

A CASE STUDY OF PITTSBURGH MAGAZINE:  
An analysis of the use of Facebook and Twitter  
from the perspective of magazine editors and readers

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by  
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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

A CASE STUDY OF PITTSBURGH MAGAZINE:

An analysis of the use of Facebook and Twitter

from the perspective of magazine editors and readers

presented by Alexandria Anna Antonacci,

a candidate for the degree of master of arts,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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# A CASE STUDY OF PITTSBURGH MAGAZINE

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this case study was to review the evolution of *Pittsburgh Magazine's* social media outlets. Focusing on the magazine's Facebook and Twitter pages, the study looked at how both the editors and readers evolved to use those pages. This study used the diffusion of innovation theory and formed interview questions by the innovation characteristics: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability. This single-case study used both editor and reader interviews as well as participant observation to gain information on the Facebook and Twitter adaptation process.

Overall *Pittsburgh Magazine* editors felt that their duties expanded since the innovation adaption in January 2009. The magazine is adapting to the social media innovations, but is struggling due to the lack of staff members to focus on digital. The magazine's print readership was reluctant to use both Facebook and Twitter because of dislike and confusion. The magazine's digital readership evolved to use Facebook, but only a minority adapted to use Twitter. The digital readership tended to share more posts with others on Twitter, without the over-posting apprehension they felt on Facebook. The subscribers interviewed suggested the magazine cover a wider variety of topics on its Facebook and Twitter pages.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

This study focused on a thorough examination of *Pittsburgh Magazine's* social media outlets, specifically Facebook and Twitter. Its purpose was to learn about the evolution of the magazine's social media uses and practices from the perspective of the magazine's editors and its readers. The research questions were formed under the theoretical framework of diffusion of innovations. The first research question asked how *Pittsburgh Magazine* editors evolved to use Facebook and Twitter? The second research question asked the *Pittsburgh Magazine* readership community to explain how they evolved to use *Pittsburgh Magazine's* Facebook and Twitter pages? The third research question asked the *Pittsburgh Magazine* readership community for suggestions on how to further enhance the qualities and functionalities of using *Pittsburgh Magazine's* Facebook and Twitter pages. Learning more about the magazine's readers' user experience will help the editors improve their social media interactions on Facebook and Twitter.

This study follows the diffusion of innovation theory and adds to current research by showing the evolution of social media uses and practices via Facebook and Twitter. The magazine's perspective displayed the goals and reasoning's behind using Facebook and Twitter. The readers' perspective presented their reactions to *Pittsburgh Magazine's* Facebook and Twitter pages, and why they decided to use or not use them in their daily lives. Previous case studies have used this theory to find rates of innovation in other publications. Learning how and why readers decided to use *Pittsburgh Magazine's* Facebook and Twitter pages offered insight as to how editors can better connect with



their audiences.

The study started in January 2014 with in-depth interviews with staff members of *Pittsburgh Magazine*. Interview questions asked staff members to discuss the magazines adaption to Facebook and Twitter. Then a random purposive sampling of print subscribers, digital subscribers were gathered for phone interviews. They were asked to describe their adaptation experience to *Pittsburgh Magazine's* Facebook and Twitter pages. The participation observation helped fill in the gaps from editor interviews when describing the digital production process.

This study was designed to answer questions based directly on the theory of diffusion of innovations. It decoded *Pittsburgh Magazine's* social media as well as its community's adaption, satisfaction and suggestions for its pages. This research showed the reasoning's behind *Pittsburgh Magazine's* use of Facebook and Twitter and its readers progression to using those pages. The goal of this study was to find the best strategies for *Pittsburgh Magazine* to communicate with its audience through their Facebook and Twitter pages.

### ***Pittsburgh Magazine*, a context for research**

*Pittsburgh Magazine* is a monthly publication that produces not only a print edition but also a website, blog, app, e-newsletters, and posts to social media outlets such as: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and YouTube. With a variety of social media outlets available, the study will closely focus on the magazine's two most popular sites, Facebook and Twitter. According to the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Media Kit. (n.d.):

Since 1969, *Pittsburgh Magazine* has been the no. 1 magazine in the region, with more readers, subscribers, advertisers and newsstand sales than anyone else. 45 years later, we remain the most-read magazine in Pittsburgh and the only

magazine with audited circulation. Built on a foundation of independent quality journalism, the *Pittsburgh Magazine* brand is a trusted information partner for our most engaged residents and visitors. In print and online, we celebrate the best in the region by bringing our readers the most fascinating people, the must-visit places and the hottest events. Through an ongoing investment in digital media, *Pittsburgh Magazine* is serving the community in new and exciting ways.

In 2014 *Pittsburgh Magazine* turns 45 years old. Previously the magazine was owned by local station WQED; in 2009 it was bought by the Denver company WiesnerMedia, Schooley, T. (2010). The change of owners was organized as a seamless transition for the longtime subscribers of the magazine. When owned by WQED, anyone who made a donation to the station at the Basic Membership Level received a free 12-month subscription to *Pittsburgh Magazine*, according to WQED Multimedia: Membership, Clubs, and Benefits. (n.d.). Past partner WQED worked with WiesnerMedia, offer past subscribers a free one-year subscription to WQED members, according to the WQED Subscription Offer - Pittsburgh, PA. (n.d.).

