned to the Missoulian at age 60 (Schwanke was the sports editor at the Missoulian from 1969-1971). He calls himself the poster child for the saying, "You *can* teach an old dog new tricks."

Still, Schwanke doesn't claim to be an expert in videography. He hasn't had any formal training in producing video. Lately, though, he's been shooting from different angles, and since he has a feel for what kind of footage he needs, he can record less, which reduces the amount of time he spends wading through video.

Before heading out of the newsroom, Schwanke must decide which kind of camera he will need: either the Missoulian's small, home-style video camera or the big one with "all the bells and whistles." Taking both is unnecessary, but Schwanke can confidently select which he will need.

Schwanke realizes he still has skills to master, but he thinks his multimedia is at least above average.

"If I were getting a grade, I would say I'd get a 'B,'" he said.

Putting the story together

The technical side of multimedia is only part of the story for journalists. Besides learning how to use cameras, they also have to adapt their interviewing style for video. And then they have to piece together visual, not written, segments to tell a story.

Last December, Chaney and a Missoulian photographer drove to Lolo, Montana, just outside of Missoula, to take pictures and conduct two interviews: one for print and the other for video. The story featured a man who collects Santa Claus figures — he owns 55 in various shapes and sizes.

Chaney and the photographer, both with years of experience, handled the print side of the story expertly. They ran into problems with the video, though. A furnace was humming during one interview attempt, and they also had issues with lighting, much to Chaney's chagrin.

"We redid the interview three times. I asked him the same damn questions every time," Chaney said.

Bill Schwanke, online editor for the Missoulian, records video during an interview in March with Jim Cearley, a Missoula man whose daughter was killed by an alleged drunk driver. Cearley went to Haiti, wanting to help others as the community had helped his family after his daughter's death. Schwanke, 65, says videos allow viewers to get the "basic gist" of a story if they don't have time to sift through a written article.

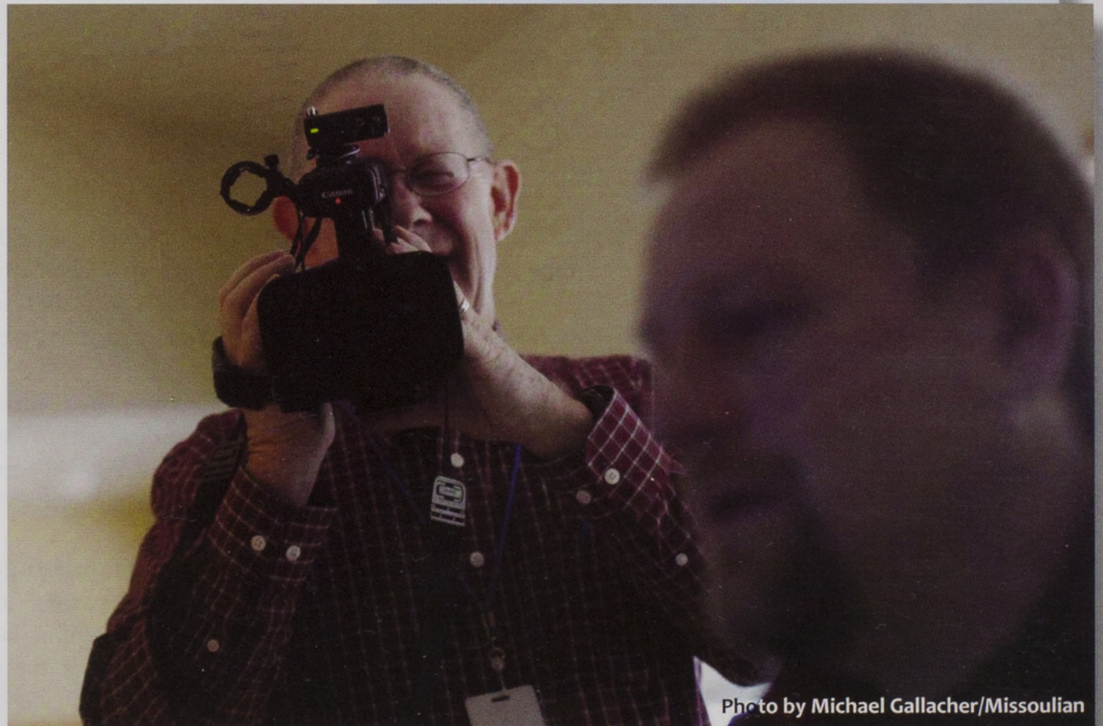


Photo by Michael Gallacher/Missoulian



People that are not doing (multimedia) are making a mistake. It's part of our world. Journalism is journalism, no matter if it's on a website.

-Bill Schwanke, Missoulian, online editor



Videographer Tanner Herriott of The Oklahoman in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, knows how interviews vary for print and video. Often, he accompanies a reporter for an interview. Other times, he shoots an interview on his own, referencing the reporter's notes. All reporters for The Oklahoman have a Flip camera.

Herriott said the types of questions a print reporter asks differ from those a videographer uses because a reporter can summarize. A videographer needs complete sentences. For video, journalists are looking for sound bites, which by nature are not as in-depth, Herriott said.

"I need four to five questions," he said. "I've only got your (the viewer's) attention for two minutes."

Herriott considers himself more of a shooter than a producer, but, "I prefer to cut my own stuff," he said. He spent time in college shooting videos of music tours and editing his footage into stories, and that experience made him technically proficient in video.

However, the need for efficiency sometimes means video footage is handed off to production editors to cut and produce.

Dave Reynolds, crime and breaking news reporter for the StarNews in Wilmington, North Carolina, used to give his raw footage to an editor. Then Reynolds would write his print story. However, he started learning the basics of Apple's editing program Final Cut at the Knight Multimedia Training in January.

A couple of weeks after going through the training, which included everything from equipment usage to putting together a story, Reynolds had produced a few rough videos. He said he needed more practice to gain confidence, but he was hoping to share his new tricks with other multimedia reporters at the StarNews.

Reynolds incorporates multimedia into his reporting by showing crimes and car wrecks that have happened in the area. Commuters can look online to see whether a crime was committed in their area before driving home, for example. Being deliberate about using video is important for Reynolds.

"We try not to change what we cover because of multimedia," he said.

Deciding whether multimedia will enhance a story warrants discussion in newsrooms. Some stories lend themselves to video since the visuals add to the story. For other stories, a visual component might not work effectively.

"Video is simply another tool, and frequently, it's the wrong tool," Chaney said. "Unless the city council is having a pie fight, live video is a tremendous waste of resources."

Learning from the experts

Journalists who go through multimedia training learn from experts, or at least experienced videographers.

Last year, about 15 Great Falls Tribune journalists participated in a workshop organized by the Society of Professional Journalists and the University of Montana. Armed with Flip video cameras, the journalists spanned out across Great Falls to collect footage. They returned to the newsroom, where they gave their video some "crude editing," said Richard Ecke, city reporter and columnist for the Great Falls Tribune.

The training lasted a mere hour and a half, but Ecke learned



Photo by Kim Skornogowski/Great Falls Tribune

Rich Ecke, city reporter for the Great Falls Tribune, edits footage for a video showing a new highway project to widen a stretch of Great Falls' 10th Avenue South to six lanes. Ecke, who has worked at the Tribune for more than 30 years, says the Flip video cameras that Tribune journalists use take "pretty good video" but the audio quality is "poor and faint."

valuable basic guidelines to follow. For instance, he learned that he should almost never pan — experts hardly ever pan, he said. Ecke, who has been at the Tribune for more than 30 years, compared using video to being a TV reporter because he is showing and telling a story at the same time.

Ecke put his video skills to work during city elections. The Tribune ran one-minute videos of 10 of the 12 candidates, and viewers responded positively, Ecke said, in spite of background noise and other distractions. During Ecke's interviews, trucks roared past multiple times, and once, a hang glider using a motorized kite sailed across the sky behind a candidate.

Chaney and the photo editor of the Missoulian attended a training session in the Midwest and learned video skills by sharing tips with other journalists there. Chaney supplements that experience by watching special features from movies. If he's relaxing at home, he can turn on the commentary and have award-winning director Martin Scorsese explaining the reason a scene was set up in a particular way — to portray a certain message to the viewers.

Chaney taps into his college past as a foundation for producing video, but he's looking everywhere for ways to tell a compelling story through multimedia.

"If you don't have a good story with good visuals, it's still shit," Chaney said.

People have always been telling stories — verbally, pictorially, photographically, and of course, through writing. Multimedia simply opens up a new dimension for sharing stories.

"As we get more and more tools, toys, venues and platforms," Chaney said, "the danger is missing that initial elegance of what you were doing — trying to tell a story, capture your readers' attention so maybe they'll somehow better their lives." **MJR**

Off the beaten

Small-town papers in northwest Montana show the 'then' and 'now' for multimedia

Story and photos by **JUSTIN FRANZ**

Whitefish Pilot editor Richard Hanners realizes the northwest Montana community "isn't a sleepy little town." Still, he doesn't have time for multimedia.

"The technology is constantly changing, and I don't have time to fiddle with it," he said, adding that the small-town paper near the Canadian border has only two editorial employees, barely enough to cover the town of 5,000 people.

It is a similar story across the country. Small publications that lack the money and manpower cannot keep up with their big city counterparts that are creating a noticeable online presence with multimedia.

There are, however, exceptions to every rule.

Just 15 miles from the Whitefish Pilot down Highway 93, it's a different story at the office of the Flathead Beacon, a paper based in downtown Kalispell, Montana, a town with an estimated population of 20,000. Created in 2007, the weekly paper stands out among small newspapers in Montana with its online presence and multimedia. The Beacon is also in direct competition with the town's daily newspaper, the Daily Inter Lake.

Having good online content has been important for the paper since the beginning, according to editor Kellyn Brown, a 2002 graduate of the UM School of Journalism.

While some newspaper websites, especially those of weeklies, feature just the content that is produced for the paper, Brown works hard to keep the online aspect of the company as up-to-date as possible.

"We're kind of a different animal in that we put out a weekly paper, but we want to keep our website fresh," he said.

To do this, Brown heads up a staff of three writers, one photographer and one designer.

That small staff is the nucleus of an impressive effort to bring new media to the Web, including photos, video, blogging and Twitter feeds.

One of the people leading that effort is Lido Vizzutti, a virtual one-man band of photography and multimedia.

Vizzutti wears many hats when it comes to illustrating the news both in print and online. On a sunny spring morning in March 2010, he sat and edited photographs at his desk in the open newsroom at the Main Street office.

But there is no such thing as a normal day for Vizzutti, and moments later he grabbed a Nikon camera and an extra lens or two before heading out the door with a reporter to walk a few blocks to a meeting with local business owners and Sen. Max Baucus. Then he rushed back and edited the photos to be put online immediately following the story's completion.

This is much of Vizzutti's day: rushing in and out of the office, camera in hand, to shoot another story before coming back to edit images and talk to reporters.



Flathead Beacon photographer Lido Vizzutti covers a health care meeting hosted by Montana Sen. Max Baucus in March 2010.

The Flathead Beacon newsroom in Kalispell is home to the alt-weekly that serves the Flathead Valley region.



path

School of Journalism: Thriving and Surviving in a Multimedia World

Flathead Beacon photographer Lido Vizzutti, left, and editor Kellyn Brown have taken a lead in the advancement of multimedia at small publications in Montana.



"Every day is a little different," he said.

With the work of illustrating an entire weekly paper left to one man, you might think that Vizzutti would have time for little else.

However, these constraints haven't stopped him from trying new things such as multimedia slideshows on the website, which combine still images, audio and, in some cases, video.

But Vizzutti himself can only do so many pieces along with the more pressing issue of shooting images for the paper. At the end of the day, the paper is still the most important part of the business, according to Brown.

"My preference is online," he said. "(But) our print is still our bread and butter."

That "bread and butter" requires 15,000 copies of the Flathead Beacon in print every week. That number is about 1,000 fewer than the Daily Inter Lake's circulation, but both are much more than the Whitefish Pilot's circulation of 2,900.

That is why Vizzutti tries to shoot at least one multimedia piece a week, including simple slideshows. Some of Vizzutti's most recent and proudest work was a "Best of Preps" slideshow that featured portrait shots of some of the area's best high school athletes. Spliced between the pictures of the students was a time-lapse video of the entire photo shoot. Another piece combined audio and photos of an area family cutting down their own Christmas tree.

Both pieces have been wildly popular, Vizzutti said, although it does come with a price.

"Multimedia is time-consuming, and it can be tough to produce when you have many other responsibilities," he said. "In all honesty, we don't do as much as we should, and it's honestly because of time."

It takes time, he said, because he doesn't just want to put out a mediocre piece.

"To be frank, I'm not interested in cranking out multimedia for the sake of cranking it out," he said. "I think there is a

difference between quality and just getting stuff online."

Brown agrees that creating online content for the sake of looking advanced or to fill space is not what they are interested in.

"I like to think that good video is great, but it's hard," he said. "Doing video for the sake of video is a waste of time ... It's tough, but we do the best with what we got."

To find inspiration, Vizzutti spends a lot of his free time searching the Web for various multimedia examples. He said that some of the best he has seen have been from the San Jose Mercury News. It's an example of what he'd like to see the Beacon's own multimedia look like.

"I said there are no boundaries; we can do anything we want," he said.

And Vizzutti tests these boundaries in hopes of bringing more interest to the paper's website and online content.

"My hope is that when I produce something, it drives viewers (to the site)," he said. "For me it's just a fantastic way to tell stories and that is why we do what we do: We tell stories. It's a very exciting way to tell a story. It's very exciting for our viewers."

Vizzutti said that at the end of the day, multimedia is still just a small part of what they do at the paper every week.

"When multimedia first came about, it was going to save newspapers and the visual people wanted to believe that, but the fact is it hasn't," he said.

He has pondered adding short ads to the front of multimedia pieces. However, he believes the clip must be truly interesting for someone to sit through the advertisement.

The future of journalism and how multimedia will play a part are just two more things that Brown, Vizzutti and others of the noticeably young staff have to ponder.

"I think that youthfulness helps very much, especially in a start-up, because you have fresh perspectives and ideas," he said. "When you start from scratch and you have a young perspective it's easy to involve non-traditional forms of media." *MR*

Tips and tricks

BY
HANNA DAGG

PEOPLE TODAY want news quick and easy and multimedia seems to be the news media's answer. The number of news outlets that are turning to multimedia has increased dramatically, but with this growth spurt come more opportunities to fail. Multimedia has to not only capture the viewer's attention but also effectively inform. The trick is finding the balance between the two. So the question is, what makes a successful multimedia piece?

It takes so many steps to create a successful multimedia piece, but it takes only one bad element to ruin the story. Here are some tips and tricks to help prevent mistakes and optimize results.

The world of multimedia can be divided into three parts: pre-production, production and post-production.

MULTIMEDIA STRENGTHENS PRINT STORIES

Story by **PASSANG NORBU**

A multimedia story consists of a combination of text, still photographs, video clips, audio, graphics and maybe even interactivity. It is usually presented on a website in a nonlinear format, meaning the information in each medium is complementary, but hopefully not redundant. News companies today are rapidly exploring multimedia options to produce news as text, photo, video, audio and graphics.

Traditional print journalists report a story using a reporter's notebook. They can write down information from interviews based on what they see and hear, but what they gather is usually only useful for print. On the other hand, when journalists report a story for television, using a video camera to shoot interviews or events that will be visual elements in a clip, what they gather is usually only useful for television.

When journalists report for online publications, materials for both print and broadcast media are useful and important. Capturing video content, still pictures, audio and any other relevant information at the same time, however, can be quite challenging.

The trick for journalists now is thinking on different levels while taking a multifaceted approach to their stories. Adding multimedia to content not only grabs readers' attention but also enhances understanding and makes information accessible beyond traditional methods.

Quite often, journalists are specialized in only one form of media and not in others. So

the question is: How do journalists pick the right form of multimedia for a news story?

There are two basic types of multimedia stories.

One type is a story in which a reporter is in charge of putting the story together. The story is usually a daily beat story, a feature or part of an investigative series or special project. The reporter, sometimes called a "backpack journalist," goes into the field and uses a digital video camera as a reporter's notebook. The reporter gathers everything that will go into text and graphics.

The second type is where the editor/producer is in charge, generally covering breaking news or a special project. The editor assigns individuals to produce pieces of a breaking news story, like tornadoes damaging a city or a politician's illicit affair. He or she can ask a photographer for photos, a reporter for interviews, a videographer for film of the incident, another reporter to gather information by phone and a graphic artist to produce maps and illustrations. An editor, rather than a "backpack journalist," then plans out the story.

The best multimedia stories are multi-dimensional. They use interactive video and someone with pithy quotes and strong emotions for still photos and audio.

Before stepping into the field to shoot a story, background information needs to be gathered. This is called storyboarding — laying out the multimedia options. Preliminary interviews with sources, getting a basic idea of what to expect in the field and looking up anything the

PRE-PRODUCTION

Know the focus of your story

- Write out the questions that you are going to ask in the order you are going to ask them.

Compose open-ended questions

- Make the subject answer in full sentences. Yes and no answers are a fast way to kill the audio of a good story and complete answers will make the editing process much smoother.

Familiarize yourself with the equipment

- Test that everything is working properly and that all batteries are charged. Take along spare batteries.

Build an emotional connection between your viewers and your subject. As a storyteller, you're working with a limited attention span, so you have a short amount of time to pack in the essential details of a story.

Peter Huoppi, *The Day*, director of multimedia

sources have published in print or on the Web are all part of the process.

It is important to track down any previous stories on the topic, though reporters need to avoid copyright infringement, for it is often easy to plagiarize without even realizing.

Editors, who usually have the upper hand in the decision, say the choice of multimedia depends mostly on the reporting environment.

"For stories where there is less movement — like in city council or budget meetings — just straightforward text is enough to pass on the information to the readers," said the Missoulian City Editor Gwen Florio, adding that there are two types of stories for which multimedia can be used.

"First is the visual and feature stories like a profile/recreation story for which slideshow and video are best options because audience want high quality work," she said. "The other type is the breaking news story in which text as in Twitter feeds and audio fit well with audience not caring much about quality."

The Missoulian of Missoula, Montana, circulates 30,000 copies per day, and its website receives 4 million hits every month.

"The biggest challenge, however, is getting the resources and manpower needed to produce better quality of work," Florio said. "Good equipment is expensive, and we cannot hire more people."

News organizations are not all at the same stage in respect to their multimedia content. Where some national papers are fairly advanced, medium-sized news outlets are lagging.

"Currently, we are only able to present photo feature stories with online slideshows," said Skylar Browning, the editor of The Missoula Independent. "Local newspapers turning to multimedia journalism is a smart step, and I look forward to the Independent incorporating more multimedia in the future. Multimedia

offers another, often more interactive, way to tell a story. But you also require more resources for that."

According to Lee Banville, professor of journalism at the University of Montana, the mixture of video, audio and photos best tells a story. News organizations can pass on the information more freely now with the advancement of multimedia and the Web.

Banville also said that it is important to understand the elements of the story and its comprehensiveness to the audience before choosing which multimedia to use. The common challenge editors and reporters face now is deciding when an audience will view or listen to the multimedia.