Since WiesnerMedia bought the magazine, its website, Pittsburghmagazine.com, has gone through explosive growth. According to its media kit, the website page views rose from 1,350,000 in 2010 to 3,640,000 in 2012. In 2013 the website was redesigned for both mobile and tablet usability. With a circulation of 50,936 the magazine currently has 22,720 Twitter followers and 9,888 Facebook likes. In comparison *Baltimore Magazine* has a similar circulation of 52,249 with 21,378 Twitter followers and 12,279 Facebook “likes”. *Portland Monthly* has a circulation of 53,017 with 20,648 Twitter followers and 25,474 Facebook “likes”. *Seattle Met* has a circulation of 54,713 with 26,077 Twitter followers and 18,427 Facebook “likes”. *Orange Coast Magazine* has a circulation of 53,017 and 7,273 Twitter followers and 3,457 Facebook “likes”. Overall,

when comparing city magazines across the country with the same circulation social media numbers vary, placing *Pittsburgh Magazine* somewhere in the middle. In a telephone interview, online editor Sean Conboy, (2013, November 8) reported he would like to learn more about how to improve *Pittsburgh Magazine's* social media pages.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

City magazines now have the opportunity to break their monthly publication schedule through the web and social media, Sivek (2013). Saseen, Mitchell and Olmstead (2013) explain that social media is an “indispensable tool” for sharing content, finding new readers and strengthening the relationship with current readers. A Pew Research study found that, “Some 47% of smartphone users said they got news through a social network “sometimes” or “regularly,” (Saseen et al., 2013).

Rogers (2003) organizes the innovation decision process in five stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation. Implementing an innovation takes time, and the time it takes is a method of rating an innovation decision. Now users can share their articles on social media, comment on articles on their website and participate in polls and quizzes. The interactive options are almost endless with multiple platforms available for publication.

For the purpose of this research, interactivity is defined as multidirectional communication (Pavlik, 1998). Through personalization and community building, the communicator has a chance to use interactivity as a way to meet the audience’s needs (Lieb, 1998). Through meeting their needs, the audience can meet the needs of the publication. Publications can now have a conversation with the audience, making the one-way flow of news a thing of the past (Chung, 2008). The theoretical framework applied to this study, diffusion of innovations, will examine the editors’ and the reader’s progression to using of Facebook and Twitter.

### **Interactivity**

Magazines offer multiple person-to-person communication opportunities through their social media channels. Interactivity can be two-way communication between one source and receiver or “multidirectional communication” between many, Pavlik, (1998). By posting on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, the magazine encourages that multidirectional communication.

According to Steuer (1992) interactivity is where the audience can engage in altering the content of a “mediated environment in real time.” Users can engage with *Pittsburgh Magazine* through its social media outlets simply by commenting on a post, sharing a link, retweeting posts or replying to tweets, etc. Straubhaar and La Rose (1996) say that interactivity with real time feedback gathered from the audience on a media channel can be used by the source to constantly enhance the message they are delivering to their receivers. Magazine editors can use the feedback from users who participate on their social media channels to constantly improve the messages they deliver. Lieb (1998) explained that interactivity has two main components: personalization and community building.

Ha and James (1998) explain that, "Interactivity should be defined in terms of the extent to which the communicator and the audience respond to, or are willing to facilitate, each other's communication needs" (p.461). To test the level of interactivity on magazine websites, one would have to look at how the editors and audience interact and fulfill each other's needs. The clear purpose of interactivity is exchange (Haeckel, 1998). Wang (2011) concluded that, “The evolving field of digital media is presenting new opportunities to generate higher engagement with magazine readers. This is because

higher interactivity manifested by a mobile magazine increases message involvement and attitude” (p.72).

Jensen (1998) discusses that interactivity is the amount of control that a media allows its audience to “influence” their content. Wang (2011) found that, “Message involvement initiated by interactivity can be influential since it serves as a mediating factor that transfers the interactivity effect into stronger attitude toward a mobile magazine” (p.72). Bezjian-Avery, Calder and Iacobucci (1998) reviewed interactive systems and found that consumers now have the ability to influence content by requesting or sending in information. Schumann, Artis and Rivera (2001) pointed out that the consumer makes the decision to interact, so interactivity is a trait of the consumer not the media entirely. Interactivity changed the media’s one-way flow of communication and made it a conversation (Chung, 2008). The purpose of Chung’s study was to find concise media interactivity categories, which readers use each category and the factors for using each of them.

Interactivity is essential to this study to see how both editors and readers evolved to use the interactive platforms of both Facebook and Twitter. Chung (2008) found that multimedia on the newspapers site is not being used to its fullest extent. Most importantly the study found that users who were more experienced and confident with their skills with the Internet used more multimedia aspects of the website.

### **Diffusion of Innovations**

Since this study is focused on the evolution of *Pittsburgh Magazine’s* Facebook and Twitter social media channels, the findings were analyzed through the theoretical framework of diffusion of innovations. Rogers (2003) explained that, “diffusion is the

process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system.” Rogers describes innovation as, “an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption.” Rogers also explains that innovations have a particular set of characteristics: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability. According to Oldenburg and Glanz (2008) the key question for the relative advantage asks, “is the innovation better than what was there before?” Compatibility asks, “does the innovation fit the intended audience?” Complexity is used to find, “is the innovation easy to use?” Trialability asks, “can the innovation be used before making a decision to adopt?” Observability asks, “Are the results of the innovation visible and easily measurable?” (p.319). Rogers describes time by the innovation-decision process; its five steps are knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation.

Diffusion of agricultural innovations studies how farmers are exposed to new methods and pinpoints reasons for low productivity (Ali, Jan, & Anwar, 2011). Ali et. Al. (2011) found that income and education were important factors when deciding to adopt agricultural innovations. Kim (2008) concluded that in any area of innovation, “gaining awareness of these trends will represent only half of the job at hand. Remaining flexible and open-minded to change organizationally to take act upon these trends will be the other half (p.312).”

### **Research questions**

The research questions were formed under the theoretical framework of diffusion of innovations.

**RQ 1:** How did the editors of *Pittsburgh Magazine* evolve to use Facebook and Twitter?

**RQ 2:** How did the *Pittsburgh Magazine* readership community evolve to use *Pittsburgh Magazine*'s Facebook and Twitter pages?

**RQ 3:** What suggestions does the *Pittsburgh Magazine* readership community have on how to further enhance the qualities and functionalities of *Pittsburgh Magazine*'s Facebook and Twitter pages?



## Chapter 3: Methodology

Performing an on-site single-case study of *Pittsburgh Magazine* was the best opportunity to explore and understand the publications digital process. Editor Cindi Lash and vice president Betsy Benson gave permission to do this study in the spring of 2014. This study focused on a thorough examination of *Pittsburgh Magazine's* social media channels, specifically Facebook and Twitter. It aimed to learn about the evolution of the magazine's social media innovation from the perspective of the editors and the readers. This study consisted of in-depth interviews with editors and readers. The study was conducted from January to April 2014, at their office, Washington's Landing 600 Waterfront Drive, Suite 100 Pittsburgh, PA 15222. It required access to the staff for interviews and contact information for the magazine's print and digital subscribers. Interviews with the staff were done at the office. Phone interviews with readers were conducted outside of the office.

### Interviews

The case study began in January starting with in-depth interviews from select staff members who are highly involved with digital content at the magazine. Interviews with the staff of *Pittsburgh Magazine* concentrated on their decision process when it came to adapting Facebook and Twitter social media channels to their business.

In alphabetical order, the people that interviewed were:

- Cindi Lash, editor
- Sean Conboy, online editor
- Leah Krenn, marketing director

Each of these face-to-face interviews was an hour long at the *Pittsburgh Magazine* office. These semi-structured interviews had predetermined questions, but allotted time for introduction of new questions not anticipated by the researcher. The interview began with the list of pre-developed questions that were structured in terms of the research questions the study presumed to answer. These questions were asked with an adaptable agenda with available time to ask impromptu sub-questions.

After interviews with the staff were conducted, a sample of the *Pittsburgh Magazine* readership community was chosen for phone interviews. This sample was chosen through random purposive sampling from its two main groups of readers: print subscribers and digital. According to the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Media Kit. (n.d.): the magazine has 39,792 paid subscriptions, 2,732 digital subscriptions, 22,720 twitter followers and 9,888 Facebook likes. The final selection of participants were determined through random purposive sampling of these subgroups. According to Creswell, J. W. (2009) purposive sampling chooses participants who “will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (p.178). The magazine provided phone numbers and e-mail addresses of print and digital subscribers to contact.

The number of interviews selected was justified through Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) research, “key informants” chosen are a small sub-sample of individuals who were selected from the overall grouping of research participants. Morse (1994) (as cited in Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2007) explained that qualitative researchers need a minimum of six participants, “where the goal is to understand the essence of experience.” Kuzel (1992) as cited in Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2007) recommend 6 to 8 data sources are chosen for homogeneous samples and the 12-20 overall are necessary. For this study 9

participants were chosen from paid subscriptions and digital subscriptions. A total of 18 reader interviews were conducted. These interviews aimed to find out more about their user experience with *Pittsburgh Magazine*'s Facebook and Twitter pages.

To guide the interviews, the researcher moderated the interviewee's answers using Whyte's (1982 p. 112) scale of directiveness. Following Whyte's research on interviews, the researcher did not interrupt the interviewee accidentally. Interruptions were reserved for keeping the conversation on point, pertaining only to the focus of the research question. The semi-structured interviews allowed for spontaneous exchange of information with the possibility of retaining information that wasn't previously conceived before. It also provided structure and direction when necessary. It's important for the researcher to speak in terms the subjects will understand by removing research jargon. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994 p.371), "The use of language and specific terms is important for creating a 'sharedness of meanings' in which both interviewer and respondent understand the contextual nature of the interview." It was imperative to not make assumptions during the interview and have the interviewee expand on and clarify answers that aren't easily understandable by the researcher. Interview questions were short and specific allowing the most possible time for long answers from the interviewee.

This study followed some specific guidelines for interviewing from Denzin and Lincoln (1994 p. 364) to keep the researchers biases out of their questioning process:

- "Never get involved in long explanations of the study; use standard explanation provided."
- "Never deviate from the study introduction, sequence of questions, or question wording."
- "Never suggest an answer or disagree with an answer. Do not give the respondent any idea of your personal views on the topic of the question or survey."

- “Never interpret the meaning of a question; just repeat the question and give instructions or clarifications.”

The interview was recorded on two separate devices in case of any technical malfunction.

The researcher also took notes on a notepad to write down key points of the interview.

The researcher attempted to take those notes inconspicuously, aiming to avoid distracting the interviewee.

### **Participant Observation**

With the researcher interning at *Pittsburgh Magazine* during the length of the research, she had access to the staff to observe the magazine’s digital production. The second part of the case study involved a participant observation at *Pittsburgh Magazine* from January to April. The researcher observed the digital production process at the office, and had the opportunity to ask questions during the observation. The researcher kept a journal during the study recording observations that pertained to the digital process. These semi-structured notes pertained to the research questions and followed a particular observational protocol but also allowed room for further observation when necessary.

The observational protocol required information logs in the journal to begin with the date, time and place of observation. They also included descriptions of office setting, conversations, accounts of events, etc. The notes allowed space for reflective thoughts of the observation, which included impressions of the situation. Notes were primarily written during the observation time at the magazine but were also written outside of the work environment. It was important that the researcher allowed large blocks of time to write down more detailed recollections of events that occurred. The research used the chronological recall strategy as well as highlight incidents that stood out.

## **Analysis**

This single case study is limited to findings on this particular magazine. The findings will not necessarily directly apply to any other magazine. To make sure that the findings were indeed valid and reliable, a variation of methods was developed. Through two units of in-depth analyses (interviews with editors and readers as well as participant observation) the data was broad enough to learn about the organization from a variety of different forms. The semi-structured interviews at the beginning of the study helped the research provide a clear view of how the *Pittsburgh Magazine* staff adapted to Facebook and Twitter and examined their goals and adaptation experience. The interviews with the *Pittsburgh Magazine* readership community provided reader insight as to how they adapted to *Pittsburgh Magazine*'s Facebook and Twitter pages. The interviews also asked the *Pittsburgh Magazine* readership community for suggestions on how to further enhance their experience using *Pittsburgh Magazine*'s Facebook and Twitter pages. The participant observation filled the gaps of research that the interviews didn't provide.

This study prepared for the ethical concerns of the human participants, which according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) involve "topics of informed consent (consent received from the subject after he or she has been carefully and truthfully informed about the research), right to privacy (protecting the identity of the subject) and protection from harm (physical, emotional, or any other kind)"(p.372).