"The quality of multimedia doesn't matter much," Banville said. "What matters are the editorial quality and the technical ability to do it."

A decent multimedia piece can be done using a cheap camera and audio recorder, but it is important to know how to weave and edit material into a story.

"News organizations mostly spend on the technology rather than educating journalists on the use of the technology," Banville said.

However, working with multimedia is much easier today than in the past. Journalists do not need to have intimate knowledge of complicated coding or programming since user-friendly software is easily available.

Technology and viewer expectations will continue to change and evolve over time. What will never change is the requirement for a good journalist to spot a worthy story and possess the knowhow to share it in the right medium — whether it is simple print news, video, audio message or a complex multi-dimensional online clip. The decision to use the right medium lies in the hands of the journalist, who should not let the core story get lost amid fancy multimedia platforms. *NR*

POST PRODUCTION

Utilize your B-roll

- B-roll video, stills or audio can add a scene-setting element to your piece that can capture and maintain viewers' interest. It is also excellent for transitions in your narrative and for covering up choppy video transitions.

Establish your focus early

- Another one of photojournalist Colin Mulvany's tips is to introduce the reason for your story early. "Viewers can be a fickle crowd. If they don't know what your story is in the first 20 or 30 seconds, chances are they will bolt."

Examine your narrative

- Make sure your story makes sense and is appealing to the common viewer. If you find yourself bored, chances are your viewer will be too.

I would say that No. 1 when you are doing a video or a slideshow is make sure that your audio sounds good. If everything else sucks, people may still watch it.

Tammy Marshall,

The Pacific Northwest Inlander, photojournalist

Know what your story is, how you are going to get into the story and how you are going to get out. Define your story. Don't go off on tangents. You are not out to make an epic film.

Colin Mulvany,

The Spokesman-Review, photojournalist

PRODUCTION

Use a variety of angles and shots.

- Whether shooting video or stills, having wide, medium and tight shots will keep the visuals fresh for the viewer.

Shoot B-roll (B-roll is extra footage or sound you gather to show the setting of your story)

- Extra footage or audio will come in handy when editing your story. When in doubt, shoot it!

Prioritize

- Conduct your interview first. This will give you a good idea of what video or stills will match with what audio.

Audio levels

- Listen to your audio levels and make sure you can hear your subject clearly before starting the interview.

BLOGGING: The ethical and legal implications

Story by COLLIN BEHAN

The appetite for blogs among newspapers has exploded in the last few years and, while this increase in itself probably isn't any great revelation, the sheer scope of the increase creates an interesting ethical dilemma for newspapers. The home pages of each of the top 10 U.S. dailies by circulation all have links to blogs, both by staffers and freelancers. In fact, it is difficult to find a daily newspaper that doesn't at least link to a blog, if not actively support its own.

The New York Times has upwards of 60 blogs directly affiliated with its website. The Los Angeles Times has blogs on everything from the latest tech gadgets to celebrity gossip. The Billings Gazette has a blog offering tips on proper grammar, and the Boulder Daily Camera in Colorado runs a blog on local businesses by its vice presidents of marketing.

Blogs allow local newspapers to reach a national and international audience through the Internet. Gwen Florio, city editor for the Missoulian newspaper, sees this in how her blog on Native American news and culture, The Buffalo Post, reaches audiences the paper can't. The Buffalo Post aggregates and distills news coverage dealing with Native Americans from across the country.

"I know that the blog is read all over the country," Florio said. "So people who might miss our stories in the paper or who might not see them on other Native news blogs can see them that way."

Reporters, editors and columnists for newspapers, as well as broadcast and radio news stations, have seized blogging as an opportunity to increase market awareness and expand their reader base. Blogs are certainly a part of new media but are now so prevalent they could generally be considered mainstream.

The question whether reporters should be blogging at all is moot at this point. The reporters are already blogging, whether of their own volition or after being ordered to by editors.

Niche blogs, which constitute the majority of general blogs, can be complex or flippant and dense or sparse, depending on what the writers and readers want, which is partly the point

of blogs in the first place. Part of the great appeal of blogs for readers is that they are often less rigid than hard news stories, at least the broadly successful ones tend to be. Consequently, people can relate to blogs much more easily than to some news stories.

Blogs entice journalists because of their great appeal to readers. Some readers dive wholeheartedly into posting on their favorite blogs, writing their own opinions on comment threads nearly every day. Many bloggers frequently publish their own retorts to reader comments, creating a conversation that furthers the exchange of ideas.

But newspapers have a journalistic brand to protect. In print they follow certain ethical guidelines, guidelines which may stifle the creative integrity of blogs. Reporters writing blogs about the topics they are supposed to cover for their newspapers without bias run into a particular problem.

At the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, local education reporters had covered a blog on education for years when columnist Maureen Downey became the main writer. The reporters who had been writing on the blog were using it as an extension of their news stories, posting dry news blurbs about upcoming stories, Downey said. Editors believed that she, as an opinion columnist, would be better suited to punch up the blog with personal perspectives.

"I think the opinion element, the personal element, sort of engages people," Downey said, adding that the blog has close to quadrupled its daily hits since she took over in August. "But as

a journalist, I will tell you that I wouldn't want to do a blog on something I was doing straight reporting on."

Similarly, Jodi Rave, a former staff writer for the Missoulian who covered the Native American news beat, started The Buffalo Post blog. Rave left the paper and the blog in the summer of 2009 and Florio took over.

But while Rave was working on it, she said she never found a particular conflict of interest between her reporting, column writing and blogging.

"I had a general rule that if I had reported on a particular issue as a news story, I tended to stay away from them as opinion pieces, but there was so much news and information that that territory was wide open," Rave said.

At the same paper, a blog on city government has shown a differing viewpoint on this same issue. Missoulian city government beat reporter Keila Szpaller said the paper started blogs several years ago without any clear purpose after an outside consultant recommended it. The blog she started, Missoula Red Tape, quickly showed the benefits of covering the same issues online that she was writing about for the newspaper.

"My list of story ideas has always been way too long for one person to get to," Szpaller said.

The solution for Szpaller was to put out small blurbs on her blog. Public documents and files that weren't supported by the newspaper's website, but that Szpaller still felt were important information to make available, could also be posted to the blog. The tone of the blog is also less formal than the articles she writes for the Missoulian.

Acknowledging that there is a rift between reporters who draw a clear line between hard news and blogging, and others who say that objectivity is impossible to begin with, Szpaller said she occasionally does write opinion into her blog.

"I'm sure that I veer into that and it's really, really touchy; it's

an uncomfortable place," Szpaller said.

The benefit though, Szpaller said, is that she can directly interact with readers and have a back-and-forth conversation. Generally, the most commented-on posts are the ones in which she offers an opinion, albeit lightly.

Szpaller said readers have accused her of being "snarky" on the blog when describing certain issues, but never of having an outright wrong or defamatory opinion, and editors have never asked her to take down a post. Whenever she feels she might be "putting even one little toe over the line," Szpaller said she checks in with her editors.

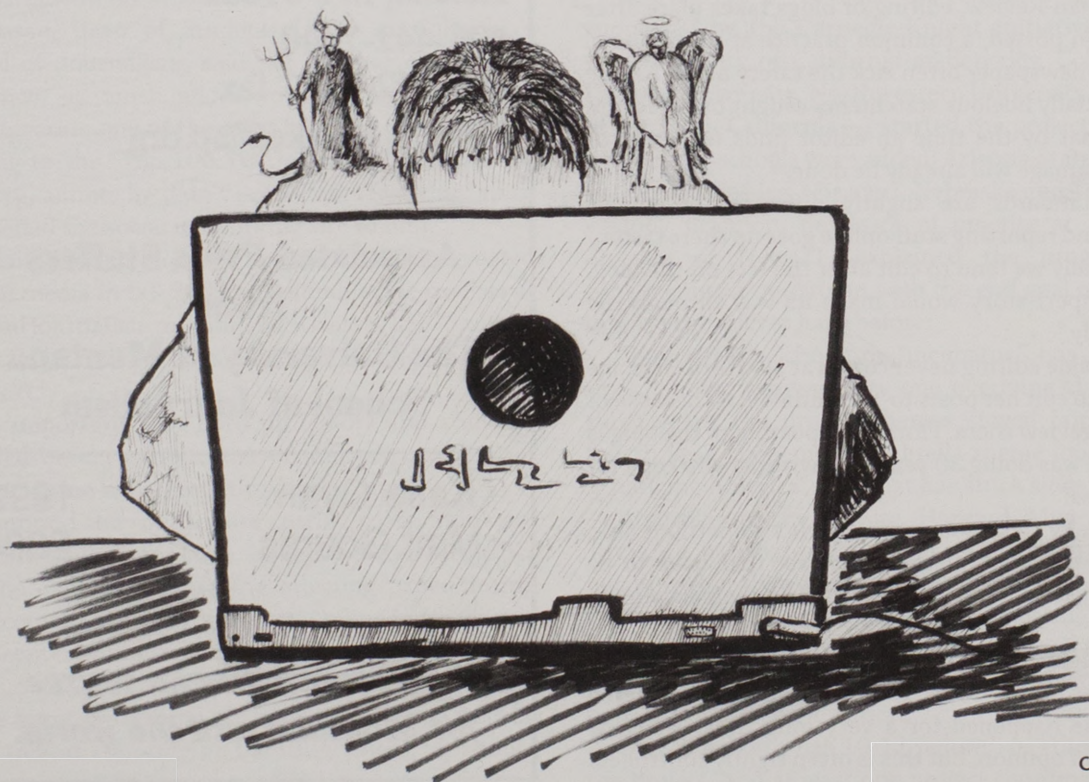
At the Grand Forks Herald in North Dakota, city beat reporter Tu-Uyen Tran follows city government on his blog. He said he tries to draw a clear line between taking a stand on an issue and giving his own tone for context on an issue. Writing on both platforms, he can be an objective journalist in the paper and let readers know that he is critically analyzing what the politicians he covers are saying. By giving his own interpretation in the first person, Tran said he can bring out the personality of the issues and put them in a context more people can identify with.

"With the blog you can do that. It's sort of like having your cake and eating it too," Tran said.

But there is a danger of alienating potential contacts in a blog or losing credibility as an impartial reporter in blogging opinion. Newspapers are trying to catch up to these dangers by creating guidelines for their bloggers.

Reporters and columnists do have the additional safety net of their news organizations behind them. But this also means they must protect the name of the newspaper when writing on their blogs.

The Spokesman-Review in Spokane, Washington, is one paper that has formalized its own set of guidelines for its reporters and freelance bloggers. The paper has staff and freelance



Cartoon by Ben Palmer

bloggers write for its website. The Spokesman-Review published its guidelines online in 2008 to set a standard for blogs on its website, said Ryan Pitts, the newspaper's assistant managing editor for digital media. But the paper wanted to set a formalized guideline for bloggers so editors would have something specific to point to beyond "be professional," he said.

"We'd been operating that way for years, and that just seemed smart to have something that kind of codified it, and something that other people could look at and, like I said, call us out if we're not meeting those expectations," Pitts said. "We've had internal stuff of course before then, but I think that was the first time we actually published our ethics policy online."

The paper doesn't necessarily have a different standard for its bloggers as it would for its reporters or opinion columnists, he said. Rather, the same basic rules the Spokesman-Review applies to reporters and opinion columnists in the paper edition are applied to bloggers.

The Spokesman-Review blogging ethics guidelines, published on its website, reiterate this standard: "Blogs produced for the Web should be considered an extension of the printed brand — even as they embrace and invite more relaxed, casual discourse."

This document does make a few stipulations for reporters who are also blogging. Reporters engaged in writing beat-specific blogs, such as sports or city council, "should avoid expressing opinions that compromise credibility and impartiality."

The guidelines also expressly prohibit reporters from blogging personal views on matters they are currently covering professionally to protect the readers' perception of the paper as being impartial.

These guidelines are a step toward protecting the paper. But the guidelines themselves make clear that editors can't foresee and prevent all problems. The final paragraph on the blog provisions states, "Rather than engage in the futile task of listing what is and isn't appropriate, we expect simply that newsroom staff don't do anything that would embarrass or unpleasantly surprise editors or colleagues."

At The Spokesman-Review, editing of blogs takes place after the blogs have been posted, a common practice at newspapers. The writer and the newspaper often lack the safety net of having mistakes or potentially libelous statements caught by an editor. The risk here is that by the time an editor finds the error or ethical lapse, the damage will already be done.

"The editing standards are slightly different, of course, because blogging and reporting stuff online goes up there faster," Pitt said. "And usually we tend to edit after the fact on the blog, whereas a (newspaper) story would make its way through the workflow differently."

Sometimes, outside editing never comes at all. Florio said she is the only person to edit her posts to The Buffalo Post because of the lack of staff to review them. Florio said posting to the blog is more like what she was doing 30 years ago writing wire copy for the Associated Press.

"It's like everybody talks about this like it's something new. But I'm writing really short pieces really fast that have to be accurate and editing them myself," Florio said. "It feels absolutely familiar to me."

Viewed in this light, the blogs by reporters, who are writing without opinion as Florio tries to do, could be considered something that has happened for a very long time. The new addition is the use of opinion, but this is often tightly controlled.

Sometimes those opinions go up before a story is even released. Szpaller said a post she put up in November, directly quoting a city councilmember's listserv about possible mistakes on a multi-million dollar construction project, angered a city official. The official, she said, was mostly angered because she hadn't called him for clarification of the issue.

"So, I have to explain to him that I'm not going to call him every time I put a blog post up, and I will always call him when I'm doing a story that relates to him," she said.

Publishing the information she gained from the councilman's listserv was not inappropriate in her opinion, Szpaller said, because she cited the source correctly. Nor did she feel she needed to interview all the sources she would for a story since the blog post was short and purposefully punchy.

The small snippet she posted wasn't the whole story, Szpaller said, but putting it up on the blog generated enough interest that she pursued it for an article. Two days later she published an article for the newspaper fully detailing what had started with the blog. The angered city official was interviewed and quoted in that story. *MJR*

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Teaching multimedia

Photo by Sally Finneran

Don Anderson Hall, the University of Montana's "new" journalism building, sits in front of the "M" on the school's campus. The building, completed in 2007, has a plethora of tools for new multimedia journalists.

Journalism schools across the country cope with the changing media

Story by **ASHLEY KLEIN**

Everyone's talking about it. It's like a nasty infection spreading through journalism schools around the nation. It's past the point of whispers. That fear, the one of uncertainty — the unknown — is festering in the minds of students, raising stress levels almost to the point of breaking. All around the world, budding journalists and veterans can be heard screaming, "Is multimedia the new frontier?"

Simply put: Yes. It's 2010, and multimedia is here to stay. Now the question is: how do we teach it?

Sree Sreenivasan, dean of Student Affairs at Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism, said the day has come when the students know as much about emerging media as the professors. Sreenivasan, one of the most followed professors on Twitter according to the "Top 100 Twitterers in Academia" by OnlineSchools.org, admits he didn't even start "tweeting" until a student mentioned the social networking site to him.

The self-proclaimed technology evangelist and skeptic created a course in social media in fall 2009 at Columbia. He teaches at the school's digital journalism program with classes like "Smarter Surfing: Better Use of Your Web Time," and "Figuring Out Blogs & Whatever's Next."

He said it is important that both professors and students stay open-minded because the future of journalism is full of possibilities, and no one knows exactly what to expect.

Newsrooms around the country are cutting costs. Staffs are being trimmed and budgets for large, in-depth pieces are nearly non-existent. The days of reading the morning paper during breakfast are becoming a thing of the past. Online journalism is now, and at the center of it all is multimedia.

So what do students need to know? Should budding journalists dabble in a little bit of everything, including traditional writing and editing, as well as shooting and editing video? Or should they pick one trade and have it mastered?

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One collaboration thinks it has the answer.

News21 is a 10-week investigative reporting program supported by the Carnegie-Knight Initiative. Five schools — the University of California at Berkeley, Columbia University, Harvard University, Northwestern University and the University of Southern California — started the project in 2006. In 2008, seven more schools were added: Arizona State, Maryland, North Carolina, Syracuse, Missouri, Nebraska and Texas.

Jody Brannon, professor of practice at ASU and national director of News21, explained the program as basically constructing a newsroom with the end goal of engaging readers in ways they never have before.

Though each school, or "incubator," has its own project to work on, the program has one overlying theme. For the first three years, the project themes stayed fairly narrow. By the fourth year, the general umbrella theme loosened to a generic "Changing America" idea that has stuck since then.

According to the website, Harvard, Missouri, Nebraska and Texas are "associate schools" rather than "participating schools," meaning that they don't actually create incubators. Instead they send one or two students to the participating universities.

For 2010, incubators chose topics ranging from homelessness in America to energy issues, the 2010 census and the elderly population across the nation.

Each incubator has 10-12 fellows, or students, who produce the project, and at least one project coordinator, who is usually

“ It’s
that
fine
line
between
being
a
jack
of
all
trades
and a
master
of
none.”

Don Wittekind,
professor of journalism
at the University
of North Carolina-
Chapel Hill

a professor at the school. Each team does its project a little differently.

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill has three coordinators for News21 and 12 fellows. The “Powering a Nation” team is also composed of “coaches” who act as guides to the fellows.

This is the second year that the UNC team is focusing its project on energy. The team decided to carry over the theme from 2009 because it felt like it had more of the story to tell.

The teams only have half a year to produce the project. During the spring they brainstorm, and then during the summer fellowship they gather and create their stories. The project has to be done by the end of the summer fellowship. UNC plans to expand on what students learned about energy use in 2009 and add more to it in 2010.

In 2009, 94 students, ranging from college juniors to doctoral students, participated in News21. Brannon said each school chooses participants differently, but all of the students are the “cream of the crop and leaders in journalism education circles.”

Don Wittekind, professor of journalism at UNC and coordinator for News 21 at the school said, “News21 is an experience you will never get again. It’s unique at this time. The resources are unbelievable.”

News21 received a \$7.5 million grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The grant allows fellows in the teams a stipend of more than \$2,000 each.

While investigative reporting suffers at larger media outlets, the fellows are granted almost unrestricted access to their reporting. They use state-of-the art equipment, travel without restraint and are taught by some of the most knowledgeable professors in their field — all of which is covered by the grant.

The program starts during the spring semester before the 10-week summer program. Students meet and discuss what they will be doing over the summer. The spring seminars allow students to meet one another and learn as much about their topic as possible.

News21, like the curriculum enrichment program funded by

Carnegie-Knight, works with students to do interdisciplinary work. Many spring seminars feature speakers from other departments at the universities.

“We like to think of it as making learning fun,” Brannon said.

At UNC, the group splits into teams. Each team is in charge of one story and usually consists of a reporter, photographer, videographer and programmer. The team works together to come up with ideas for the story.

Zach Ferriola-Bruckenstein, a 2009 graduate of UNC and member of the 2009 News21 staff, said his internship at National Geographic “didn’t compare with coming up with ideas and doing them from start to finish.”

He said that during the course of his internship he didn’t have one thing published. At News21, he was able to start and finish the entire project and see the work on the Web.

All of the past incubators’ projects can be viewed at the News21 website, News21.com. Each incubator created its own multimedia package, including written stories, photos, videos and interactive graphics.

Brannon said multimedia offers more to storytelling.

“You can construct a very complex project,” she said. “There are more layers than just with an inverted pyramid.”

“It’s real world,” Wittekind said. “You may or may not get experience at an internship. The team environment is key.”

For the most part, each student was accepted into the program because of a special skill set. Ferriola-Bruckenstein took the role of programmer.

Wittekind said he prefers that students pick a specialty on which to focus, like designing, writing or videography, because “you can’t be an expert in everything.”

“It’s that fine line,” Wittekind said, “between being a jack of all trades and a master of none.”

He said that it is good that students are competent in many media aspects in a team environment, because they are usually able to work better together if they have some knowledge of the others’ work.

“Most great projects are a team of specialists who really respect one another,” Wittekind said.

Brannon doesn’t necessarily agree with Wittekind. She said adaptability is key in the new media world.

“I need them to be able to adapt to everything,” Brannon said. “It’s more valuable than any particular tool.”

She said smart students should take advantage of their education. She said a journalism degree is a good start, but pairing it with a business entrepreneurial degree or something of the sort will really give a student an advantage in the job market.

She said the News21 team model seems to work well.

Brannon said 80 percent of journalism students involved with News21 get a job in the media field within six months of graduation. Brannon said that from 2006 to 2010, students got hired at a 10 percent higher rate than non-News21 students.

Wittekind said he hopes other schools are starting to teach team projects like News21.

The School of Journalism at the University of Montana-Missoula teaches some classes like News21, though not on as large a scale.



Photo by Eric Oravsky

Journalism students at the University of Montana practice shooting video for a multimedia class. The students here are using a Sony XD camera.

Native News has been an honors class at the journalism school since 1992. Eight pairs of students are each assigned to one of the seven Indian reservations in Montana, with one pair covering the “urban” Native Americans. As at News21, the teams work collaboratively to produce a package story, including a story and photos.

According to Carol Van Valkenburg, adviser of Native News and head of the print department at UM, the idea behind the project was to get students working on more in-depth stories involving the under-reported Native American tribes spread across Montana.

Both the photographer and writer work for the story. Native News is one of the few classes that UM’s journalism school offers in which students work as equal partners on one story.

“I think it’s extraordinarily valuable,” Van Valkenburg said, and students “learn to respect other points of view and see things that they may not otherwise.”

More recently, the project launched a website to supplement the printed magazine, and it is filled with multimedia.

Van Valkenburg said the multimedia on the website “does not

tell the same story, but tells another story” than the one that is written or photographed.

“It adds another dimension,” Van Valkenburg said.

Though Van Valkenburg is supportive of multimedia and collaborative works for the class, she is conservative about its future in teaching journalism. She said joint projects between print, radio/television and photo students have been tried in the past, but “all it served to do was make them hyper-competitive.”

Multimedia has staked its claim in the media world. Its presence will continually challenge professors to teach students how to report on important stories in an interesting, and perhaps interactive, way.

Though limited to just a few journalism schools, the News21 model has been proven to work. Smaller schools could, as UM is doing, teach a similar approach with classes like Native News. Will this type of learning prove to be the best way for the ever-changing multimedia world?

For that there is no answer. But Van Valkenburg said that budding journalists “all have to have the basics.”

Let’s hope that never changes. **MJR**



A University of Montana student reporter conducts an interview at a UM lacrosse game this spring.

A New Game

Montana newspaper sports sections hustle for new opportunities in the digital age

Story by **ROMAN STUBBS** Photos by **JUSTIN FRANZ**

George Geise never thought this business would age him. He thought that sports, and the way they played out on his pages for the past 40 years, would keep him young forever. And yet, Geise is now the old breed. He wanders a path with the golden days behind him, the tenderfoot Twitter, Facebook and Internet videos following him wherever he goes.

The 62-year-old sports editor of the Great Falls Tribune cherishes these days in 2010, which are perhaps some of the last of his career. It's a cold Friday afternoon in February, and Geise is working on his own terms. The quiet Tribune sports office, or "toy department," in Great Falls, Montana, sits in the back corner of the newsroom, with the platinum-haired Geise just arriving to work the 2-to-11 shift at his cubicle in the forefront.

There is no video equipment lying out — just late 1990s computer screens displaying Quark agate layout, keys popping, and a fax machine in the corner to retrieve and send news to and from the rural towns across the central plains.

There are state basketball tournaments spanning every corner of the state this particular weekend, and many major Montana newspapers — the Independent Record in Helena and the Gazette in Billings — are complementing their print with

video on their websites.

But not at the Great Falls Tribune.

Geise, who has been at the helm for more than 32 years, acknowledges that Tribune sports multimedia is nearly nonexistent. In fact, never in the history of the sports department has there been a video posted on the publication's website, which has been up since the late 1990s.

Technology has certainly made his job easier in the past quarter century. When he started in this business in rural Wisconsin, he wrote stories on a typewriter. There was little room for error, little room for changes on the fly, because copy editors bloodied up his prep sports copy on hard paper before sending it off to the publishing company.

He moved west in 1975, and has been a sports editor ever since. Each year has inched his mind closer to the fact that the

business is morphing into a wild, fresh digital frontier. And it is taking sports reporting with it.

Major newspapers in Montana have been producing multimedia for the past five years, with an evolutionary arc. Blogging and in-game updates have strengthened with supplemental websites for beat reporters to reach online audiences, and the emergence of Twitter in 2007 allowed sports sections to beam live scores and news across the state. Online slideshows have allowed photographers to complement print stories with more than one dominant event photo. Montana's sports online video journalism scene is at times stylish, but is also equally primitive.

The Independent and Gazette have carved out their places in the digital realm by featuring high school athletics — usually three to four minute videos that are tucked within the story text on the respective website. The videos have an established trend: spliced sections of highlights, with the sound of coach and player interviews in the background.

In Missoula, Montana, sports editor Bob Meseroll's section has benefited greatly from the services of Bill Schwanke, a two-decade radio production veteran who started a career in the online news field just four years ago. The Missoulian brought him in because of his audio experience, believing Schwanke's handling of sound editing could be translated into handling video software.

Schwanke uses a high-definition Canon to shoot — although the camera isn't digital. He began to refine his skills at shooting video during prep games in Missoula, which was a formidable task. It entailed that Schwanke learn to strike the balance in distance between the field and the players.

"It's a constant learning process," he says.

Although local high school sports garner a lot of online interest, Schwanke and company have prospered with video reporting on University of Montana football. The multimedia production includes slideshows from photographers after each home game, in addition to Schwanke's video clips and interview with Griz football beat reporter Fritz Neighbor, who does his twice-a-week analysis titled the "Fritz Blitz."

The Missoulian trend has become consistent throughout the seasons, with Schwanke also filming seasonal commentary from prep sports beat reporter Nick Lockridge. On average, the site posts two to three sports videos a week. Schwanke, who works in the newsroom, is the only staff member who shoots video for the sports department.

"When they do hire another full time staff person," he says, "they are going to hire someone who has both writing and multimedia skills."

Montana State beat reporter Will Holden has the versatility

that Schwanke speaks of — skills that are needed among the three-man staff at the Bozeman Chronicle. Holden is a true utility man. He doesn't cover the men's basketball beat at Montana State; he smothers it.

From the press row, he sets up his tripod and swivels his video camera endlessly to capture action on the court. During timeouts, he updates his Bobcat blog by writing a couple of detailed sentences about the game, then uses his simple point-

and-shoot digital camera to take a picture of the team huddle or fans in the arena. On the following timeout, he will tweet the action to reach a larger regional base than the Bozeman faithful who follow his blog. And, by the end of the night, he will have a notebook full of notes that will become the framework of an 800-word game story for the morning's paper.

"It makes for an interesting two hours of basketball, that's for sure," Holden says.

Holden loves to write, but admits that he has never particularly enjoyed reading; the traditional game-story in print never appealed to him.

This fall he traveled to East Lansing, Michigan, to watch Michigan State and Montana State play on opening day of the college football season, and it was there that he observed the tactics of a few Detroit Free Press reporters in the press box. He saw the emphasis they put on online updating and multimedia, and less concentration on the relentless notes for the print story.

Holden carried the observation back to Bozeman, and is now working every day to capitalize on the opportunity the online landscape presents, an opportunity that he calls "visual analysis."

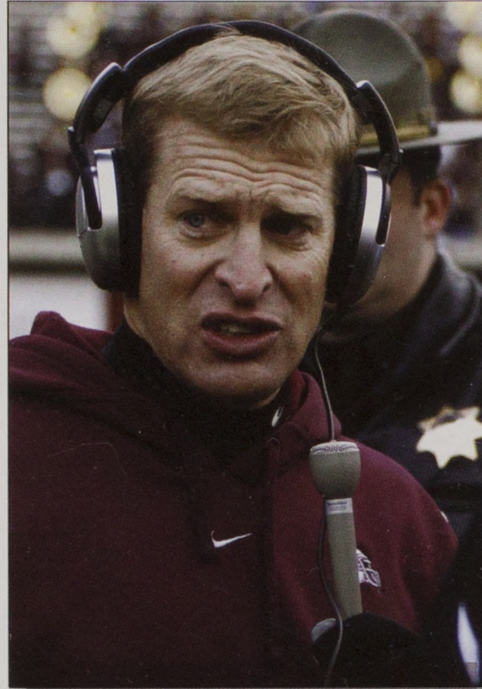
"As much as (the business) is changing, it's not changing," Holden says. "There are people who go online and look at video. Ten minutes of video can be just as good as reading a story that is 1,000 words."

In his video pieces from the press row, Holden has brought a novel idea to Montana sports coverage: in-game video blogs. Holden streams video highlights, then adds transparent-commentary text on top of the video, providing the viewer with a hybrid of highlights and blogging.

In his video posted from March's Big Sky men's basketball tournament in Bozeman, Holden posted a video blog about Portland State upsetting Montana State. In one clip from the first half, Holden displays a 12-second clip of Portland State guard Dominic Waters, who was playing the game with a heel injury.

Whether the injury was widely known is irrelevant; but the clip captures Waters making a steal, dribbling the length of the court and pulling up to make a 15-foot jumper. In Holden's transparent text at the bottom of the video, he uses a headline that reads: "Waters fights back." The sub-head reads: "PSU senior gets the steal & finish then limps back on injured heel."

Traditionally this play from Waters, arguably the best player



Sports sections across Montana are converting more postgame interviews into video features online, including in Missoula, where former UM football coach Bobby Hauck speaks to the press last year.

on the floor that night, would've been omitted from print, and the color from his gritty performance could very well be unsubstantiated. But Holden's video accomplishes what many in the business are becoming incredibly attracted to: the ability to expand the volume of game coverage with video, words and beat reporting on an injury that was a major factor in that game.

Other innovative ideas have developed across the state. At the young Flathead Beacon in Kalispell, Montana, Lido Vizzutti, has been experimenting with video and still images all year long.

In December he debuted a clip of still images capturing a photo shoot of all of Flathead's top prep athletes. Vizzutti set the images to a rotating speed, documenting the whole shoot, from equipment set-up to the final snapshot. This was reinforced with the sounds of the shoot, from the clanks of set-up to the clicks of camera's snapping, all set to polka-style beat.

The measure of success in this new wave of storytelling remains uncharted, and not only in a financial sense (advertising in Montana is rarely sponsored on sports videos). Aside from the shortage of resources and time, what remains is a tremendous freedom for journalists to redefine the craft of a traditional sports story.

"We're definitely seeing people push in new directions," says Joel Odom, the online sports editor at The Oregonian.

Videographers at newspapers such as The Spokesman-Review, The Seattle Times and The Oregonian are only becoming better and more seasoned. Not only is the game coverage in these markets expansive, but there has also been a growth in profile narratives and locker room interaction that is streamed to the viewer.

While it is unfair to compare the multimedia capabilities between the markets in Spokane, Washington, and Portland, Oregon, to Missoula and Bozeman, the opportunity for growth in video structure and style carries significant potential to change sports coverage in Montana. Resources may have to be reallocated to feed the market with more sports video.

"I think it's going to have to be both," Odom says of preserving the print coverage and cultivating video.

He added that while video presents problems for a small, older demographic such as Great Falls, the business to engage the consumer remains competitive.

"If it's not going to come from the Great Falls Tribune, its going to come from another source," Odom says. "Or at least there is the opportunity for that."

Back in Great Falls, it still makes sense that one of the state's most respected newspapers hasn't cultivated sports video at a time when the market is presenting itself, at least, as a possibility. And the reasons delve deeper than the job cuts induced by Gannett in the past two and a half years. The corporation vowed to adapt to the trend of multimedia reporting five years ago. Geise began to attend workshops on implementing sports video on the website. "We were going to take it slow," he says.

But soon there wasn't proper equipment to shoot sports. The Gannett Web had yet to adopt the video platform Maven (the company installed the popular Brightcove platform this January) and wasn't compatible with digital imaging, and key member Robin Loznak, who was ready to spearhead the effort, departed for a new media job in Oregon. Today, the only trace of multimedia is the periodic blogging by Geise or assistant

sports editor Scott Mansch, who also opened a one-time Twitter account in March just to cover the Montana Grizzlies men's basketball team at the NCAA tournament in San Jose.

Although the lack of funding and training is hampering the section in developing a presence on the Web, other forces are at work.

Geise runs the most veteran staff in the state, perhaps one of the most experienced crews in the country. All four of his reporters are in their early-to-late fifties, all in the backstretch of their respective careers. Four of the five (Geise, Mansch, Mike Town and Curt Backa) have worked together for over two decades, and their methods in many ways have never changed.

For the district tournaments, for example, Geise will arrive a few hours early to watch consolation games and scout out information for future reporting, before covering bracket games for the next day's paper. He will not Twitter or Facebook or blog the scores live, just watch.

To him, technology has become somewhat of a hindrance to sports reporters at live events, where the focus is on the second-by-second rattle of the online world, rather than the copy being written for the morning's customers.

In Great Falls, those print customers are as steady as they have ever been, with the Tribune reaching a circulation of nearly 34,000. The demographic in Great Falls is trending older – with 40 percent of the population sitting at 44 years or older. The town is sleepy and conservative in many respects, devoid of a vibrant college atmosphere that attracts online and multimedia viewership, and sits on wide-open range, a rural center. Not exactly the formula that spells a multimedia hotbed, or even at least a scene comparable to Billings, Missoula or Helena.

Still, Geise believes another push could be made to implement video clips of high school and college athletics within the next decade, but not likely before his retirement within the next few years. And even then, the market in Great Falls isn't likely to become starving for sports multimedia. Geise isn't a diehard newspaper purist. But he is without question an old schooler, continuing to survive in an infant multimedia world.

"We take pride in what we do," Geise says. "But we don't take pride in not doing multimedia." *MJR*

**Montana Journalism Review thanks these alumni
who have made contributions to the magazine.**

Bill and Lynn Schwanke '67

**Meg Lavold Henderson '68
Susan Williams Lubbers '68**

**Lana Brinkman Russ '69
Julie Parker Huntington '69**

Nedra Bayne '70

William E. Larson '71

Marci Krivonen '04

Kat Sather '05.

STARING INTO THE BREACH

IMAGINING THE FUTURE OF TELEVISION NEWS

Story by **MATT MCLEOD**

It's no secret, newspapers are a dying breed, sputtering across the globe, and reporters, cameramen and producers in the television news industry have begun to ask two important questions: Will they be next, and if so, where do they go from here? Concerns over the future of broadcast media have clouded the horizon and cast an ominous shadow over TV news.

But one thing is clear — convergence is more than an increasing reality; it's an inevitable force. Electronic journalism and evolving technology have changed the face of news in recent years, and will continue to shift the delivery of news in the 21st Century. The once clearly-defined lines marking the boundaries between television, radio and print media, between television, computers, telephones, mp3 devices and the countless new products emerging from an exploding communications sector are all beginning to fade, blurring separate platforms into what many insiders believe will ultimately become one.

Beginning with the rise of radio in the early 20th Century and the popularization of television mid-century, media began a process of divergence; in the future, that trend will abate,

as news is transformed into a conglomeration of video, audio, graphics and print. The challenge for broadcast media will be whether it can adapt and survive in the brave new world forged by global connectivity.

The changing state of the business

Broadcast news is still a formidable force in journalism. According to a 2006 Radio Television News Directors Foundation survey conducted by Hofstra professor Bob Papper, 65.5 percent of Americans get their news from local TV news, while 28.4 percent of Americans regularly tune into national news. The same study found that just 11 percent of people list the Internet as their primary news provider.

It's easy to crown the Web as the new king of

media, but it's important to remember that for now, it's not even close. Television news is still the five-ton elephant in the room.

According to Nielson Online, with nearly three quarters of the population surfing the net, the percentage of North Americans connected to the Web far outstrips usage in any other continent. But even in the United States, a country with one of the highest per capita computer ownerships, by a strict numbers analysis, TV news is by far the most influential form of news media.

Television may still have a stranglehold on delivery, but the winds of change are blowing. People are turning more and more to the Internet to get their news. The number of global Internet users continues to soar. Today in the United States, 74.1 percent of households are connected to the Web; in 1999 that number stood at 32 percent. Even in the world's poorest areas, the Internet is starting to make inroads. In Africa, where less than seven percent of the population is online, the Web growth rate was nearly 1,400 percent between 2000 and 2009; in the Middle East, a region where 28.3 percent of households are on the Web, the rate was 1,648 percent during the same period.

These factors have exposed chinks in TV news' armor, and appear to be threatening TV news' bottom line. In May, the U.S. Senate convened to study the uncertain future of journalism,

The board's final recommendation is pending. Whether Congress ultimately agrees remains to be seen.

Flipping the script

Some of the history's most famous footage — the Zapruder film and Rodney King tape — came not from trained cameramen, but from laymen on the scene. And today, the list of citizen journalist scoops is growing faster than ever. From a bystander with a cell phone camera who captured the only images of a jet crashing in the mountains near Yuma, Arizona, to Norfolk, Virginia, bloggers posting the names of gas stations that still had power in the wake of a hurricane on a local television website, more and more people have begun to flood the net with news.

In the new digital age, citizen journalism is all the rage. Today, South Korean news site OhmyNews.com is staffed by citizen journalists who are paid \$2 to \$20 for their stories.

And a Japanese news station recently ran live coverage of a disastrous car wreck continuously filmed by a trucker who captured the scene with his cell phone and streamed the video to the station.

Now layman-run stations have begun to spring up everywhere. Three years ago Daytona Beach, Florida janitor Harold Kionka created DaytonaBeach-Live.com, a free 24-hour Internet television site. With Kionka's coverage of space shuttle launches, rock concerts and biker festivals, his site generates as many as 17,000 hits a day.

Kionka's formula has been so successful, he's started a second local online station — GalaxyTV.com. Not that either of Kionka's sites rivals TV news — his video looks blurry and his opinion-driven reporting doesn't help — but

shortcomings and all, the sites have survived.

Critics in the traditional media have hammered the plausibility of relying heavily on citizen journalists on the grounds of the impossibility of controlling content with user-submitted work. Professionals have also blasted the upstarts' credibility, citing the lack of quality untrained journalists bring to the business.