The interview data was analyzed through the lens of diffusion of innovations theory. This theory guided the questions being asked throughout the duration of interviews. The topic for the interviews with editors focused on the social media innovation culture of *Pittsburgh Magazine*. The reader interviews had two main topics:

their personal adaptation to *Pittsburgh Magazine's* Facebook and Twitter pages and their suggestions on how to further enhance their experience on those social media pages. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) establishing rapport may lead to more informed research during the course of study. The questions were organized by Rogers (2003) innovations categories of characteristics: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability.

The field notes from the participant observation were analyzed through open-coding according to Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995), where the researcher applies the data to a line-by-line analysis to identify and formulate any and all ideas. This form of coding allowed the chance to review all documents instead of predetermined topics. At the start of data analysis the researcher wrote initial memos on particular phenomena, topics or categories found in the interview and participant observation transcripts.

Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995 p.146) list questions that are useful when analyzing field notes:

- “What are people doing? What are they trying to accomplish?”
- “How, exactly, do they do this? What specific means and/or strategies do they use?”
- “How do members talk about, characterize, and understand what is going on?”
- “What assumptions are they making?”
- “What do I see going on here? What did I learn from these notes?”
- “Why did I include them?”

The memos lead to integrative memos as the final data was reviewed. The integrative memos linked overall themes from the interviews to the rest of the research.

Implementing a variation of methods verified that the research questions would be successfully answered. Each method was designed in order to help answer the questions

of the study. The researcher identified overall themes between the two methods of data collection to answer the research questions. To keep personal views and biases out of the study, the researcher used the random purposive sampling method where individuals chosen would best help answer interview questions and research questions.

## Chapter 4: Findings

This case study focused on answering three questions: How did the editors of *Pittsburgh Magazine* evolve to use Facebook and Twitter? How did the *Pittsburgh Magazine* readership community evolve to use *Pittsburgh Magazine*'s Facebook and Twitter pages? What suggestions does the *Pittsburgh Magazine* readership community have on how to further enhance the qualities and functionalities of *Pittsburgh Magazine*'s Facebook and Twitter pages?

The research questions were formed under the theoretical framework of diffusion of innovations. The interview questions asked were organized by Rogers (2003) innovation characteristics: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability.

### **How did the editors of *Pittsburgh Magazine* evolve to use Facebook and Twitter?**

*Pittsburgh Magazine* joined Facebook and Twitter in January 2009. The magazine started recording analytics in January 2011. At that time the magazine had 2,387 likes on Facebook and 5,902 followers on Twitter. In January of 2014 the magazine had 9,888 Facebook likes and 22,720 Twitter followers. The magazine editors restrict the number of Facebook posts to once or twice a day while on Twitter they have the opportunity to post more frequently.

*Pittsburgh Magazine* editors adapted to Facebook and Twitter to reach new communities the print edition couldn't. Editors learned how to read and utilize analytics to reach the magazine readership effectively by posting topics that had previous success. On both Facebook and Twitter the magazine had to: adapt headlines for SEO, create



blogs for all interests, find a unique online voice, learn when and how much to post. The magazine also had to upgrade its website to HTML 5 for the increase in mobile users due to the new social traffic. *Pittsburgh Magazine* measures the results of using Facebook and Twitter by: new users, individual post effectiveness, referral traffic, traffic driven to the website for longer periods of time and post reach vs. engagement.

A majority of the *Pittsburgh Magazine* staff is focused on the print magazine, while only a minority is focused on the digital editions. That split is shifting as the magazine focuses on and moves ahead with various digital projects planned for the future. Publisher and Vice President Betsy Benson's responsibilities vary, depending on projects underway and their status; she is very engaged in the daily digital operation, as she is in all aspects of the magazine. The editorial staff has four editors (three associates and editor Cindi Lash), the Art Director and Assistant Designer and one part-time fact-checker. Editors' duties are roughly 60 percent print 40 percent digital split. That number is deceptive because much of the magazine's content is dual-purpose. Each associate editor has separate but overlapping responsibilities for digital content. In addition to their writing and editing duties (which involves print content that ultimately goes online), all participate in editing the 412 blog each day.

The associates also contribute to the 412 blog occasionally. The associates all have different web obligations; Lauren Davidson oversees the GottaHaveIt blog and sometimes web extras; Kristina Martin writes Eat Street and edits web extras; Sean Collier writes and reviews film and edits both After Dark and PMWeekend; and they all edit each other for second reads. Cindi Lash also does second edits on posts from Leah Krenn, PittGirl and Pulling No Punches, and on every newsletter and After Dark post.

Online editor Sean Conboy is a special case because a majority of his duties relate to digital content. He is also the sports editor and focuses 10-15 percent of his time on that.

Marketing director, Leah Krenn and marketing assistant Michelle Bradbury have a mix of both print and online duties. Pertaining to edit, their print roles are relatively limited; they contribute the content for the Scene pages and the house ads. Their role is broader for online — they handle much of the social media as well as coordinate the distribution of the three newsletters, Great Minds, Eat Street and PMWeekend.

At present, *Pittsburgh Magazine* has around 14 people working under arrangements to produce specific content each month — for Datebook, Scoop, Dine and columns (PittGirl and Sebak.) For the most part, their content is aimed to appear first in print and is replicated in its entirety online. There are some exceptions. Virginia Montanez/PittGirl, who in addition to her monthly print column also writes about four separate blog posts each month. New contributor Hal B. Klein, will be writing a new monthly food column but also will be contributing separate posts each month to the new weekly “The Best Blog.” Brazen Kitchen blogger Leah Lizarondo writes weekly posts and produces occasional videos, but she also writes occasionally for print as a one-shot freelancer. She also will be contributing to “The Best Blog.” Photographer Dave DiCello, whose work is primarily and frequently used on pittsburghmagazine.com, occasionally does a separate freelance job for print (which later ends up online as well.) There’s also Sean Conboy’s Pulling No Punches blog.