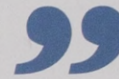
Will there ever come a time where the vast majority of news is generated by non-professionals? Those in the media business think it's unlikely. Chambers said he's convinced improving technology will increase citizens' involvement in news gathering to a degree, but that broadcast journalists will always be in demand.

"You have to understand that ever since the personal video camera has been around, people have been catching things on film that other people find interesting," Chambers said. "But that doesn't replace the job of a trained storyteller. There will always be the need for people who know what they're doing. You can't replace competence with technology."

Such arguments are expected from an industry scrambling to save its neck, but what if broadcast companies could find a way to put new technology to work for them?

“Why plan your day around watching the news at six, when you could turn on a computer and have it whenever you get the time?”

Denise Dowling, University of Montana broadcast journalism professor



forming the Senate Subcommittee on Communications, Technology and the Internet.

National Association of Broadcasters president and CEO David Rehr sent a letter to Sen. John Kerry, who chaired the committee, in which Rehr noted NAB studies had consistently shown the cost of providing local news had continued to rise annually, while “the cash flow and profits of a number of television stations decline, particularly in small markets.”

“As representatives of the newspaper industry will also attest, competition in the 21st Century digital media marketplace is relentless,” Rehr’s letter lamented. “Technological advancements and the explosion of media outlets have created an increasingly challenging economic environment for the production of quality news and information, especially (locally). The current economic crisis has only exacerbated the difficulties that broadcast stations face. Double-digit percentage declines in advertising revenue threaten to undermine the ability of television and radio stations to offer locally oriented services, including costly services such as local news.”

He asked the committee to pass legislation protecting news broadcasts, which he said are a public service, not just a business.



Photo illustration by David Waters

In June 2009, a CBS television station in Miami aired a story that set the blogosphere abuzz. On the day Apple released the newest generation of iPhones, WFOR producer Gio Benitez filmed an unremarkable piece about people standing in line outside an Apple store in a local mall.

What was so groundbreaking about his story? Benitez filmed it using his own iPhone, making it the first broadcast news segment ever created using the technology. Other media outlets soon picked up the story, and the station began receiving hundreds of e-mails congratulating Benitez for his ingenuity and marveling at the quality of the footage.

If Benitez hadn't been a paid CBS employee, his piece would have been seen as strictly advancing the cause of citizen journalism, but many bloggers saw the story as a win for broadcast news.

On her site *The Future of News*, blogger E.B. Boyd noted: "Video-enabled phones are obviously more mobile — and take less expertise to use — than professional cameras ... they might be able to do *more* coverage than they were able to do before ... Smartphones are obviously a lot less expensive than professional cameras ... it might be possible to substitute smartphones for the big equipment in some situations, thereby saving money for cash-strapped news operations."

Emerging outlets

In 2005, reporter Mark Schapiro scored a coup for Web-based news outlets, when his Frontline/World story "Nuclear Underground" landed on the PBS television show "The News Hour" with Jim Lehrer. It exposed Israeli businessman Asher Karni's role in a worldwide gun-running ring.

The success of the report, which was an entirely Web-based project, led Frontline editor Stephen Talbot to remark that the Web was "rapidly becoming the place where we develop and shape our broadcast stories."

"We will continue to break down the barriers between broadcast and online media," Talbot vowed.

The good news for television reporters and cameramen is that new media sites are popping up all over the Internet and bringing serious stories and legitimate work with them.

Two such sites are Mediastorm.com, which is partially funded by The Washington Post, and Bombayfc.com, which is underwritten by camera giant Canon. MediaStorm consistently runs in-depth stories covering global dilemmas. See author Marcus Bleasdale's "Rape of a Nation," which chronicles the world's deadliest war, a conflict raging in the steaming jungles of the Democratic Republic of Congo. MediaStorm reporters created a documentary companion piece to the book, which streams on the site.

Another MediaStorm story is Jonathan Torgovnik's "Unintended Consequences," which chronicles the plight Rwandan women still face in the long wake of their country's 1994 civil war.

Hundreds of thousands of women were raped during the conflict, and thousands have contracted HIV, while 20,000 are raising children born as a direct result of the sexual violence.

And at BombayFlyingClub.com, a video blog, reporters are earning salaries sifting through the filthy hospitals of southern India and sweltering jungles of Ethiopia running down stories.

Granted, the reach of sites like Mediastorm and BombayFlyingClub has so far been limited, but that's changing as technology continues to level the playing field. RSS feeds, digital newsletters, Facebook pages, Twitter feeds, podcasts and widgets are cheap tricks to pull off, and that's given up-and-coming Internet news sources a foot in the door.

The emerging world of online coverage

As it stands, there are few streaming broadcast newscasts available online. Then again, it depends on what you consider news. Entertainment news shows like Comedy Central's "The Daily Show" and "The Colbert Report" offer full episodes at their websites, but when it comes to the networks — you'll be hard-pressed to find full episodes floating around the Web. What media outlets like ABC, CBS, NBC and FOX do offer is a medley of short segments, clickable stories designed to give the user control over what he or she wishes to watch.

Online video and broadcast news might share the same format, but in a number of ways, they're hardly similar. News outlets sometimes include video segments shot by non-professionals: footage from police and surveillance camera video, webcams or videos downloaded from global niche sites.

But for the most part, broadcast news sticks to footage filmed by professional cameramen with pricey equipment. It's not the case online, where shaky handheld clips and fuzzy pictures are the norm, especially with user-generated material.

Production values aside, many bloggers claim there's an authenticity to raw footage and that viewers experience more connection to what they feel is an honest experience, instead of the manipulative nature of TV news stories.

Since the two styles of video journalism are so different, critics of journalism schools have argued curriculum that sticks strictly to what's worked in the past — news teams with high-end equipment — will be less and useful in the future. Business writer Richard Sine, blogging on the Huffington Post, argued journalism schools were little more than parasites, stealing money from the pockets of students who are bound to fail at finding jobs.

UM School of Journalism Professor Denise Dowling counters that journalism schools have always stayed ahead of the curve on technology, and will continue to keep pace with the changing world of media. She cited the fact that professors have changed the program's curriculum so that all journalism majors are required to take video, audio and photo classes. And Dowling said that no matter how the means of news delivery shifts, success of any program depends on fundamentals.

"We recognize things are changing, but we will continue to do the same," Dowling said. "Trained professionals who report news will always be better equipped for the job. If news reporting boils down to what we use and how we use it, our students will have an advantage with both. They'll learn how to use the right tools and they'll know how to use them in the right way."

A glimpse into the future

Will TV news ever go exclusively online? Dowling believes so.

"I think it's going to happen, and I think it's going to happen sooner rather than later," Dowling said. "Everything is so consumer-driven these days that people want what they want and they want to have it right away. Why plan your day around watching the news at six, when you could turn on a computer and have it whenever you get the time?"

In his book "Going Live: Getting News Right in a Real-Time, Online World," Phillip Seib argued the evolving nature of computer technology is changing the way the device is thought of and blurring the line between television and Internet media, and will continue to do so in the future.

"Part of this evolution will be a function of a convergence of hardware," Seib wrote. "The conventional wisdom to date has decreed that no one wants to 'watch' a PC like a television ... That problem is waning as computer equipment becomes less cumbersome (e.g., thinner monitors) and as Internet connections become smoother. These two factors are crucial

in the convergence of television and the Internet because they enhance streaming."

Television has begun its gradual shift toward the net in other areas, and increasingly, it's free. Today you can watch thousands of full TV shows at sites like Hulu.com, movies at sites like Watch-FreeMovies.com or sports at ESPN360.com without paying a dime.

Technology also allows computer users to watch media downloaded or streaming through their computers. For a few dollars PC users can link their laptop to their big screen by an HDMI cable, meaning they can watch TV *through* their computer, *through* their TV.

The challenge for broadcast news remains whether advertisers will buy into the online scheme. At ESPN360.com, for instance, the vast majority of the commercials the site runs are for ESPN programming, because most advertisers have yet to jump on board with the idea of paying for airtime on the site. And it stands to reason — it's unrealistic to assume viewers will sit through Internet commercials with a worldwide Web of distractions at their fingertips.

But the shift to Web news is inevitable, whether traditional news broadcasts stick with the same format and simply stream their content online, or whether most news stories hit the Internet as short snippets, as is the online trend.

As Seib argued in "Going Live," like it or not, convergence is coming. "Separation among the three principle news media — print, television/radio and Internet — might not prove sensible or even feasible in the long run," Seib wrote. "Some new amalgam of the three may evolve as their technologies of news delivery come together. This will be the future: convergence."

The overriding factor is a simple one: accessibility. Take the example of the cell phone, which has all but vanquished the disappearing landline. Hardly anyone under the age of 30 still pays for a home phone any more. And really, why would they? A mobile phone is just that — infinitely mobile. Users can stick it in their pocket and take it anywhere they need to go.

Online news carries the same advantage. Technology allows remote access to national and local news from virtually anywhere. A traveler can open a laptop, switch on a PDA or fire up an iPod or a tablet computer and watch streaming news broadcasts from his or her hometown on demand. With increased broadband and emerging computer technology, picture and sound quality is improving by leaps and bounds.

And studies have shown viewers want to connect with the news, something Web-exclusive new tools let them to do. In 2006, a Radio and Television News Directors Foundation survey found that more than 60 percent of people surveyed said they were unsatisfied with their ability to interact with TV news. News consultant Terry Heaton, vice president of Audience Research and Development, said it's a problem that won't be solved until broadcast news moves online.

"As I heard someone once say, it's a little like fixing a car while you're driving," Heaton said.

Clearly, it's only a matter of time before television gets the picture. *MJR*

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www.mjr.jour.umn.edu

COMMENTS

Newspaper websites debate anonymity and identification

Story by **CHRIS ARNESON**

Photo by **STEEL BROOKS**

In recent years the emergence of online news media has contributed to a decline of traditional print news media, most notably newspapers. Newsrooms across the nation have made extraordinary staff cuts, and many newspapers have slashed the number of pages of daily publications in an effort to stem the bleeding of plunging advertising revenue. But as the shift toward online media has closed one door for journalism — the printed daily newspaper — it has opened another for interactive online media.

Interactive media, most notably interactive reader comment threads, may be the opportunity print journalism needs to reel advertising dollars back in, and if done right may increase the news value for readers, too. But the shift to a profitable online business model poses challenges to the traditional role of the newspaper, and has faced opposition from those inside and outside the newsroom.

Tim Akimoff, the newly promoted digital manager of the Missoulian newspaper, has watched and helped in launching commenting systems at three newspapers: The Oregonian, the Statesman Journal and the Missoulian. At all three, he says, editors and reporters alike opposed allowing comments on newspaper websites.

"Here, nobody wanted it," he says. "There's a sense of — there's a wall, sort of, between the journalists and the community. It's one that I've really struggled to overcome because the new journalism really has to be much more in the community."

Akimoff says editors, especially those who believe strongly in an independent newsroom and want to uphold the traditional idea of newspapers, oppose adjusting to the changing role of the media in the online age. Still, the traditionalists will eventually have to embrace newspapers' changing reality.

Says Akimoff, "Sherry (Devlin, the Missoulian's editor) is one

of those people where she's got that kind of old-school value of what a newspaper is. And I love that. She so protects the newspaper more so than any other editor I've ever worked with. But I think she can also see where it's changing and where she can't hold back the flood tide that's kind of overwhelming us ... Other editors I've worked with would absolutely have it stop. They would do everything they can to keep it from continuing."

Even some bloggers who thrive on online media oppose allowing comments on their websites. In a 2006 blog post, Seth Godin, a blogger who writes on online media issues, explained why he doesn't allow comments on any of his six websites, saying for a single blogger, reading through and moderating comments takes too much time. Moreover, it changes a writer's perception of his or her audience. "It permanently changes the way I write," he wrote. "Instead of writing for everyone, I find myself writing in anticipation of the commenters ... so, given a choice between a blog with comments or no blog at all, I think I'd have to choose the latter."

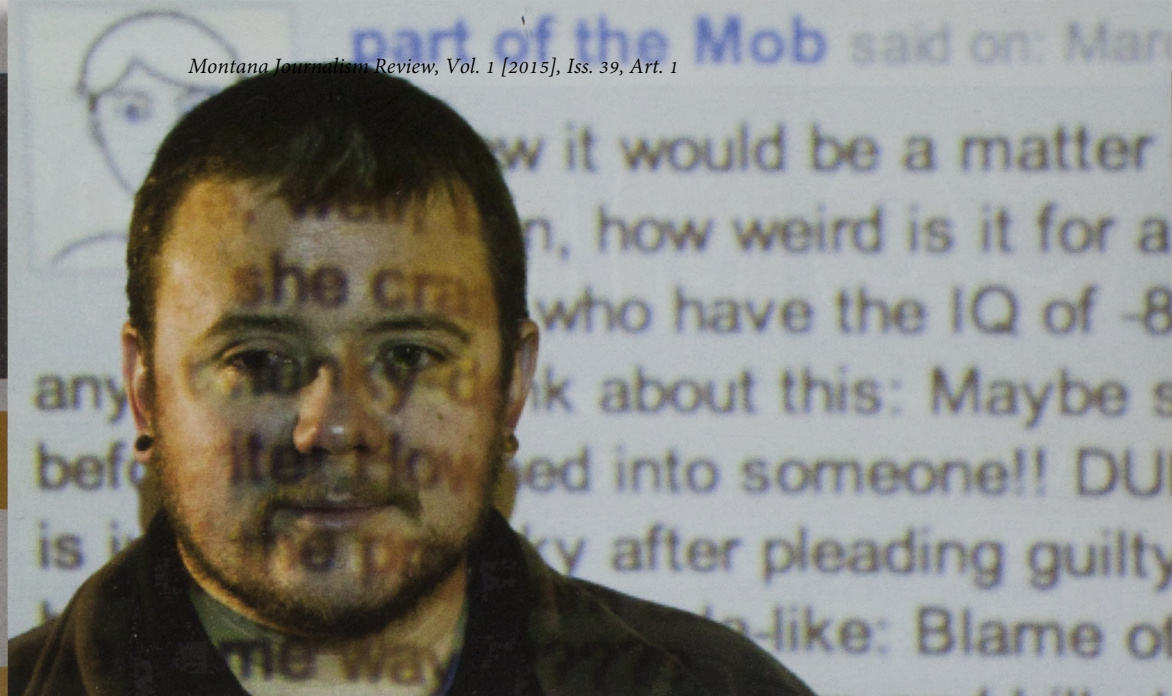
Sree Sreenivasan, dean of Student Affairs at Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism, says the benefits of reader participation outweigh the drawbacks. It gets people engaged in the news, he says.

"Lots of people want to take action when they read a story," he said in a 2007 interview with USA Today. "In the old days if you were upset about something, you could tell one person at the water cooler. Now you can forward it to 100 friends and say, 'We need to do something.'"

Akimoff agrees. If newspapers want to remain a relevant factor in any community, they need to be able to keep up with the technologies of the day. With Web services like Twitter.com, Facebook.com and Craigslist.com, newspapers have to adjust to remain relevant. Today, someone can go to Twitter or Facebook

“ There’s a wall, sort of, between the journalists and the community. It’s one that I’ve really struggled to overcome because the new journalism really has to be much more in the community. ”

-Tim Akimoff, Missoulian, digital manager



Tim Akimoff

to announce their engagement or wedding. Someone wanting to sell a car can post it on Craigslist for free, so why bother with paid classifieds?

Moreover, cuts in newsroom staff leave publications desperate for material to fill their pages, both online and in print. Community-submitted material can solve that problem, Akimoff says. Traditional reporters want to keep a separation between the newsroom and the community to preserve a sense of journalistic objectivity, but if reporters don't make an effort to be part of the community, readers will just depend on Facebook and Twitter for their entertainment and news.

This is where comments come in. Comment strings provide an opportunity for newspapers to connect with the community. They offer the public a forum in which to debate political and social issues. They can also add information to a story that the reporter may have overlooked or provide a tip for a reporter to follow up on.

Akimoff recalls a suicide case he was reporting on for the *Missoulian*. He couldn't reach any of the victim's relatives until he posted a story about the incident online. Shortly after, someone wrote a comment on the story mentioning the victim's sister.

"I actually found his sister and ended up giving her a call," he says. "She just tore me a new one, but that was an immense value to me as a reporter."

Despite their value as a reporting tool, comments can also make reporters' jobs difficult. Just after *The Oregonian* took its commenting system online, Akimoff posted a story about a bilingual program at Oregon State University to help acclimate Hispanic students and their families. What followed was a barrage of racially derogatory comments and charges of biased reporting by the publication.

"I could not believe the stuff people wrote, just directed at me personally for supposedly supporting this system, and it was an eye opener," he says.

Comments prompted personal attacks at other *Oregonian* writers as well. One Hispanic reporter in particular became the target of racial slurs.

"It didn't matter what it was, she was always personally attacked in almost every comment," Akimoff says. "It was the fact that she was Hispanic and that somehow, she was an advocate for every Mexican to be on welfare and get citizenship or get their driver's license. She was one of the more fair and balanced reporters I've ever worked with. She didn't give anybody the benefit of the doubt. She always checked citizenship papers; no white reporter would go into a Mexican's home and ask for their citizenship papers."

Story comments have a tendency to attract extreme social and political views, especially within the first few months of going online. At each of the three newspapers Akimoff watched and enabled comments, he says about a dozen people posted prolifically, and almost all of their comments were bigoted or obscene.

"They're just ignorant people who just love to spout off," he says. "And they give the appearance of being a huge crowd of people, so you start to think, 'Wow, are we the only people in this community who feel this way?'"

But as time went on at each of the publications, more users signed up with the papers' commenting systems, and eventually the obscene comments were outnumbered by reader comments that offered insight and a balanced range of views. Even so, at the *Missoulian*, years after initially launching comments, reporters still become frustrated with incendiary or inaccurate reader comments.

Moreover, editors fear online comments could put publications at risk for lawsuits, or could offend readers and advertisers. For Akimoff, this is one of the biggest challenges to developing an effective advertising model for comments, which could be one of the *Missoulian's* best advertising resources.

Newspapers across the nation weigh an array of legal and practical variables in deciding whether to mediate comments, permit user moderation, or allow completely unmoderated comments. So far, no publication has developed the perfect system, but editors and publishers see the financial potential of comment pages.

Akimoff says the most effective section of a newspaper to

advertise on is the op-ed page. It is one of the most widely read, and it attracts readers from every demographic. However the op-ed page is also one of the most difficult pages to sell advertising on, because businesses are afraid they will be associated with a controversial or negative editorial.

This rings doubly true for advertising on comment sections of newspaper websites. Advertisers are even more hesitant about advertising next to comment strings that can often contain more controversial statements than on even the most extreme editorial opinions. But comment pages also have some of the highest time-on-site statistics of any page on newspaper websites.

In the online advertising world, advertisers are billed by page views and click-throughs, with page views generating the majority of online advertising revenue. A page view is simply a tally of the number of times a page with a company's advertisement is viewed by a Web user, no matter how briefly. But since advertisers want to get the most value for their advertising budget, they want to be sure that visitors spend sufficient time on a page to notice their advertisements. This is where time-on-site comes in. Missoulian.com averages 6.5 minutes of time-on-site, while most popular blog sites average 13 minutes — that's Akimoff's goal.