The magazine’s number of freelancers is never the same month-to-month, but it can be anywhere from three to eight. Their work almost always is aimed at appearing in print and being replicated in its entirety in the digital edition. Most of them are writing

the same content for both the print and digital issues. It's roughly 50-50. A few notable exceptions include: Mike May, who often writes a longer exhibits column for web, Dave Cole, who produce's videos of the Rubber Duck, the Holiday Lights and the St. Patrick's Day parade, and intern online exclusives.

Cindi Lash, Sean Conboy and Leah Krenn work as the core digital team at *Pittsburgh Magazine*. Lash, magazine editor, supervises social media posting and content management. Conboy, online editor, is in charge of everything in the Pittsburgh Magazine digital space and specializes in improving user experience. Krenn, marketing director, prepares e-newsletters and contributes to social media posting. Although the digital team is small, they all played roles that helped the magazine evolve to use social media.

**Cindi Lash.**

Cindi Lash became editor of *Pittsburgh Magazine* in April of 2013. Prior she worked as the regional editor for AOL Patch.com in Western Pennsylvania. At the magazine she is in charge of supervising the editorial, art and digital staff as well as performing a community outreach role. She is also a member of the senior leadership team. When asked if her duties have changed since she first acquired the job she responded, "No, I wouldn't, I mean they've grown or I've maybe reassessed what's involved." Lash explained more about her online role, "I am confident that my responsibilities and attention to digital are greater than the role involved prior to my arrival in April 2013, given the number of web initiatives we've started or expanded over the past year."

Lash uses Twitter technology to connect with magazine readers. Her personal Twitter account, CindiPGHMAG, is tailored to promote *Pittsburgh Magazine*.

I don't deal directly with our Facebook page. That falls more under marketing. Pinterest - I look to see what goes on there and I will suggest things. I see that as part of my role, social media part of it as far as content and the kinds of things we have out there. But I'm not the person who's actually doing the actual mechanics of posting it.

Her role with social media at the publication is more of supervision, content presentation and brand management.

**Sean Conboy.**

Sean Conboy started working full time for *Pittsburgh Magazine* in January of 2010 as an associate editor. He was also contributing a sports blog to the magazine six months prior. He then became online editor in May of 2011. Previous to that he worked as a communications associate at Bayer MaterialScience. At the magazine he is in charge of web development and design, posting print features and content to the website, sourcing, curating and editing blog posts including five e-newsletter blogs and the magazine's five blogs: Pulling No Punches, After Dark, Brazen Kitchen, Pitt Girl and the 412. A major part of his job is testing and improving user interface experience. Conboy controls about 60 percent of *Pittsburgh Magazine's* Facebook and Twitter posts while the rest is handed over to the marketing department.

Three years ago the magazine would upload print content on the website with one lead image. Conboy explains that recently, "were really trying to make our features sing and make them something that's really value added and a good online experience."

During the summer of 2013 the magazine upgraded to an HTML 5 website that is now

mobile responsive. The magazine's mobile audience is now above 45 percent and that's because of the large increase of social media traffic. "We will quite literally work backwards in design and try to figure out a layout and everything that works first for an iPhone and then for an iPad and then all the way up to a big 30 inch desktop monitor," he said.

When asked if his job duties have changed since he first got his job, he responded, "I don't know if they've changed so much as expanded in scope." His original arrangement with the magazine had him spending 50 percent of his time working as the online editor and the other 50 percent writing for the magazine. Since 2011 he has been working on growing *Pittsburgh Magazine's* daily content. To do that he realized he had to decide between writing as frequently and managing the site. He decided to spend more time on the website because it would benefit the publication more. Conboy mainly uses Facebook and Twitter to connect with readers and drive them to the website. The magazine's blogs are almost 100 percent driven by social media.

**Leah Krenn.**

Leah Krenn started working for *Pittsburgh Magazine* in October of 2011 as the marketing manager. In January of 2013 she was promoted to marketing director. Previously she worked as a development specialist for the non-profit Easter Seals Western PA. A large portion of her responsibilities at *Pittsburgh Magazine* are the events the publication hosts. The magazine has 15 events each year and they range from the Best Restaurants Party, which draws 2,300 people in attendance, to small receptions of 25 to 50 people.

She is also responsible for branding of the magazine from the business and the editorial sides and for the magazine's e-newsletters. She works with editorial team to get content, with the sales team to get ads and then puts them all together. She works with the designers on sales collateral, like media kits and sales sheets. Krenn also focuses her time on the promotion of new issues, the print magazine, the website, the social media channels and the magazine app. She calls her daily duties a "moving target."

When she was hired as marketing manager, she only had the resources to work on daily projects. She felt she never had time for projects that were more long term, getting a global perspective or thinking more about branding. In January of 2013 Krenn was promoted to marketing director and the magazine had the opportunity and the resources to hire a marketing assistant. With this new help, the assistant can focus on daily projects while Krenn can think about the bigger picture for the magazine. Specifically she has been able to work more on branding and circulation.

At the magazine she uses e-newsletters, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and e-mail to connect with the magazine's readers. The magazine has used Groupon as well to interest readers to buy tickets for magazine events and magazine subscriptions. The magazine has also done external advertising on radio through partnerships with Clear Channel stations and KQV, WESA, WYP public radio stations. Krenn explained that the magazine has also experimented with Text SMS messaging for contests at magazine events.

### **Social Media Opportunity**

Cindi Lash felt that the using social media was better than the technology *Pittsburgh Magazine* had available before because, "it reaches different communities".

We have an unusual or unique audience situation in that initially the magazine was a vehicle or an arm of WQED the public television station here. And so years ago a significant portion of the audience was driven or was comprised of people who were WQED members and patrons. If you donated to WQED you got a subscription and if you were a patron, somebody who watched their programming, the magazine did and still continues to run programming schedules. Same thing with the classical musical station.