But content alone will not keep readers on a site for that long. To get those kind of numbers, Akimoff says, the Missoulian would have to get users on comment strings talking back and forth.

A commenting scheme that increases time-on-site will also increase click-throughs, Akimoff says. In a click-through, a visitor doesn't just see the advertisement, but actually clicks on it, which usually sends them to an advertiser's marketing website. Just as advertisers reason that the longer a reader stays on one page, the better chance he has of noticing an advertisement, there is also a better chance he will click on the advertisement. Right now, the Missoulian only has a .6 percent click-through rate. Though relatively low, it still generates "thousands and thousands of dollars depending on where that ad is running," Akimoff says.

Even with low time-on-site, enabling comments on a newspaper website can dramatically increase the number of page views. Unmoderated commenting has shown to be the most effective tool at increasing page views, based on Akimoff's experiences at the Missoulian.

Steve Semelsberger, of Pluck, a social media Web developer who contracts with USA Today, the Washington Post and the San Francisco Chronicle, estimated in a recent interview with the Chronicle that comments can increase page views by between 5 and 15 percent. (If you look closely, you can see the "Powered by Pluck" logo next to the comment boxes of more than 250 news websites).

Despite the statistics, Akimoff says, it will still take time to develop a truly effective interactive comment model. Traditionalist editors will have to adjust to the idea that the news media is changing. But if done right, online publications can provide more valuable news resources to readers. It also takes time for the

community to embrace a new style of journalism. Some readers are anxious about exposing themselves to commenters and are afraid to post a comment on a story, Akimoff says.

The solution to all of these commenting issues is for online publications to fully embrace and integrate with online social media. A comprehensive commenting strategy that encourages reporters to respond to reader comments, like those at the Washington Post and New York Times would add substantial news value to a publication.

Moreover, an unmoderated commenting system that depends on user votes and post flagging would relieve many of the legal and practical concerns of publishers.

The ideal situation, Akimoff says, is community-led moderation, in which users could report a malicious commenter. After numerous reports from readers, the site administrator would be notified and could review the content and choose whether to block the reported commenter. The Missoulian has already successfully implemented this on its community blog website, Speakupmissoula.com.

A community-led moderation commenting model would also allow for immediate commenting and facilitate dialogue between multiple readers, as readers would stay on the site longer, engaging in conversation through the comment thread. This would increase time-on-site numbers and generate more advertising revenue.

If the Missoulian were able to effectively implement such a system, it would be the type of business model the print media needs to remain solvent.

"Readers could hypothetically be there all day long," Akimoff says. "Which would be exactly the way I would want it. I'd love to have half an hour, 45 minute time-on-site times."

For now, Akimoff and Web editors at other publications are still talking in hypotheticals and experimenting. Akimoff says people need to remember that online publications are still young.

"It's hard for me to believe that I was at The Oregonian when they started posting online," Akimoff says. "It feels like we've been doing that for decades, but really we haven't. Very few newspapers have been. Some of the longest are 10 years now, whereas most are within the last three to five years."

Still the clock is ticking for the newspaper industry to find an effective online model. **MJR**

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FUTURE E C IS HERE

Steve Jobs' multimedia dream machine is here.

Will the iPad reinvent personal computing?

Or will it fail to find its niche?

Story by **CAMERON RASMUSSEN**

Photo illustration by **HANNA DAGG**

After testing an iPad demo unit at the device's unveiling, Stephen Fry, tech enthusiast and dry wit extraordinaire, wrote a gushing, 2,000-word endorsement "I cannot emphasize this enough: Hold your judgment until you've spent five minutes with it," he wrote. "No YouTube film, no promotional video, no keynote address, no list of features can even hint at the extraordinary feeling you get from actually using and interacting with one of these magical objects."

Web denizens, hustling to their favorite forums and blogs, quickly divided. Many responded in sprawling variations of "Not impressed." Others interpreted the unveiling as nothing less than an Orwellian nightmare, with Apple's tightly administrated operating system stomping all over the individualism embodied in more open user platforms. A final division supported Apple with statements ranging from cautious optimism to near-religious fervor.

So is the iPad magical or mortally flawed? Where does the hype meet the information superhighway?

If there were a hype chip, Apple seems to have over-clocked it on the iPad. Rumors of an Apple tablet hit the Internet about a year ago, and visions of Minority Report danced in gadget geek heads.

The 2002 Steven Spielberg film portrayed near-future technology as slick, touch-based computer interfaces and entertainment devices that constantly uploaded new, relevant information. Gadget geeks watched drooling in darkened theaters and bemoaned its phantom fictionality.

But this was it, the rumor mill churned. This was the must-have tech that would lead humanity into a world of stylish control and interactive media. Here was the device that could cause trouble for an on-the-lam Tom Cruise, thanks to its unparalleled connectivity and instantaneous updates.

On January 27, Steve Jobs unveiled the device with the

nerdy sureness that made him rich and famous. He dropped buzz-phrases like "it just works" and repeatedly referenced the device's smooth, seamless operation.

True to form, the Internet exploded, with predictions and apps caroming around cyberspace up to Apple's release of the iPad on April 3.

Fan-boy Fry was right: Before you can fully evaluate the iPad, you need to take it for a spin. The device is seductive in its presentation. The user zips effortlessly from one task to another with no lag whatsoever. Every application preloaded onto the shiny device features a spit and polish that clumsier companies can only envy. The e-book reader spins open with slick panache.

Most importantly, interaction within the device is nearly flawless. The touch screen is perhaps the most accurate and responsive on the market. A first-timer interacting with the device will, no doubt, find it far more intuitive and painless than one's first experience wielding a mouse and keyboard.

Apple seems to be aiming for the light computing market with the iPad — a niche previously dominated by netbooks. To that end, it has succeeded. Media consumption on the device is a fun, polished experience. Internet browsing — convenient yet cumbersome on a smartphone — matches a PC for ease of use. Games benefit from the larger screen, but without buttons, generally veer toward simplicity. While short e-mails, notes and messages are no problem, more extensive word processing on the touch keyboard is best avoided. Even today's best touch technology can't match the tactile, speedy experience of a physical keyboard.

Tech heads have justifiable complaints. The iPad's specs don't send data-crunchers into a tizzy, or, for that matter, even raise heart rates. But the device's horsepower is certainly sufficient to run any current app with snappy responsiveness, and only the most technically demanding could take issue with the 1 GHz Apple A4 processor.

The overall specifications, however, provoke big complaint No. 1: "It's just a blown-up iPod Touch."

The similarities are startling. The minimalist form factor, the operating system and the prominent screen all scream iPod Touch with scary intensity.

The difference between the products is, of course, size, size, size. No one wants to read "The Great Gatsby" on an iPhone. The cinematography of "Lawrence of Arabia" is probably not best appreciated on a 3-inch screen. The New York Times' front page requires a lot of annoying scrolling to properly navigate with such meager screen real estate. In this respect, the iPad has positioned itself in competition with the netbook and e-reader arenas.

Once again, however, the iPod Touch similarities come roaring back with even worse implications. The lack of multitasking, for instance, returns in all its frustrating prominence. In part, this keeps the device purring along at a brisk speed, but with the reliable performance come limitations. An iPad user, for example, can't listen to the Pandora Internet Radio app and write an e-mail at the same time. To the company's credit, Apple has addressed the issue with the announcement of iPhone OS 4.0, a firmware update featuring limited multitasking. Even so, the update won't be made available until the fall.

Another oft-cited criticism is the iPad's lack of Flash support, but many counter-arguers say Flash is on its way out. The next iteration of HTML(5) will natively support embedded video. Even so, the critic responds, Flash retains a prominent place in today's Internet, and for a device as ambitious as the iPad, shouldn't we be judging it on its immediate merits?

These issues, along with the lack of a physical keyboard, limit the iPad in comparison to a netbook. But for e-readers? The iPad has the potential to single-handedly obliterate the e-reader market. The 9.7-inch screen looks nice. Not only is text a pleasure to read on the screen, but the richness of the display suddenly makes image-intensive publications, like comics, graphic novels and cookbooks, electronically viable.

Apple's competition, however, isn't about to let it gobble up potential new markets. Google has already made significant headway in challenging Apple's smart-phone dominance with its Android operating system. Microsoft also resurrected its mobile division with the unveiling of Windows Phone 7. The new operating system completely gutted its archaic Windows Mobile 6 series with impressive results.

The market is gearing up for a corporate fight and consumers are picking sides. Technophiles have divided over one principle issue: the administration of applications.

Apple offers a tightly controlled user experience, the so-called "walled garden." The only way to add functionality to its devices, outside of hacking the software, is through its famous App Store featuring more than 100,000 apps. Apple monitors and approves every app that graces its store. If it finds that an app is in poor taste (Baby Shaker) or offers functionality it doesn't like (Netshare, which allowed iPhone users to piggyback their laptop onto their phone's 3G Internet connection) or aids the

competition (Google Voice), Apple will ban the app.

Geeks hailed Google as the savior of techno-tinkerers everywhere. Android was completely open source, allowing the savvy to fiddle to their heart's content. Google opened its own app store. At 10,000 apps and counting, it's a fraction of the size but has the capacity to grow. Android also allows users to add apps downloaded from the Internet, effectively neutralizing any corporate control over device functionality.

All this hand-wringing over apps is tied to the iPad's future. After all, it's not the miraculous tech that will make the tablet

a success. It's the diversity of functionality brought about through the App Store. Not only does the device support existing apps, but new apps specifically for the iPad are already appearing. Netflix has made its peerless library of streaming TV and movies available for the device. Popular newspapers and magazines are releasing apps that transform their print iterations into polished multimedia experiences on the iPad. Utility websites like Wikipedia and Dictionary.com are optimized for the large touch screen interface. While most digital artists are loathe to abandon Adobe Illustrator, pen and digitizers, powerful art apps, are nevertheless available on the iPad. The iDisplay app even allows the device to double as a second monitor for an iMac.

But Apple's biggest trump card is its stock with the masses. Despite pseudo-hipster affectations, Apple has become, in essence,

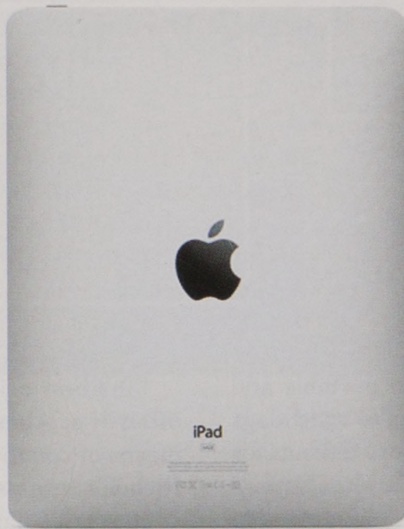
a populist company. Its products are simple, streamlined and easily understandable to all but the most computer illiterate.

"With the iPad, it seems like Apple's model customer is that same stupid stereotype of a technophobic, timid, scatterbrained mother as appears in a billion renditions of 'that's too complicated for my mom,'" wrote Cory Doctorow of the technology site Boing Boing.

None of this matters. The iPad almost certainly will be successful, and it's off to a promising start with 300,000 sold on launch day and more than a million sold (including the 3G version) before MJR went to press. Perhaps it won't become as omnipresent as the iPod — at least not within the lifetime of its first hardware version — but it will sell splendidly. Will it change the course of the technological future? Will future offices and schools be equipped with touch interfaces rather than the modern mouse-and-keyboard set up?

"One melancholy thought occurs as my fingers glide and flow over the surface of this astonishing object," Fry wrote in Time Magazine after the iPad's debut. "Douglas Adams is not alive to see the closest thing to his Hitchhiker's Guide humankind has yet devised."

It's too early to allow the iPad such legendary technological status. But it could well be a 9.7-inch window into the future of personal computing. Right now, we don't know the extent that consumers will embrace Steve Job's technological valentine, and even if it exceeds expectations, it probably won't transform the market within its first generation. Once it expands beyond the limits of its current hardware and operating system, however, the iPad could well put a new face on mobile computing. *MJR*



The iPad maintains Apple's signature, minimalist form factor.

Citizen journalism

Story by **ERIN COLE**

In 1962, Abraham Zapruder purchased an 8mm color camera to record home movies of his grandchildren. On an early afternoon in November 1963, Zapruder captured footage of Kennedy's assassination in Dallas. In what would have been the greatest citizen journalist coup of all time, WFAA, a local television station, had the chance to run the footage. However, the station could only process 16 mm black-and-white film. The footage wasn't shown until 1975, when it ran on Geraldo Rivera's "Good Night America."

Today, because of advancing technology, television stations and newspaper photo editors no longer need to play the part of the middleman. Securing airtime on YouTube or submitting photos to a news agency takes only a few keystrokes.

Technology has armed ordinary citizens with portable and unobtrusive devices, elevating them to the status of watchdogs and spies. Their constant observance makes it more difficult for governments, companies and figures of authority to alter history. Multimedia produced by citizen journalists has the power to affect legislation, court cases, war and even public policy.

Some view citizen journalists as being an ungoverned band of free speech renegades. While these critics may be vindicated in scoffing at the amateur prose produced by some of these do-it-yourself journalists, few would argue against the power wielded by the images of the smoldering Twin Towers in New York, just one of the many moving scenes recorded by these "amateurs."



Photo by Justin Franz

Small digital cameras have made it easier to cover political and news events, such as this 2008 gubernatorial debate at the University of Montana. Governor Brian Schweitzer is shown here.

In the past six years alone, at least one major world event has been captured each year. In 2004, vacationers in Thailand recorded the tsunami that pummeled the nation's beaches. Six months later, in July 2005, London commuters captured terrorist attacks on the city's Underground using cell phones. Amateur images of the huge earthquake that struck Java in 2006 were sent around the world. In 2007, a student at Virginia Tech used the same technology to record police response to the school's shootings. In 2008, vacationers, in Mumbai, India, recorded terrorist attacks made on

local hotels. The peak of citizen journalism came in 2009 when a video of Neda Agha-Soltan bleeding to death on a Tehran street hit YouTube.

Neda's death, a result of the protests over the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, helped spark a change in the public's attitude towards multimedia produced by citizen journalists. People realized that the best news updates on the situation in Iran did not come from news professionals, but rather from footage obtained by Iranian citizens in the thick of the tumult. Twitter had previously planned site maintenance that would have shut down the communication. The U.S. State Department stepped in and asked the company to postpone it, which it did.

Iran is not the only country to have been thrust into the spotlight by its own citizen journalists.

"The best original Internet journalism happens much more often by accident, when smart and curious people with access to means of communication are at the scene of a sudden disaster," Nicholas Lemann wrote in a 2006 New Yorker article.

Russia is infamous for being a dangerous place for journalists. Global Journalist magazine reports that 19 journalists have been killed in the line of duty since 2000 and that only one perpetrator has been brought to justice.

Keeping in mind that Russia has fostered a tradition of squelching free speech, the International Center for Journalists has partnered with the Glasnost Defense Foundation to offer ordinary Russians lessons in reporting. Their hope is that citizens will go and report where reporters fear to tread.

Sergey Brin, one of Google's co-founders, was born in Moscow where he spent his early childhood years. He was instrumental in creating Google's motto, "Don't be evil." When Google entered the Chinese search engine market in 2006, he and co-founder Larry Page entered into a tango with the Chinese government by allowing it to block results it found objectionable. But after Google claimed Chinese-based cyber attacks hit the company's servers, the tango turned into a murky bullfight.

Citizen journalists made an effort to report from China, but often met disastrous results. In early January 2010, a man in the rural Hubei province attempted to film a confrontation between law enforcement agents and local citizens. After being spotted, he was pulled from his car and beaten to death, his tape confiscated.

Even if he had been successful in leaving the scene unscathed, uploading the footage without repercussion was another hurdle to jump. Censorship in China includes patrolling search engines, and reporting questionable online activity to the government's Public Security Bureau. Internet service providers are also not privately owned, erasing that buffer.

Public figures are increasingly under siege by citizen journalists. Celebrity fodder and updates fill many of the world's blogs, and, judging by their popularity, the public doesn't seem to mind when the privacy of the famous is invaded.

Intruding on what was once the domain of the paparazzi,

Technology allows citizens to gather news

citizen journalists are catching more and more celebrities behaving badly. An audience member with a cell phone recorded actor Michael Richards (Kramer of "Seinfeld") delivering a racist rant to an audience member at the Laugh Factory, a comedy club in Los Angeles. Meanwhile, another cell-phone wielding patron caught singer Ashlee Simpson's drunken escapade at a Toronto McDonald's.

While some stars may welcome the spotlight, it's a beacon most politicians hope to avoid.

Citizens in possession of salacious texts and e-mails sent from former Rep. Mark Foley to congressional pages released them to news outlets. As a result of the ensuing maelstrom, Foley resigned.

In other cases, citizen journalists literally record a politician's actual downfall. For instance, the 2006 execution of Iraq's former leader, Saddam Hussein, was caught on a guard's cell phone.

Realizing that more people were jumping on the watchdog bandwagon, new businesses and nonprofits have sprung up to cater to the trend.

WITNESS, a New York-based organization whose motto is "see it, film it, change it," gives video cameras to various human rights groups around the world and helps get the footage released to media outlets.

Cell phone companies are also taking advantage of the trend.

Fromdistance, an Estonian software company, has developed a smartphone app for Nokia called Mobile Citizen Reporter. The app gives anyone at the right place at the right time the ability to send pictures and video to a news organization.

Does this spell the end of traditional professional multimedia?

EMT Isaac Greenlaw was at work in January when a small-engine plane crashed near Bangor, Maine. In the search for the aircraft, Greenlaw took one of the first images (shown below) of the scene, which ended up on the front page of the Bangor Daily News the following day.



Photo by Isaac Greenlaw

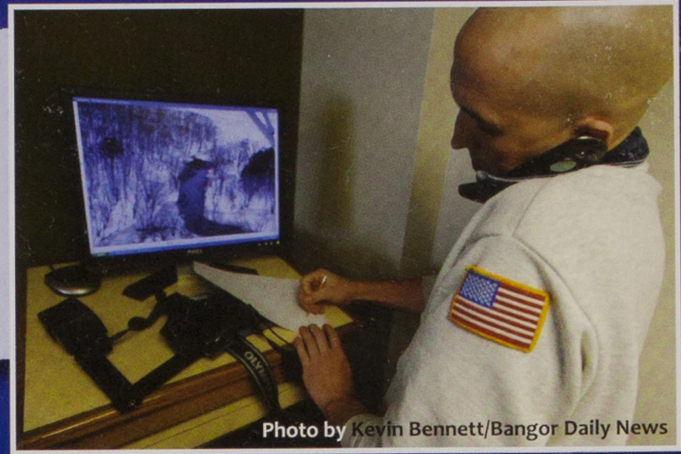


Photo by Kevin Bennett/Bangor Daily News

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No, a filter will always be needed — someone to edit and package the material.

Lauren McCullough, manager of social networks and news engagement for the Associated Press, believes the two can coexist.