An innovation's relative advantage to past technology is one characteristic of Rogers theory. The relative advantage of social media for the magazine was the opportunity for new readers. A Pew Research study found that, "Americans over 50 are still somewhat less likely to consume news digitally as those under 50: about 43% of those aged 50 to 64 get some form of digital news yesterday compared with 60% of the younger age groups," (Saseen et al., 2013). Pittsburgh's current audience is comprised of those members who have aged with the publication, but the magazine wants to use social media to reach a new younger that the print edition couldn't. "We try very hard to represent what's cool and interesting and vital about Pittsburgh," Lash said.

Were going to be more likely to reach the newer constituency of people, younger people, without trying to be ageist or anything about it. But we're more likely to reach them through social media and specifically with Facebook than we are likely to reach the people who are coming to us to get the classical music schedule for WQED.

Pittsburgh Magazine's readership community has a pretty significant split in age and interests. "What we're doing online vs. print now is just two totally different things for sure," Sean Conboy said. Conboy explained that while most print articles translate well to readers on the web, around 20 percent of print articles are hindered by a timeliness factor or are difficult to display properly on the web. Therefore, the blogs fill

its readers' daily news needs. The magazine tailored its Facebook and Twitter page for a busy, professional, socially-active audience, posting city centric things like, “what is the best thing I can do in Pittsburgh today.” The magazine’s blogs were created for people with diverse interests in Pittsburgh to have something to relate with when scrolling through the Pittsburgh Magazine social media pages. For example, the 412 blog highlights the most "awesome" thing about Pittsburgh on a given day for a time-strapped audience. It covers the best of Pittsburgh. It posts about local news, events and pop culture bits that relate to the city. Rogers theory implies that the innovation should fit the intended audience. In this case, editors found Facebook and Twitter compatible to their publication, but they had to take multiple steps to adapt to each platform.

### **Magazine Website Evolution for Social Media**

*Pittsburgh Magazine* re-launched the pittsburghmagazine.com site in January of 2010 because of the separation from WQED broadcasting. That was the first year of the magazine’s social media and not a lot of time or effort was put into web development. When Sean Conboy took over as online editor in May 2011, he revamped the site and the social media channels. He pointed out what blogs weren’t working, changed the tone for a digital audience and launched new ones. “First we had to develop content and we had to get our raw uniques up. We had to get content that was more crafted for an online audience,” Conboy said. After the blog revamp, the number of social media followers went up as well.

I guess the biggest criticism I had of where we were at before was that regardless of staff, the voice was not where it needed to be for a digital audience. It wasn’t dynamic enough. It was too much a print voice. But I think that’s my proudest accomplishment is trying to push us more towards a more progressive, funny, interesting voice.



*Pittsburgh Magazine's* blogs are the main developer of community readers and interaction on social media.

The Pittsburgh Magazine website at the time of the re-launch in 2010 was not mobile friendly. The magazine found as social media numbers grew, the site experience was barely useable to mobile readers. This made it hard for readers to travel from the Facebook page to the website, which was a huge problem for the magazine. The advertisements and images didn't scale for phones and readers had to double tap into the text. Ease of use is one criterion Rogers singles out and because Pittsburgh Magazine's site wasn't built to handle mobile readers, it inspired a complete makeover. This prompted the June 2012 change to the upgraded HTML 5 mobile responsive site. "I think that was the key when we upgraded and made a more mobile friendly site. That really dovetailed with more social shares for us," Conboy said. He found that the magazine's Facebook and Twitter readers positively responded to the drastic change.

Conboy said that if Twitter or Facebook didn't exist the magazine probably wouldn't have brought on the sustainable foodie blog, Brazen Kitchen. For that matter the 412 blog wouldn't exist either because of the lack of demand for that daily content. Because of Twitter *Pittsburgh Magazine* shaped its blogs and print articles to get the most attention. The magazine has become very reactionary to social media analytics. "Even when we're planning print features now, it's asking ourselves that question. Does this work in 140 characters?" Conboy said. The editors do this to please their growing audience and to entice more people to share content.

## **Facebook**

Overall *Pittsburgh Magazine* editors want the Facebook page to be a place for Pittsburghers to value. The value could hold something the reader didn't know before, something they're interested in or an opportunity to win something. "Facebook is now the social bread and butter for us; Twitter is almost secondary," said Conboy.

The magazine uses Facebook to further connect with its audience by having an ongoing conversation with them online. On this specific platform Lash explained that they use audience responses "to tell us what they want and to tell us what they'd like to see." Lash explained:

It's a community-building thing and we really want to build more of that community -- that those people care about what we do and tell us what they like and presumably will read us and continue to read us and benefit our advertisers and spread the word about who we are and what we do.

In his theory, Rogers suggests that that the innovation should have a relative advantage. Krenn felt that using Facebook was a better technology than anything *Pittsburgh Magazine* had before because of "the opportunity for immediate feedback." Because the magazine is traditionally a monthly publication, this technology gave the editors the opportunity to provide content on a daily basis and strengthen their connection with the audience. Krenn explained how Facebook not only strengthened the magazines voice but also its relationship with readers:

Facebook is personal, more personal than Twitter in my opinion because it's kind of unsolicited. When it's appearing on your feed, it's almost like being invited into your home. Just like we consider our magazine being invited into the homes of our subscribers.

*Pittsburgh Magazine* values that its readers chose to receive information from them. “We do not sell sponsorships for advertising on our social media channels, which you know is kind of a grey area these days,” Krenn said. Magazine editors feel that because readers chose to like the page, the magazine has made sure to protect its readers from over posting.

Although the magazine now has immediate feedback, it also has a difficult time with community management. Conboy believes the magazine has a resource problem when it comes to the amount of people and the amount of time they can put into digital technologies. Although they would love to grow their digital staff, they currently don’t have the resources. Conboy explained that the main issue is being “reactive now instead of proactive.” If there is a problem or someone complains about a post on Facebook, someone on the staff will fix it. The magazine doesn’t do a lot of proactive contests to reach the local community. *Pittsburgh Magazine* doesn’t currently have the resources to be proactive instead of reactive.

### **Magazine Adaption to Facebook.**

Conboy explained that one of the first things that the editors realized was that the old magazine headlines didn’t work for social media. Rogers theory mentions that innovation compatibility analyzes how the innovation fits the intended audience. The print headlines that the magazine is using now wouldn’t be used online anymore because they aren’t what people are looking to read on Facebook.

You know whereas two years ago I may have called something by a catchy three-word title that was maybe a metaphor to the post or something like that, I would never do that now. For example, my last post the title was “For the love of God lets start being honest about concussions”. That was a very calculated decision to

start it with “for the love of God” because I thought on social that would immediately catch people’s attention.

The magazine also does classic BuzzFeed type posts such as, “17 Vintage Photos of the Steel City Old.” This is a number posting strategy the magazine uses but tries to use sparingly to keep variety on its Facebook page. Headlines are one of the things the magazine does to show its uniqueness in a reader’s Facebook stream.

The magazine also uses the new Facebook image display to stand out in readers streams. Conboy makes sure when posting on this platform that he edits the photos according to the Facebook ratio so that images won’t be cut off. Before any editing takes place, he takes time to identify which photo will work best and catch the most attention.

It’d be harder to measure the results, but it really seems like something that’s so vital. I think the image is almost more important than the title at this point -- just with how people flick through their stream, especially on mobile.

*Pittsburgh Magazine* has adapted to this relatively new Facebook image display technology to not only keep the quality of its product but to also catch more viewers on mobile.

Lash felt that Facebook fit *Pittsburgh Magazine* well, but she monitors for over posting and spam.

You don’t want to be hitting people over the head with things. You don’t want to be just spamming them with stuff. Twitter is like a river. You can throw things in Twitter and it’s gone in thirty seconds and you can throw it out there again. But Facebook, you just don’t want to be torturing people; you want to give them something that’s interesting and will catch their attention. But you don’t want to hit them over the head saying ‘read me,’ ‘read me,’ ‘love me,’ ‘love me’.

The magazine is extremely careful about the amount of times and what times it posts daily. Conboy explained that the magazine tends to posts at peak times: 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. during the week and much later on the weekend around 10 p.m.

Rogers identifies an innovations ease of use as complexity, Krenn explained that the magazine is ever adapting to Facebook to continue to find the best practices. “I think that we continue to evolve our Facebook strategy. Based on the algorithm on Facebook first and foremost, just like Google, they’re always changing what sticks and how many eyeballs you are getting on something,” Krenn said. The magazine will usually post once a day on Facebook because of the changing algorithm. This algorithm penalizes pages that post things that don’t receive enough likes, comments and shared. “We’ve been successful in the shares and likes, specifically because we try to keep it small as far as how much were sharing a week,” Conboy said.

The magazine’s strategy recently added the investment of Facebook-sponsored content. Although the magazine has run a few limited paid campaigns, it has had some positive results. Primarily the magazine has used it to promote its iPad app and viral content. It has not used it for sidebar ads or “like” campaigns.

I think we will increase it just because our kind of dipping our toes in the water have their tangible results and the good thing about Facebook is you know its hard to judge how many eyeballs see a billboard, but we know exactly how many eyeballs see a post on our Facebook stream.

Overall, she would like to see the magazine’s page views grow organically, but by boosting posts it gives *Pittsburgh Magazine* the chance to grow faster.

### **Facebook Analytics.**

Krenn wants to use Facebook to further connect with the audience by keeping a careful eye to analytics. “I think just simply by monitoring things, posts that we post, and seeing how successful they are gives us data that we never really had before or at least as much data as we’ve ever had before,” Krenn said. While previously magazine editors had to wait to get e-mails, letters or calls to receive feedback, they now can receive almost instant feedback on Facebook.

Lash said that what the magazine posts is mainly based on what readers are currently having conversations about and what they responded to previously. “We’re monitoring the performance all the time so that it’s continuing to evolve our choices,” Krenn said. The magazine learns more about the reader by trial and error and monitoring the success of posts. If stories can’t be distilled down into “here’s why you need to click in 140 characters,” then it shouldn’t be used online. Conboy explained:

It’s like computer learning; you do this enough and it almost becomes self-evident. You start writing a headline and you’re like, this is not going to hit cause I know what’s hit before. And this headline’s not going to work. This image isn’t going to work.

Visible and easily measurable results is a fundamental objective for innovation in Rogers theory. Conboy pointed out that in analytics, he observes a range of results and pointed out a significant difference between likes and shares vs. page views.

It’s like the things that people click on sometimes are very hot but the bounce rate is very high and, the share rate is low. You can come up with an enticing headline, you can lead the horse to water, but you can’t make them drink or you don’t know how long they’re going to drink for. They may read your headline, but then if they bounce, what’s the point? You get a page view ok, but your bounce rate is going up. Your time on page is going down and that’s not worth it at all.

Krenn said that the magazine measures individual posts to see how effective they are. The magazine does pay attention to page likes, but editors do not have an overall goal number. Cindi Lash receives Facebook analytic reports to keep her updated on the magazine's page results. "The likes are growing; the shares is still one thing were really working on," Lash said. She explained that the magazine needs to post content on social media to make readers feel "somebody else really needs to see this." She explained that overall she ends up paying more attention to the website analytics than the social media analytics.

We don't really have the time. Again this is a contrast for me in my last job. The people who worked for me were very aggressively tasked with having Facebook pages pegged to their websites on which they were to have this ongoing conversation with their community.

*Pittsburgh Magazine* does not have the manpower to engage with its community on a 24/7-time span. Lash questioned if that was really the magazine's main focus.

You know we do more daily things and more weekly things but essentially we're still pretty much a monthly publication. So are we, are we having a daily conversation with our readers? No, we're not. Should we? We probably should be having more of it. But realistically, I mean we work with the limits of our resources and I think we do a pretty good job of juggling them and frankly really stretching them.

The magazine is currently unable to have an ongoing dialogue with its audience. With its current staff they are limited to the amount of time each person has available to focus on digital content.

Conboy believes that the most important thing is creating a good experience on social to strengthen the relationship with the magazine's digital readers. There is no "magic formula" for sharing content. "It's how good the content is. You might as well go back to when your writer was first pitching the concept because all news anymore - shareability is how good the article is," Conboy said.