"AP has always recognized the value of citizen journalists," she said in an e-mail interview with journalist Steve Myers. "Some of the most iconic images have been captured by eyewitnesses whom the AP worked with to distribute the images to our customers."

Citizen journalists and the traditional media will continue to have a solid relationship; although strained at times, it can be mutually beneficial.

There are still critiques, however.

To hear The Daily Show's Jon Stewart wax philosophic on CNN's iREPORT, citizen journalism is yet another cost-cutting measure of news organizations.

"CNN wants you to spare them what is currently the most arduous part of what they do: reporting," he said. "Apparently they want you to get as close as possible to an exploding building during a hurricane. 'Gee, this assignment looks dangerous. You know who would be good for that story? John Q. Schmuck!'" **NR**

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Better than a desk

Story by **HEATHER ROUSSI**

At a time when being able to do it all as a multimedia journalist has become increasingly important, the ability to interview sources, photograph the story and upload it to the website from home may just make things a little easier.

With the increasing ease of creating and transmitting a multimedia story over the Internet, many journalists are choosing to work from home. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, about 19 percent of all journalists worked as freelancers in 2008, and that number is projected to increase in the next decade.



Photo by Natalie Alcoba

Brent Foster walks along a pipe in Dharavi, one of Asia's largest slums in Mumbai, India. Foster was working on an assignment for TIME.com to produce a story of life in the slum where Slum-dog Millionaire was shot.

Megan Taylor, a recent graduate of the University of Florida's School of Journalism who has been freelancing for almost a year, said that getting a foot in the door is the hardest part. As a freelance Web developer and multimedia producer, Taylor said most of the work she's done for smaller online publications has been because a colleague recommended her for the job.

"I haven't actually freelanced for any major papers," Taylor said. "I tried a couple of times and mostly just didn't get any responses. From talking to some freelancers who do work for major papers, though, I understand that getting started is the hardest part. You have to forge a relationship with an editor, and sometimes write for free for a while."

Another challenge, Taylor said, is the lack of a community for a freelancer. Working from home means no one to confide in about the difficulties of juggling different projects and the continual search for new work. But Taylor said she did manage to find other freelancers to connect with.

"I was never really able to hook into a community, although the Poynter E-Media Tidbits blog has an e-mail list group where people pitch ideas and comment on stories," Taylor said. "What I did do was follow a lot of blogs about freelancing and find some people I admired who were freelancing online and get in touch with them."

Taylor also stressed the importance of multimedia news reporting as one of the most important aspects of journalism in the future, especially in an industry that is becoming increasingly defined by interactive content.

"The reason multimedia is important is this: the Internet," Taylor said. "The Internet allows us to very cheaply use many different mediums to tell a story. Millions of people watch video online now. People are looking for content to entertain them and interact with. Text alone is no longer enough."

Another multimedia journalist, Chris Booker, has also recently started freelancing. Booker was a staff video journalist and media producer at the Chicago Tribune until 2009, when he joined Northwestern University as an assistant professor. He now teaches at Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism in

View more freelance multimedia online at
www.mjr.jour.umn.edu

job

Brent Foster works on a multimedia project in the Jharia Coal fields in the state of Jharkhand, India, 2009.



Photo by Paul Madsen/Bombay Flying Club

Doha, Qatar, and does freelance work for the Global Post, Time.com and Slate.com. Booker said there are more opportunities for U.S. journalists to succeed overseas because there's less competition.

"In the U.S. you are competing with many more people and in some ways won't be carving out a specialty or niche," Booker said. "U.S. media outlets have decimated their foreign bureaus, but they still need foreign content. They are far more likely to use freelancers now because they have fired their foreign correspondents or closed their bureaus."

More importantly, though, Booker said, freelancing abroad has allowed him to follow his interests when finding a story to produce.

"I have found that being overseas allows me tremendous freedom to pursue the stories I am interested in," Booker said. "At the Tribune, it was a constant balancing act between fulfilling my duties to produce daily stories and pursue the stories I was interested in. Now I have a backlog of stories with my two primary outlets (Time.com and Global Post), all of which were my own pitches."

When pitching a story idea to a potential editor, Booker said the final product, whether audio, video or photos, is often the result of specific subject matter. Although his creative process is always evolving, Booker likes to spend time "just taking things in" and always reminds himself of the reader's viewpoint.

"I pitch my stories beforehand and then try to let the story dictate the medium," Booker said. "I also really try to listen to what the space sounds like. What are some of the unique audio things that I could use within the final piece? This makes for interesting openings, endings and segues. Usually I will pitch just a video, but then I will shoot photos and panoramas and offer those up to the editors as well."

Brent Foster, another freelancer living overseas, recently quit his job on staff at the Los Angeles Times and moved to

New Delhi, India. Unlike Booker, Foster doesn't have a support system for his work and said starting a freelancing career abroad has been extremely difficult.

"It's not easy at all," Foster said. "Leaving a staff job to freelance internationally has been a huge financial struggle. I do, however, look at it like beginning any new business. You can't really expect to be incredibly successful financially the first year you open any business. I think the challenge is to make sure editors know who you are and where you are, and most importantly, think of you first when an assignment comes up in your region. I firmly believe, like anything else, a lot of the business comes down to personal relationships, be it in the flesh or via e-mail."

Foster also said having an Internet connection is one of his main concerns when working on a project. Living in India sometimes means slow connections, power outages and even sending a hard drive across continents by FedEx. This means that one more step in story production is accounting for the time a single project may take.

"Some clients hire me to shoot, edit, research, write and basically give them a complete piece in the end ... others ask me to shoot only, and then want to edit the piece themselves," Foster said.

"It really depends on the project. It takes an amazing amount of time to meet the right characters for the story, shoot, plan and eventually edit, which is the longest part of the process."

Foster added that although the logistics of working as a freelancer on the other side of the globe might be time-consuming, in the future, newspapers will rely more on those reporters willing to risk not knowing where their next assignment might come from.

"I think freelancing is definitely the way of the future," Foster said. "As the staff of a magazine and newspaper continues to dwindle, naturally freelancers will fill that void, for better or worse." **MUR**

Factual accuracy in the news media is on the decline. A large number of journalists have traded accurate content for the faster production of stories with minimal effort.

Take the "Dog Meat Soup" media scandal for example, in which media satirist Joey Skaggs duped the media into including detailed verbatim conversations with individuals claiming to be representatives of a non-existent Dog Meat Soup business.

It has become increasingly apparent in many cases around the world that the increased speed of news and information has put the accuracy of newspapers, news websites, radio and television news into question. But have the Internet and the World Wide Web really damaged journalism?

Since the introduction of the Internet by George Boole, and the World Wide Web by Tim Berners-Lee, the world has changed monumentally in terms of information transfer. In the late 1970s, the Internet was an elusive system used by the U.S. military during the Cold War in case of nuclear Armageddon.

Now just 30 years later, almost one-quarter of the world's population has access to the Internet. A study conducted by Internet World Stats Usage and Population Statistics estimated that as of September 30, 2009, more than 1.7 billion people use the Internet regularly.

The Internet's evolution has reformed the architectural structure of the news media. Although mass-circulation newspapers used to be the most dominant news medium, computer-based information network technologies appear to be pulling ahead.

Postmodern critics such as Jean Baudrillard detail how advanced media technology simulates events in such a way as to make them "hyper-real," that is, better than real. Virtual reality can produce stimuli recognized as "real," or plausible by the viewer.

Now imagine the effect of having access to print, audio, video and photographs along with the ability to access infinite amounts of information related to the subject matter streamed from anywhere in the world, with just a click of a button. The World Wide Web, in its immediacy, often spreads news information almost instantly — a phenomenon referred to as "going viral."

A recent example of this is the "Balloon Boy Scandal." The story went into overdrive around the world once news broke that a 6-year-old boy had hitched a ride on a homemade helium balloon 7,000 feet above Colorado. The boy's confession that he had been hiding at home the entire time led to a lot of easily fooled news stations, up to seven million hits online and criminal charges for his parents.

In a poll of members of the national news media, almost two-thirds believed the Internet is injuring journalism. The poll, conducted by the Atlantic and National Journal, asked 43 media professionals whether journalism has been helped or hurt by the increase of online news, and 65 percent said journalism has been hurt, while 34 percent said it has been helped.

Multimedia news can be as deceptive as it is informative. Anybody with access to the Internet and a fundamental understanding of how to post information on websites can be a source.

As a result, professional news organizations are increasingly suspicious of their nonprofessional rivals. Yet journalists, in their quest to beat the deadline, will sometimes use these fabricated or inaccurate sources.

We have seen a decline in journalistic skill, but an increase in the immediacy of news, diversity, opinion and pluralistic competition between news outlets. How multimedia applications are utilized and how accurate these stories are, however, is still up to journalists.

Here are a few examples of how immediacy has hurt the journalism world.

IMMEDIATE

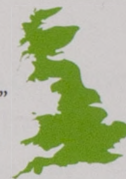
A few examples of the 'oops' that have plagued journalists

England

Sept. 19, 2008

Zany ones:

Online prankster and Beta user "godspants" edited a Wikipedia page on a Cypriot soccer team, AC Omonia, to include some interesting facts about the soccer team. It was stated that AC Omonia's fans are referred to as the "zany ones," wear hats made out of shoes and sing songs about a little potato.



When the British club Manchester City played against the Cypriot team, a British tabloid, the Daily Mirror, used Wikipedia as a source of information about the team for their build-up article. Even when the prankster "godspants" emailed them to inform them of the prank, the Daily Mirror still referred to them as the "Zany Ones" in their post-match article.

March 25, 2010

Teachers leave 5-year-old stuck in tree:

Several popular English newspapers were caught fielding the same incorrect facts about teachers who allegedly left a 5-year-old boy stuck up a tree for an hour. No assistance was given to the boy because of the apparent health and safety regulations. Journalists more concerned with the deadline did not even bother talking to the school. Each newspaper wrote articles based on each others information. One of the papers included: "But instead of helping him, staff followed guidelines and retreated inside the school building to 'observe from a distance' so the child would not get 'distracted and fall.'"

Newspapers displayed these headlines:

The Daily Mail: **'Teachers leave boy, 5, stranded in tree because of health and safety (then report passer-by who helped him down to police)'**

The Telegraph: **'Woman reported to police after coming to aid of boy left in tree'**

The Express: **'TEACHERS LEAVE BOY OF 5 STUCK UP A TREE FOR 1 HOUR'**

The Daily Star: **'TEACHERS LEAVE BOY OF 5 STUCK UP 20FT TREE'**

As it turned out, the boy was not stuck up a tree, but a woman from outside the school climbed over the fence and asked him to get down. The young boy replied he did not want to speak to strangers. At no time was the boy distressed or did he appear to be stuck in the tree. The boy's mother was in complete support of the school and stated: "All I can say is thank God the staff behaved in the manner they did. I don't know what the lady's intentions were but I am really glad that I didn't have to wait to find out. I fully support the actions of the school both before the incident and since."

Check out an extended version of the story online at

www.mjr.jour.umt.edu

ERRORS

United States

Oct. 15, 2009

Balloon Boy scandal:

The story went viral around the world. An elaborate hoax by the Heene family in Colorado. Six-year-old Falcon Heene was thought to have hopped into his father's homemade helium balloon, and floated 7,000 feet into the sky. Falcon's father, a self-proclaimed scientist, reportedly planned the hoax as a publicity stunt, hoping that a reality television show would come from it. The boy was later found hiding in the attic of the family's house. The National Guard spent \$14,500 launching two helicopters in the search, and the Denver International Airport temporarily closed down its airspace.

The story went into overdrive. Related video clips were hitting the Web and spreading rapidly. Up to 400 stories concerning the "balloon boy," a term coined by social media, were uploaded. Even when the boy let slip on Wolf Blitzer "that we did this for the show," the story generated more than 7 million page-views.

May 16, 1994

Dog Meat Soup:

Joey Skaggs, a socio-political media satirist, sent letters to 1,500 dog shelters around the country seeking to purchase dog meat at 10 cents per pound to be consumed by North Koreans as food. This caused media hysteria. Skaggs set up an answering machine with a Korean woman's voice. He received thousands of calls, faxes and letters in the first week alone. Many media outlets reported on the story and included detailed conversations that supposedly occurred between individuals and the representatives, yet none of those actually took place.

Shortly after, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals revealed that this was a hoax. It confirmed that none of the reporters had verified the information they had reported, nor did they bother to look beneath the surface.

Ireland

March 30, 2009

Maurice Jarre:

In an experiment, a 22-year-old sociology student from University College Dublin, Shane Fitzgerald, attempted to test the speed of breaking news — and see whether news media would pick up mistakes.

When Sky News broke the news of French composer Maurice Jarre's death, Fitzgerald edited Jarre's Wikipedia Web page immediately, and included quotes that read: "One could say my life itself has been one long soundtrack," and "Music was my life, music brought me to life, and music is how I will be remembered long after I leave this life. When I die there will be a final waltz playing in my head and that only I can hear." While the sociology student only expected to reel in a few small newspapers and online bloggers, major newspapers from England, United States, India and Australia all used the quote.

Australia

Sept. 12, 2009

Hungry Beast stunt:

Hungry Beast, an Australian weekly, topical indie-news program that covers everything from the silly to the serious fooled the Australian media into believing that Sydney-siders are the most gullible in the nation. They pretended to conduct a survey that took around a "thousand 25- to 35-year-olds from five different states and we got them to read 15 different articles that were based on Australian history, five of which were complete fabrications."

Credible news sources from all over Australia published news articles online, in print, on the radio and on television claiming that a fabricated research program called the Levitt Institute had discovered this fact.

Hungry Beast created a simple Web page for the Levitt Institute with the so-called facts, and sent a press release to the Australian Associated Press. A decrepit building in Sydney was claimed as the address for the institute, and a false spokesperson for the institute gave interviews with radio shows around the country. A fabricated professor and other ridiculous credentials were briefly located on Wikipedia.

What finally gave it away, though, was that the website was only registered on September 8 of that year. The Australian media lapped it up, and then were informed by the Hungry Beast program, that the institute was just a stunt to highlight the laziness in journalism.

Denmark

Sept. 10, 2009

Sex Tourism scandal:

Danish tourism bosses were forced to apologize for the release of a YouTube clip hoax concerning a "yummy mummy," pleading for the man who had impregnated her one-and-a-half years prior to come forward and claim his baby.

The beautiful blonde claimed her little boy, August, was the result of a one-night stand in Copenhagen. She could not remember his name, and then proceeded to elaborate on the night of consummation. The clip, which appears to be shot in the woman's home, attracted more than a million hits in less than a week.

The video, with Danish actor Ditte Arnth Jorgensen, was an interesting ploy from tourism company *Visit Denmark* to attract male tourists from other countries. The company tried to defend its actions, saying it was a "good and sweet story about a mature, responsible woman who lives in free society and shoulders the responsibility of her actions."

The YouTube clip attracted attention from newspapers around the world including England, the U.S., India and Australia. YouTube CEO Dorte Kiilerich said, "We deeply apologize that the film has offended a lot of people, that certainly wasn't the idea." **MJR**

Courtroom

Journalists use Twitter to

Story by **BRENNA BRAATEN**

Photo illustration by **DANIEL DOHERTY**

Twitter, an online real-time messaging service, is fast becoming one of the social media giants by which many people can update their friends on exactly what they're up to at any given moment. It's a way to share information, and that's what newspapers have decided to tap into.

Both major and minor news sources have been using Twitter to connect to their audiences and help them learn something about a variety of topics. Tweeting from the courtroom has become an increasingly popular way for reporters to let people know what's going on in a trial, in bursts of 140 characters, including spaces, or less.

Ron Sylvester is a pioneer when it comes to using social media for journalistic value. For almost two years he's been tweeting court cases through Twitter, and since then many other papers have followed suit.

Sylvester, of The Wichita Eagle in Wichita Kansas, debuted on Twitter in May 2008. Before that, the Eagle attempted live blogging by e-mail, but people said the updates weren't coming fast enough.

Sylvester said he didn't know anyone using Twitter for court cases when he started, although a lot of journalists were being encouraged to use new social media like Twitter and Facebook.

"A lot of people thought that some form of social networking was going to be the way that people distributed information in the future," he said. "And to some extent it's worked out that way."

The first case in which it was used was a murder trial. Sylvester was sent to cover the jury selection. The response to his "tweets" was immediate.

"I started doing it during jury selection, thinking, 'Nobody's going to pay attention to this,'" he said. But that was unfounded.

From that first day, the numbers have grown to at least 1,900 followers on Twitter. Sylvester said that's only a fraction of the true number because many people who don't use Twitter read his Twitter feed directly on The Wichita Eagle's website. Even so, the numbers are impressive.

"It's not a huge number of people, but 1,900 readers is a lot for one of our stories on the Web per day," he said.

Sylvester said he approaches tweeting a case much as he would a normal story, except his tools are a little different. He said he uses his Blackberry phone and a Bluetooth keyboard to type and send in his tweets as a text message.

"I write the way I write," he said, "whether I'm sitting down to write a story or sitting down in court."

Sylvester said he uses complete sentences and quotes, the same way he would if he were writing a news story. He said he tries to keep away from the repetitiveness of a trial, and let his watchers know if there is nothing going on or there is a break.

Usually the 140 character limit of a tweet isn't a problem, but Sylvester admitted that on occasion he's forgotten about the limit and had to edit himself.



chatter

report live during trials

"The thing I love about Twitter is it forces you to write tight," he said. "You can't get carried away."

Last April, Sylvester said he got permission to tweet in federal court, which generally doesn't allow cell phones. In that first federal trial, the judge allowed only phones, not laptops, into the courtroom.

"I can file stuff in the courtroom where other people really can't because they can't bring their laptops in," he said. "Plus, everything fits in my pocket."

Sylvester hasn't been the only one to use Twitter in federal court. Students at the University of Montana tweeted during the W.R. Grace trial held in Missoula, Montana.

The School of Journalism and the School of Law collaborated to cover the case, which dealt with the health effects of tremolite asbestos, a deadly hazard from the vermiculite mining, in Libby, Montana.

The court convened four days a week. Students tweeted during two-hour shifts, then posted a summary on a blog afterward.

Although it was her first time using Twitter, Laura Lundquist, a second year graduate student in print journalism who took White's class, saw an immediate impact.

"As our blog and Twitter feeds became known to the people up in Libby, they tended to follow it pretty closely," she said.

While Lundquist said the immediacy of the updates was positive for followers, she recognized that there could be downsides.

"The pressure to post rapidly now that we can is hard for news organizations to ignore, but we need to be careful about inaccuracies," she said.

Jamie Satterfield is another journalist who has had success using Twitter in the courtroom. As a reporter for the Knoxville, Tennessee, News Sentinel, Satterfield has been tweeting for a year and a half.

"We were experimenting with 'twittering' for non-breaking news, like our entertainment division," she said. "So we were just kind of dabbling with it at the newspaper."

The dabbling worked. Within the first two days, she said she saw more than 1,600 followers, and since then, that number has grown.

Sylvester said he hasn't run into any problems with tweeting court cases in comparison to writing traditional stories.

"Once the first judge lets you do it and everybody sees that nothing bad's going to happen, then it's a lot easier to convince others," he said. "The federal judge that did it said that it's no different than if you were taking notes and going back and writing the story. You're still writing the story, it's just being delivered in a different way."

Sylvester's experience with court has probably helped him in starting with Twitter.

"I've been on this beat for 10 years," he said, "and so I know the lawyers involved, I know all the judges. They trust the job I do and they know I do a good job. I don't think if I was just starting the beat, if I was just coming on, I don't think I could do it."

The basics, even when using Twitter, are still important, Sylvester said.

"Source development, accuracy and professionalism are still the Published by ScholarWorks at University of Montana, 2016 deliver it," he said.

Tweets by Ron Sylvester

March 23, 2010

Editor's note: These are "tweets" by Ron Sylvester, who has been using Twitter for two years to report from courtrooms for The Wichita Eagle. During this state trial on film piracy, defendant Antonio Jones is charged with downloading and selling more than a dozen movies to his girlfriend's coworkers in Wichita.

Back in film piracy trial, MPAA investigator said films contain hidden watermarks throughout the movie.

12:52 PM Mar 23rd via UberTwitter



rsylvester

When someone uses a camcorder to illegally copy the movie, Technicolor analysis can tell which theater it was recorded.

12:54 PM Mar 23rd via UberTwitter

Gary Kissinger, the investigator, also said watermarks identify what time the movie was being shown ...

12:55 PM Mar 23rd via UberTwitter

... And even which seat in the theatre the person was sitting with the camcorder.

12:56 PM Mar 23rd via UberTwitter

Jurors nodded their heads and reacted to the testimony, surprised and impressed with those details.

12:58 PM Mar 23rd via UberTwitter

Jurors are now watching clips of several movies. Some, you can see a head of another theater goer move in and out of picture.

1:02 PM Mar 23rd via UberTwitter

Others have a crawl at bottom of screen saying it's for Academy Awards consideration only and not for distribution

1:05 PM Mar 23rd via UberTwitter

With Kissinger's testimony, the state rested its case. Witnesses who bought the DVDs testified yesterday.

1:31 PM Mar 23rd via txt

Jones, the defendant, said he will not testify in his defense.

1:34 PM Mar 23rd via txt

The defense will not put on any evidence. Lawyers will close this afternoon. Will report verdict.

1:42 PM Mar 23rd via txt

Because of arguments over jury instructions Judge Terry Pullman has dismissed the jury for the day. Closings now tomorrow.

2:09 PM Mar 23rd via txt

Satterfield said she hasn't run into too many problems either, but there are occasional hassles.

"Sometimes spectators who don't know what I'm doing think I'm text messaging or something if they don't know who I am, and I generally have to explain what I'm doing," she said. "But I haven't had any major problems."

But not every journalist has been so lucky.

In Maryland, The Baltimore Sun has had serious problems tweeting in courtrooms. While reporters had not been allowed to use devices in the courtroom directly, they had been able to update from outside.

Now a bill banning all electronic devices that would be used for social media has been introduced. Its provisions include Twitter, Facebook or any other site, including future sites that haven't even been created yet.

Sun Editor Monte Cook said the paper has an audience that wants to know what's going on, but isn't necessarily willing to wait for it, and social media are the way to provide immediacy.

Cook said the order was predicated on the assumption that posting on Twitter was essentially like having cameras in the courtroom.

"I don't think that social media is in any way broadcast," Cook said. "I think it is conversation; it is passing along information."

Cook said he thinks the issue is more about openness, and that while defendants must be given a fair trial, jurors should not be influenced and news security must be paramount, courtrooms should remain free and open to the public.

"We believe that the openness, which court proceedings should have for societal concerns, really outweighs the sort of work," Cook said.

Cook said he understands that clacking on a computer in court may be disruptive, but this specific order extends to the hallways. He said it would prohibit reporters from going into the hallway to put in an update, even though radio reporters have been doing it for much longer, just not on Twitter.

"We think it's hard to justify that extension of the order," Cook said.

He said the ban extending to any form or future form of social media is short-sighted and lacks cultural context of what's going on in society now.

He said he worries it will leave the court system closeted and unavailable to the public.

Right now, the Sun is complying with the order and will use social media as reporters can, but it is working with other media, both in Baltimore and regionally, to get the bill rescinded, or at least be allowed to work more openly.

"I think the court would do well to better understand social media and its application for keeping a well-informed citizenry," Cook said.

In Georgia last November, U.S. District Court Judge Clay Land interpreted that since the dissemination of messages was instantly posted and available to the public, it was a type of broadcasting.

However, unlike in Baltimore, Land established a media room near the entrance of the courthouse where reporters could file information outside the courtroom itself.

Sedgwick County District Judge Ben Burgess, who first allowed Sylvester to "tweet" in the courtroom, said that since video cameras are allowed in the courtroom in Wichita, he doesn't see why the newspapers can't have their own form of live feed.

"The bottom line was, as long as it was not disruptive and doesn't attract any attention to what's going on inside the courtroom, then I do not see that there's any particular problem with permitting it," he said.

While Burgess has never had a problem with tweeting or denied a person from being allowed, he said there are still rules they have to adhere to.

"I have not had an occasion to actually implement an order to exclude (reporters)," he said, "but if they violate the understanding that we have, they would be excluded."

For instance, if a reporter named a juror publicly, Burgess said it would warrant immediate dismissal from the courtroom.

Whether problematic or not, using Twitter has some benefits.

Twitter is reaching a new audience, as Sylvester found out at a tweetup, a real-life meeting of a group of people who use Twitter.

He said the Web programmer asked a follower of Sylvester's Twitter feed in his 20s if he read the paper or the Eagle's website. To both the man replied no.

"Sometimes spectators who don't know what I'm doing think I'm text messaging or something if they don't know who I am, and I generally have to explain what I'm doing."

Jamie Satterfield, Knoxville News Sentinel, on using Twitter in court

"Later she said that's proof that you're reaching a new audience; people who would not come to our news website, that wouldn't read the paper are reading you on Twitter. So that actually showed we're reaching a new audience."

Satterfield said a benefit of Twitter is that people get more information than in a normal news story.

"Even though it's coming piecemeal, I think they get a much better sense of what it's actually like in the courtroom," she said.

Whether it's Twitter or another new way to disseminate information, journalists are having to rethink the way they work.

"I think the days of having print and broadcast are gone," he said. "I think it's everything. I think you're going to have to write, you're going to have to be able to shoot and edit video and audio, and take photos. You're going to have to have a broad base of skills."

The days of working with just a pen and a notebook are also gone, Sylvester said with a laugh.

"I've got this rolling briefcase I carry," he said. "It's got a video camera, a tripod and all these microphones. And now usually the one thing I forget is a notepad and pen." **MJR**

The (mp3) Sound of Music

Story by **KAREN! GARCIA**

Matthew Perpetua is 30 years old, and his favorite band of all-time is (kind of predictably) Pavement. He graduated from Parson's School of Design, but abandoned visual art when he realized it was too expensive, and soon took to a less costly hobby: writing about music on the Internet.

Perpetua, however, did not confine himself to the written word. Back around 2001, an acquaintance offered him the use of some extra hosting space on a website, so he started embedding MP3 files on his blog to share music with his readers. By 2002, Fluxblog, what The Guardian would in a couple years time call "the pioneer of MP3 blogging," was born.

MP3 blogging, a trend that gained popularity in the mid-2000s, is written music criticism accompanied by a downloadable file of the music that is being evaluated. Perpetua's blog specifically plays host to one song per weekday; today (March 19, 2010) it is Twin Sister's "All Around and Away We Go." If Perpetua's paragraph-long description of the song ("Clicking guitar, woozy synthesizer drones, breathy vocals, flourishes that are like sparkles in soft focus") confuses or fails to satisfy the user, a link to the actual song is provided below, offering the reader an opportunity to make an informed decision.

MP3 blogging is only one of several developments that the emergence of multimedia has wrought on the field of music journalism; others include the online streaming of concerts and festivals, the proliferation of music videos and live interviews on music websites, and an increased interaction between music consumers and music journalists via message boards, forums, and comment sections.

Thanks to sites like Chicago-based webzine Pitchfork, Tiny Mix Tapes and Fluxblog and the ways in which they have integrated multimedia, music journalists can now better serve the abstract concept (music) that they have dedicated themselves to. For instance, as is illustrated by Perpetua's brainchild, it is now possible for an article or review to link directly to songs, music videos, and/or clips from live concerts.

"This serves to illustrate writing in a way which print media never could manage," says Tiny Mix Tapes user Philip Hucknall, 25. "Thus, journalism no longer needs to serve so much as a 'teaser,' which inspires the reader to seek out a particular band. Instead, the writing can talk about a record or a scene in the knowledge that the reader can most likely listen to it



Photo courtesy of Matthew S. Riley

Nick Thorburn, frontman of the Montreal-based band Islands, performs at the Palace Lounge in Missoula, Montana. Pitchfork's review of the group's debut album "Return to the Sea" in 2006 helped launch the obscure independent band to relative notoriety in the music community.

simultaneously if they choose."

Hucknall concedes that this is not an especially relevant benefit when it comes to writing about mainstream or well-known music, what with the profusion of popular bands' material on television and radio. But it does become quite important when the music journalist is writing about more obscure or little-known artists.

Indeed, Hucknall is right to point out that multimedia like MP3 blogging has helped leverage the popularity of independent bands. Artists will often send sample tracks to MP3 blog writers like Perpetua in an attempt to gain exposure and publicity through this relatively new medium. No longer do you have to aspire to get your song on the radio — you just have to get tracks streamed on a popular blog.

Hucknall's friend and fellow TMT user Craig Pearce, though, sees some problems with this system. Pearce, 25, fears that the emergence of what he calls "new media" somehow diminishes and cheapens the role of the traditional music journalist.

"If you can hear a record on a music website, or see a music video there, you may form an opinion of it on that basis," Pearce says. "This could mean that you don't read a review of the music at all, or it may mean that you

read the review but put no stock in what the writer said because you've already heard the music yourself. Either way, to me this devalues the music journalist and I see this as a bad thing.

"I say this because there is a hope that because someone is a paid, professional journalist they should be able to write pretty well and say interesting things," Pearce adds. "I want this to continue, and not be destroyed by new media."

Marvin Lin, editor in chief of Tiny Mix Tapes, could not agree more. Though a section of his website Chocolate Grinder incorporates video and audio files (with content ranging from newly-released tracks to full concerts and interviews), Lin is still a fierce supporter of the written word and the function of the writer in music journalism.

*To me, writing and reading about music
is as important as listening to music.
It's all cultural dialogue.*

Marvin Lin, Tiny Mix Tapes, editor in chief

"To me, writing and reading about music is as important as listening to music," Lin, 29, says. "It's all cultural dialogue. Yes, a writer can embed an audio file into a review to show the reader what he or she is talking about, but if what he or she is talking about is a pure description of the music, then it's sort of pointless. But if the writer is giving cultural/social/political/aesthetic

context for a song and then uses the song to justify an argument or insight, then I think the writer is doing something really exciting: making connections and provoking readers to think about music in a different light."

The way in which journalists discuss music on certain websites, though, is often called into question.

Pitchfork, for example, which is essentially the go-to online source for news and material on independent artists, is often criticized for how "overly analytical the writers can be," as Pearce puts it.

"It seems they are deliberately obtuse, making references to weird things only about five people will have heard of," he adds.

So instead of having to rely on the abstract, unclear musings of conceited 20-somethings, now readers can listen to or view the content in question to gain more understanding about what the writer is trying to say about the piece.

Regardless of their pretentious reputation, though, Pitchfork probably deserves the popularity it has garnered.

"I think Ryan Schreiber (who launched the site in 1995) has built a very good publication that serves its readers well, and has been getting better and better over the years," says Perpetua, who also contributes to Pitchfork in addition to running Fluxblog.

"It is encouraging that as the publication improves and integrates more cool things like Pitchfork.tv, it becomes more popular."

Pitchfork.tv, an entirely multimedia-driven section of the site, was incorporated in 2008 and features music videos as well as original content that is produced in Pitchfork's own studio.

"We are trying to create interesting content that we think people will like watching," says Mark Zemel, the producer and editor of Pitchfork.tv. "Our viewership has been steadily increasing, so it seems to be working."

"A lot of Web media platforms rely on other people for content, but, besides music videos, one week only's and tunnelvisions (which are non-original compilations), we produce all of our video stuff in-house which gives us way more control over what we air."

When asked about what is next for Pitchfork, Zemel doesn't quite have an answer.


"As for what the future holds ... that's tough," says Zemel. "I feel like everything in media is in a state of flux right now, and it's hard to predict how things will pan out. But, Pitchfork has done a really good job of navigating this weird landscape. It's going to be an interesting few years." 



Photo courtesy of Matthew S. Riley

Jamie Thompson plays the drums for Islands at their October show in Missoula, Montana.

Brilliantly creative to fans, polarizingly impractical to critics, the Las Vegas Sun's Rob Curley insists it's all about old-fashioned journalism in the end.



Photos courtesy of Naples Daily News

Of mice, multimedia & men

Story by **KATE SCHWAB**

Ralph Waldo Emerson is credited with the saying, "If you build a better mousetrap, the world will beat a path to your door."

And if you move to Nevada with a dream team composed of former Washington Post staffers to launch a multi-million dollar, multimedia-laden website, an army of journalism critics will camp on your doorstep to overanalyze your every move. This is especially true if you've already left an intriguing trail for them to sniff, namely a series of newspaper websites across Kansas, a video webcast program in Naples, Florida, a video portrait series (onBeing) and LoudounExtra.com, a controversial, local community website for The Washington Post.

A self-described nerd from rural Kansas, Rob Curley, 39, didn't plan on hogging the new media spotlight. His controversial philosophy of pursuing "the obvious" continually plants him there, yet he's immediately clear on one thing: The Las Vegas Sun is a team effort.

It's a good one, too. The Sun took the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for public service after running a series on workplace safety and construction deaths. Several members of the Sun's Web team were part of that effort, said Sun owner Brian Greenspun.

"I am blessed every day," said Curley, who has served as the Sun's online editor since 2008. "I get to work with some of the smartest people I've ever seen in my life."

A pre-existing joint operating agreement between Las Vegas' competing newspapers set the stage for Curley's team. It offered a unique opportunity to study what readers really wanted without fear of hemorrhaging advertising dollars by pitting print and online editions against each other. In 2005, Greenspun arranged

for the Sun's print version to be distributed as an exclusive insert in the competing Las Vegas Review-Journal.

"What if you could start completely over and try to build the newspaper of the future?" Curley wondered. "What would it look like?"

Thus far, the experiment has been largely a trial-and-error process, with plenty of national attention and brutal sideline criticism devoted to each false start and revised idea.

Curley's previous track record isn't completely rosy, either. Despite a couple of dozen accolades, his published résumé cites seven different positions within the past decade. A former Washington Post colleague of Curley's declined comment for this article, but as Curley was hitting Vegas, The Wall Street Journal ran a scathing piece denouncing the website Curley had built for the Post as "a flop" based on low reader counts.

"It's stressful," Curley said. "This is hard. Everybody says the newspaper industry needs to be able to take chances. What happens if somebody fails? When the newspaper industry does take chances and fail, there's a whole bunch of people who can't wait to write about it."

Fortunately, there are also people still willing to assume some risk for the sake of innovation. After more than a year, and in spite of heavy financial commitment and losses that led to recent staff cuts, Greenspun says he still believes in the project as a learning experience.

"I saw in Rob, and the people he would bring in, a bunch of bright, excited and creative young people who could see clearly into the future of good, credible journalism," Greenspun said.

"The only way to tell if what they saw was the correct path was to bring them to Las Vegas and let them try."

From a business standpoint, the rocky economy hasn't exactly boosted results.

"The critics had no impact; the economy has just forced us to be much smarter about how we do this," Greenspun said. "So far, I think the results are mixed. The journalism and technological aspects are stellar. The economic returns are at the other end of the spectrum."

Of one thing Curley is certain: Today's struggling news world won't be rescued by multimedia technology, but rather by the same savior it has always clung to — old-fashioned, shoe-leather reporting.

"On the print side, I can't tell you how many newspapers when you pick them up and read them, they don't realize there is CNN and the Internet," Curley said.

Despite online and broadcast sources offering the same information at a faster pace, after a major disaster or a big game, newspapers "still feel compelled to lead with it the next morning, even though it's been 24 hours since it happened," he said.

That doesn't mean print news is doomed, Curley maintains. But it does mean print journalists may need to redirect their writing habits to stay relevant. At the Sun, print reporters focus their attention on explaining why and how events occurred rather than reiterating the fact that they did happen.

"In the world I live in, when people see smoke, they look at the website," he added. If a story providing the reason for the smoke is not promptly available, Curley said, a reader's natural reaction is to question the site's credibility.

"They think, 'Oh my God, these guys suck. I'm not going back there,'" Curley said. "If people are going to the Web for new news, print needs to be something completely different. It needs to be *why* that happened. I do think there's a place for print. But is it what it looks like now? I don't know."

That philosophy appears to be working. Online ads don't cover all of the expenses, Curley said; the Greenspun family has made a big investment in multimedia journalism. But focusing on local sports, politics and other reader interests is paying off.

"Our traffic has exploded," Curley said. "We went from less than two million page views per month in 18 months to more than 14 million page views a month."

No one rises to Curley's level of reluctant prominence without catching flak from at least a few critics.

Curley's famous "hyperlocal" approach, or strict focus on community coverage, also remains highly controversial in American media circles. One of the toughest attacks has been that zeroing in too tightly on local news has led to a plethora of fluff stories at the Sun.

"The people who say that aren't really looking at our site,"

Curley said. "There is perception, and there is reality. We used to produce tons and tons of Flash. We couldn't get people to look at it."

Las Vegas, he admits, is "a goofy town" that frequently hosts national spectacles such as NASCAR. But those things get covered because they are local news. In the same vein, Curley said, the Sun staff writes about Harry Reid, but they do it because he happens to be Nevada's senator.

Local focus makes sense because modern readers run Internet searches or seek out newspapers covering the area where a major event has taken place, Curley said.

"I see us as old-school," Curley said. "You're not the authority on world news; why pretend that you are?"

In the past few years, hyperlocal coverage has gotten a tarnished image. Critics naturally began wondering what had gone wrong when they started posting items such as Little League Baseball stats and the promised readers failed to come pouring through the floodgates.

Perhaps that's because finding local news is only half the job. In Vegas, Curley's team has had to make some "very, very hardcore decisions" about what to cover based on what subscribers are actually reading.

For example, by monitoring site traffic, Curley's team soon learned which high school games readers wanted to know about. They were always the same ones, long-established schools in a city that has seen its overall population double in the past 10 years.

The same rule applies to multimedia. Common sense has to come first.

"I'm not here to try to save the industry," Curley said. "I'm here to make sure the Las Vegas Sun does the most cool and innovative things."

He's learned that sometimes being innovative means resisting the urge to play around with multimedia technology simply because it's there.

"Those things don't drive traffic," Curley said. "People go to the Web for things they're passionate about. A cool piece of Flash animation does neither of those two things. How do we inform people and give them information about their daily lives?"

It still starts with basic journalism, Curley concluded. Each story published on the Sun's website gets two editorial reads, but not before it goes live. It's up to the reporter to get the story out as accurately and swiftly as possible.

"The No. 1 skill you need to be a great new media journalist is you need to be able to write your backside off," Curley said.

Greenspun agreed. The Sun, he said, is most proud of its journalism contributions, both multimedia and traditional.

"If peer review is any sign of success, the Las Vegas Sun is very successful," Greenspun said. "We have learned through this process not to spend a fortune during a depression, and that with the right people, you can accomplish almost anything." *MJR*



“The No. 1 skill you need to be a great new media journalist is you need to be able to write your backside off.”

Rob Curley, multimedia journalist

The decline of teen magazines.

The rise of the teen website.

Story by **ERIN COLE**

Photos by **JUSTIN FRANZ**

When a 2006 national study declared that “the Internet has become THE youth medium of choice,” publishers of teen magazines already knew they were in trouble. In accordance with this trend, teens began to eschew monthly print runs for the siren call of 24/7 online media. Waiting at the mailbox for a monthly fashion fix became an increasingly antiquated pastime.

The reign of American teen magazines began in 1944 with the arrival of *Seventeen* on newsstands. In the post-war economic boom, titles flourished once publishers realized the magazines’ cash cow potential. At the turn of the 21st century, traditional women’s titles spun out “sister” versions to attract younger readers into their orbit. For a time, the future appeared rosy. But as the result of advances in technology, the golden age of teen magazines would be short-lived.

Between 2001 and 2008, more than half a dozen teen titles bit the dust. Content was either moved online or the brand disappeared entirely. The surviving publications closed in and purchased their databases and domains. This mass migration to the online realm signaled the start of a brave new world.

Marketing ploys

Faced with becoming additional victims of the digital schism, teen magazine publishers were forced to redraw their battle plans. The youth market, with an estimated \$150 billion of annual buying power, was too valuable a demographic to lose.

This was an age group that had flummoxed marketers for years. If a media company was successful in attracting teens to their publication, their victory was short-lived. The paradox was that it was only a matter of years before the targeted audience would age out and leave the subscription base. Adding to the uncertainty was the all-too-common response of teens behaving in typical fashion and rejecting the proffered offerings.

Condé Nast, arbiter of taste, experienced this firsthand in 2007 when teens failed to latch onto its youth multimedia venture. Flip.com was billed as a chic social network where teens could bundle together and share their favorite multimedia in virtual “flip” books. After failing to make even a small dent in the successes of Facebook and MySpace, the project was dropped. As for its teen print magazine, *Teen Vogue*, which began publication in 2003, Condé Nast trimmed the magazine to digest-size, hoping to make it appeal to a mobile audience.

Two years earlier saw the launch of Hachette’s *ELLEgirl*, also digest-size. Ad revenue was initially strong for the magazine, but

top brass hoped for stronger returns. Hachette tried bumping up the number of annual publications and slashed the cover price to \$1.99. Despite these attempts, *ELLEgirl* closed in 2006.

“It is always unfortunate to have to close a magazine, but today the teen market is increasingly fragmented,” Hachette CEO Jack Kliger said at the time. “To effectively reach these girls, we must invest in the media where they spend most of their time and where we see our greatest growth potential.”

The media Kliger was referring to was the Internet. Today, *ELLEgirl* lives online, where it was relaunched in 2008. Content is purportedly pumped in by an editorial team that works closely with the staff of *ELLE.com*.

Birth of the Alpha Kitties

Hearst Corporation’s *CosmoGirl*, another leading teen magazine, shuttered in 2008, but not before producing a media star. Atoosa Rubenstein stirred waters in 1999 when she became Hearst’s youngest editor in chief at age 26 at *CosmoGirl*.

Many hopes were pinned on the Iranian-born Rubenstein. She managed to cultivate a rare connection with her readers, whom she dubbed “Alpha Kitties.” *CosmoGirl* was an overnight success, in part because its readers could associate a face and a personality with the masthead.

“If a diary could talk back with advice and solace, it might sound like Ms. Rubenstein,” wrote *The New York Times*.

Rubenstein’s efforts extended far beyond the traditional Letter From the Editor. She was the first teen magazine editor to actively seek out e-mail communication with readers. Rubenstein understood the technology trends and encouraged communication with readers across several different platforms, including MySpace and YouTube.

2005 saw Rubenstein score a big coup, when as the editor in chief of Hearst-owned *Seventeen*, she partnered with MTV to produce a reality show called “Miss *Seventeen*.” The show, which she hosted, followed a group of college girls competing for a chance at an internship at the magazine.

“The modern editor in chief has to see themselves as the editor in chief of a brand, with the publication one part of that brand,” Rubenstein said in a 2005 interview with *The New York Times*.

When it became obvious that teens were tuning in for Atoosa the brand, rather than for the *Seventeen* brand, Rubenstein jumped off the glossy bandwagon. In 2006, she started her own media company, Big Momma Productions, intending to develop online multimedia content and provide consulting in teen media. Yet something happened that affected Rubenstein’s ability to strike while the iron was hot.

Today, two years after the birth of her first child, Rubenstein has all but vanished from both the print and online worlds.

“I’m pretty much the editor in chief of my family at this point,” she said in a 2009 interview.

Her MySpace page hasn’t witnessed an update since 2008. Her YouTube account is in similar straits. Meanwhile, her Big Momma Productions website, where she was purportedly “building a new home for our tribe,” has yet to produce content. The Alpha Kitty empire, which so many looked forward to as the next wave in teen media, appears dead.

Perhaps one woman could only carry the torch so far. At the very least, Rubenstein blazed a trail for a future mogul to follow.

As seen on “The Hills”

Impressed with rival Hearst’s success with MTV, Condé Nast



Mackenzie Morrison reads Teen Vogue, one of only a handful of magazines left on newsstands that caters to younger girls.

decided to partner its Teen Vogue with the television network. In 2006, one of the stars of the MTV show "The Hills" landed an internship at Teen Vogue's Los Angeles bureau. The result was branding genius. "The Hills" quickly became MTV's highest-rated television show. Each episode, featuring a behind-the-scenes look at the magazine, piped into millions of homes and thoroughly infiltrated youth pop culture.

"It's almost becoming like a novel at this point, like this generation's 'A Tale of Two Cities' or 'Oliver Twist,'" Tony DiSanto, MTV's executive vice president of series programming and development, said in 2008.

The Teen Vogue venture lasted two seasons on "The Hills" before the cast headed for other pastures. Despite the parting of ways, the show lent the magazine a public face that extended well beyond their print product.

The blogosphere

Rather than feeling threatened, media conglomerates once looked upon fashion blogs as cute side notes produced by fashion-obsessed fans. This viewpoint evaporated when these sites' bloggers gained sizeable audiences and a style authority that rivaled that of fashion magazines.

Partly to blame for this switch in allegiance was the fashion cycle. For decades, magazines revolved around biannual designer collections, one in the spring and one in the fall. At the turn of the 21st century, popular stores such as H&M and Zara, with their racks full of disposable fashion, proliferated. Instead of monthly updates in stock, stores began unpacking fresh merchandise weekly to keep up with the competition. This forced relevant fashion commentary and criticism to become faster and more frequent.

Not only did teen magazines' monthly publishing schedule work against them, but they were unable to offer the untold realms of multimedia that blogs could. Runway videos, designer interviews and models' video diaries from Fashion Week couldn't translate into print.

Blogs could also offer teens a gamut of information and perspectives from their peers. Petra Benton, a 20-year-old New Zealander who runs the blog City of Petra, is an example of this growing trend.

"We don't have trust funds or stylists who dress us," Benson said in an interview with the New Zealand press. "We are for the most part pretty everyday people."

"Readers identify with this. Seeing others wear something

you wouldn't dare to is quite eye-opening, and it makes you ask yourself, 'Why not?'"

Blogs also allowed for new fashion journalists to be discovered. Teens and adults alike follow Tavi Gevinson's blog Style Rookie with slavish devotion. Started in 2008 when she was just 11, the blog now receives around 30,000 hits a day. Gevinson devours and dissects fashion magazines, though it is important to note that these are adult fashion magazines. Her tastes lend empirical evidence to the growing sophistication of teen readers, many of whom prefer older titles than the ones marketed to them. Gevinson also embeds videos of runway shows and interviews with designers and other fashion personalities in her blog.

Cell phones and iPhones and iPods, oh my

Where a teenage girl in the 1980s was confined to making calls in her bedroom on a Princess rotary phone, today's teens experience mobile technology.

Seventeen takes the lead in producing applications for these beloved gadgets. It created an iPhone app that serves as a stylist and allows a teen to track down clothes in her city. Seventeen also produces a podcast that follows one of its beauty editors backstage at New York Fashion Week.

Compared to Seventeen's forays, The ELLEgirl BlackBerry app is in its infancy. It merely links to the ELLEgirl website and doesn't offer any additional content. Teen Vogue, meanwhile, has an iPhone app that serves as a virtual fashion closet.

It is too soon to make a definite prediction about the effect the iPad will have on teen magazines. Condé Nast, for example, formatted only five of its titles for the device, all of them geared to the adult reader. It is likely that once the advertising and circulation revenues have been gauged, Condé Nast and other media companies will offer more titles, including teen magazines, or discontinue the venture.

And then there were two

On today's newsstands, only two of the traditional teen magazines remain in print: Seventeen and Teen Vogue. While the content has not drastically altered in recent years, mentions of the online versions abound between the covers. Readers are directed to explore real-time polls, backstage looks at cover shoots, up-to-the-moment celebrity gossip and, of course, shopping links at the magazines' respective websites.

All this linkage and cross-promotion leaves a question begging to be asked: If teen magazines really are the "training wheels of the glossies," as writer Anna Quart calls them, will graduated teen readers easily fall into the fold of adult women's titles, or will there be a technology disconnect?

In order to avoid the latter, women's titles need to meet the online challenge head-on. Vogue Italia and Marie Claire are two magazines that have succeeded. Both titles have developed websites that feature a gamut of multimedia packaged in an attractive design. Marie Claire has tie-ins to the über popular reality show Project Runway, and both mediums cross-promote the other. Meanwhile, those in the know skip the stodgy American Vogue website for Vogue Italia's bilingual masterpiece, which has received accolades for its design and content.

It is safe to say the future of traditional teen magazines is unknown. While print magazines may be on the wane, it is an infallible certainty that teen girls will always desire advice from authorities other than their parents. Just as surely as necessity is the mother of invention, each coming century will boast some sort of medium that will cater to teens' tastes. **MJR**

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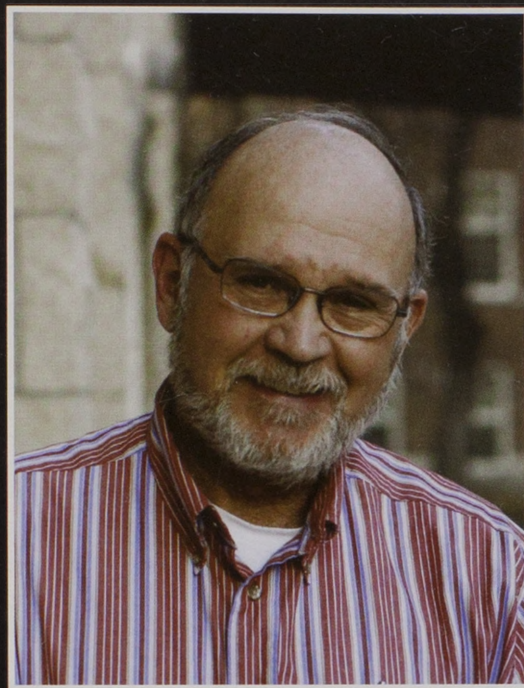
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Editor's note



Clem Work

Journalistic storytelling is undergoing a revolution these days, an exciting but scary time of exploring the effective use of multiple media, or multimedia as it's known. As managing editor Ashley Klein notes, "It's past the point of whispers. That fear, the one of uncertainty — the unknown — is festering in the minds of students, raising stress levels almost to the point of breaking. All around the world, budding journalists and veterans can be heard screaming, 'Is multimedia the new frontier?'" The answer, she acknowledges, is firmly, "Yes." How J-schools, professionals young and old, citizen journalists, small-town papers and the very biggest publications, are coping with the practice and ethics of multimedia journalism is the topic of this issue. We also have a bigger and better website with online-only features, including a multimedia gallery.

Speaking of journalistic storytelling,

the MJR staff would like to give a shout-out to Lynn and Bill Schwanke of Missoula, veteran journalists whose dedication is an inspiration to us all. Lynn, who worked for the Missoulian for many years before her retirement last year, cheerfully mentored many a Missoula-area youngster interested in journalism (including two of my kids) through the bi-weekly 4U and Represent sections in the Missoulian and the Midway Dispatch, the student-produced newspaper at the Western Montana Fair each summer. She was also the director of that high-drama annual event known as the state spelling bee for more than 20 years. Bill, longtime director of the Grizzly Athletic Assn. and Missoulian sports editor from 1969-71, had worked at Missoula's KGVO. He returned to the newspaper in 2005 at age 60 as online editor. Since then, he has produced more than 300 videos for the Missoulian's website. You'll see him in two of our stories as the "poster child" for the typewriter-bred journalist who has adapted to 21st century ways of doing multimedia journalism. The couple also responded to MJR's request for support, further evidence of their dedication.

Lynn and Bill have touched the lives of many young people interested in words. My daughter, Alyssa, writes, "I remember Lynn buzzing around the conference table where we used to have our Represent meetings, riffing off a story idea here, critiquing a page layout there. Her enthusiasm made us believe that people genuinely wanted to read about our experience as high school students, and I credit her with getting me to see the potential for storytelling in everything." **MJR**

2010
MJR Staff

Bios



Alaina Abbott graduated from the University of Montana in May with a bachelor's degree in print journalism and a minor in Wilderness Studies. Originally from Billings, she plans to stay in Missoula, taking care of her garden and chickens.



Danielle deBouver graduated from the University of Montana in May with a degree in print journalism. Originally from Connecticut, she enjoys reading, writing, skiing and running.



Javkhlan Bold-Erdene will graduate from the University of Mongolia in the spring of 2011 with a bachelor's degree in international journalism. She hopes to work as a correspondent, traveling the world. She was an exchange student at UM for a year. Her time at UM's School of Journalism has been the best part of her academic life.



Daniel Doherty graduated from the University of Montana in May with a bachelor's degree in photojournalism. He hopes to travel the world, advance his career and live in Montana, all at once if possible.



Brenna Braaten graduated from the University of Montana in May with bachelor's degrees in print journalism and English for creative writing and literature. She plans to work as a copy editor and eventually publish a novel.



Justin Franz will graduate from the University of Montana in the spring of 2011 with a bachelor's degree in print journalism. Originally from Maine, he has been an active photographer almost all his life and has traveled to many off-the-beaten-path locations in pursuit of his hobby.



Steel Brooks will graduate from the University of Montana in the spring of 2011 with a bachelor's degree in photojournalism. After school, he hopes to shoot portraits for a magazine or work for a daily newspaper.



Erin Gallagher will graduate this summer from the University of Montana with a bachelor's degree in print journalism. She would like to travel and make some awesome memories while she's still young.



Erin Cole will graduate from the University of Montana in the spring of 2011 with a bachelor's degree in print journalism. She studied Russian literature before deciding to study journalism. Her favorite things include traveling, footnotes and Shiba Inus.



Karen! Garcia graduated from the University of Montana in May with a bachelor's degree in print journalism and a minor in English literature. She will eventually come crawling back to the institution of education to pursue a master's degree in something or other. She aspires to have a library resembling the one with sliding ladders from "Beauty and the Beast."



Hanna Dagg graduated from the University of Montana in May with a bachelor's degree in photojournalism. She hopes to cycle across Europe and pursue a career in the National Park Service.



William Hall will graduate from Australia's Charles Stuart University this fall with a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism. He was an exchange student at UM. He hopes to work in print journalism. He loves sports and the wild. He is fascinated by animals and ultimately wants to write and take photos for National Geographic Magazine.



Ashley Klein graduated from the University of Montana in May with a bachelor's degree in print journalism and a minor in communication studies. She plans to travel the world. One day, she hopes to settle in a small coastal town with a dog or two.



Kate Schwab will graduate from the University of Montana in the spring of 2011 with a degree in print journalism. She transferred from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. She is the former editor of the Silver State Post in Deer Lodge, Montana. Her passions are gourmet cooking, bonfires and romping in the woods with her Aussie.



Passang Norbu will graduate from the University of Montana in the spring of 2011 with a master's degree in print journalism. Originally from Thimphu, Bhutan, he graduated with a bachelor's degree in commerce from Pune, India. In 2006, he joined Bhutan's national newspaper, Kuensel, as its correspondent for southern Bhutan.



Roman Stubbs will graduate from the University of Montana in the spring of 2011 with bachelor's degrees in print journalism and history. Originally from Great Falls, Montana, he has written for the Montana Kaimin for three years. He would one day like to become a sports writer or a teacher. He never wants to leave Montana.



Cameron Rasmusson graduated from the University of Montana in May with a bachelor's degree in print journalism. He plans to stretch his legs for a year while contemplating the comparative merits of graduate school versus real life. Also, he enjoys creating artwork and writing fiction.



Troy Warzocha will graduate from the University of Montana this fall with a bachelor's degree in print journalism. Originally from Connecticut, he hopes to write about sports either on the East Coast or in the Pacific Northwest.



Heather Roussi graduated from the University of Montana in May with a bachelor's degree in print journalism. She plans to enter the publishing world and hopes to one day edit as many books as she reads.



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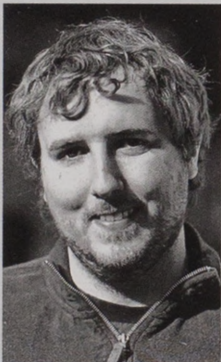
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Great Falls Tribune newsroom
employees thank the University
of Montana School of Journalism:



Don't ask yes or no questions. Embrace the power in asking "what" and "why." Make sure every story you write has at least two sources and pay the same attention to the smallest details as you do the overarching themes.

The UM School of Journalism preached these lessons, and many more from day one.

At the same time I would never have discovered the hard work and dedication needed to become a journalist without working long hours at the Kaimin.

I also found that in today's journalism, you must develop many skills to thrive. UM gave me the forum to learn those skills.

— Jake Sorich



As a fledgling writer with little experience in reporting, I sought out UM for a traditional foundation in the field. Little did I know, I would get so much more.

At the Montana Kaimin, I learned how to ask the tough questions and lead news stories with impact. In classes I discovered my niche writing bright features. I became handy with a video camera and adept at multimedia editing. The J-School's hands-on approach prepared me to hit the ground running with a solid foundation in traditional journalism as well as new media tools to handle the tasks of a modern-day reporter.

— Elizabeth Harrison

The University of Montana also played
a key role in these Great Falls Tribune
newsroom employees' careers:

Michael Babcock	Erin Madison
Kristen Cates	Gary Moseman
Rich Ecke	Matt Ochsner
Cathy (Kauffman) Gretch	Jackie (Galt) Rice
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