### **Facebook Goals.**

Conboy said that Facebook is a main driver of traffic to the website. The magazine's goal is to keep that Facebook traffic on the website for longer periods of time.

We want to maintain a time on page of above 3 minutes; that's really important to us. But the second most important thing, more important to us now than likes is how many people are sharing it. Cause our biggest hits come from when you have a really high share percentage.

The 412 blog often gets not only reader likes but also shares because of its daily content. Through the network effect, by likes and shares, the magazine could grow the total number that can view the post and like the page. Conboy said:

I'm just happy seeing that referral traffic coming from Facebook being very high no matter what. As long as that continues to grow, that means people from everywhere, or even if they don't like our Facebook page, they're reading our content and sharing with their friends on Facebook and that's huge for us.

Cindi Lash explained that the goal for the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page has two parts: to drive traffic to the website and to spur interest in the print content. "So I want it to drive web traffic, but I would also hope that perhaps it drives people back to our print content because, frankly, print is still king, print is really important to us," she said.



Krenn feels that the main goal for Facebook is to drive traffic back to pittsburghmagazine.com. By building the audience on the magazine website, it could be a steady revenue stream for the publication. She explained that those efforts will also help with branding and establishing the magazine in the community. “The magazine is in our 45th year so certainly you have to think about staying on your toes and not getting stale, not being your parents or your grandparents magazine,” Krenn said. Facebook gives the magazine the opportunity to reach new audiences that the print magazine couldn’t reach before.

Conboy said that the goals for the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page should revolve around growing the total audience numbers. He said people will like and share articles but not like the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page. The staff doesn’t know how to grow that number but they have a few ideas. Conboy thinks that they should have more contests and pay for page promotions through Facebook. The big problem is that they can’t take initiative with their lack of staff resources.

## **Twitter**

The relative advantage of Twitter compared to Facebook for *Pittsburgh Magazine* is that this platform is “less intrusive”. One of the main benefits is that it can deliver more news at a faster rate and helps the magazine editors receive more news about the area. “So not only is it valuable to us from an output perspective, we also use it from an input perspective,” Krenn said. The magazine editors now have the opportunity to monitor local businesses, public figures, clients and competitors through this social media channel. They can also find out more about their readership audience just by watching what’s trending in the area.

*Pittsburgh Magazine* editors post more frequently on Twitter but still keep in mind the fine line between informing and annoying the reader when posting at a higher rate. “Certainly I think it’s a little bit more conversational than Facebook, it breaks down barriers, but at the same time it’s less intrusive,” Krenn said.

With Twitter being an interactive platform, Conboy would like to use it to talk with readers directly to further connect the magazine with the audience. He admits there are a lot of opportunities to do this but they don’t have the resources to do it properly.

Conboy explained:

Some of the best personalities in Pittsburgh, like Mikey and Big Bob, are the Kiss FM DJs and they promote their own stuff on their Kiss FM blog. But a lot of their stuff is just really goofy, funny, cool stuff. Now they’re individual personalities so it’s a lot easier to do that. How do you do that with a brand? It’s tricky right?

He noted that a lot of National Hockey League teams are using Twitter for branding. He specifically noted that the Los Angeles Kings do a great job on social media because they tweet funny things that aren’t just linking back to LAKings.com. Conboy feels that their audience is eager to engage and share something to talk about; the magazine just needs to keep on coming up with creative ways to do so.

Cindi Lash found a creative way to connect with readers by using her personal Twitter account to further connect with the community. If she goes to a performance or restaurant she will tweet about it just to promote something about the city.

I think that keeps us out there in the forefront as people who are paying attention about what’s going on in the cultural scene, the restaurant scene, the stuff that is our beat and stuff that were tasked with covering and being knowledgeable about.

She feels that promoting events and restaurants in the city on Twitter is something that should be done on the magazine's account as well as her personal account tagged to the magazine. She encourages others on the staff to do so as well, "I think it shows some commitment that we really like what were doing and it puts that out into a wider circle of people who otherwise might not see it."

### **Magazine Adaption to Twitter.**

In Rogers theory, one characteristic of an innovation is compatibility. For *Pittsburgh Magazine*, Twitter wasn't an immediate fit. When *Pittsburgh Magazine* first started a Twitter account in 2011, the magazine was challenged with how to craft a voice for it. The magazine also had trouble figuring out what the audience wanted, especially because Twitter analytics weren't readily available. Through the misses and hits, Conboy learned what the magazine needed to do in the future on that channel. Currently the magazine is still trying to understand how to use the power of Twitter to gain more click throughs and referral traffic. Conboy explained that:

As far as the page goes, if you think about Twitter, hardly anyone is going to use specific Twitter pages anymore. You're just, you're a fish in the stream, right. So how can we capture people's attention in that infinite stream?

Pittsburgh Magazine editors learned that through the lead image feature new to Twitter, they can now stand out in that infinite stream. The magazine editors feel that photography is one of its strongpoints online and will help them generate more clicks. By adapting to the new teaser image option quickly on Twitter, the magazine editors found their own way to be unique from their competitors.

Krenn thought Twitter wasn't an immediately easy fit for *Pittsburgh Magazine*. Because the magazine tends to write more long form pieces, it was hard to adapt to the shorthand of Twitter. "So I think that has been and will continue to always be a challenge we have to adapt to," Krenn said. She compared Facebook to a magazine and Twitter to a 24-hour news broadcast.

Conboy said that *Pittsburgh Magazine's* Twitter approach is significantly different than its Facebook approach. One of the clear differences between the two social media outlets is the number of times the magazine feels comfortable posting to Twitter per day. Sean explained:

We've tried to increase the frequency of our Twitter postings to about 5 or 6 times a day, but obviously you know we only have so much content. We're not the *Post Gazette*; we don't have 10 news stories a day and also, we don't want to be spamming people with stuff that we don't think works.

No matter how many times the magazine posts, there must be an incentive to click. If the magazine writes everything the reader needs to know in the tweet, then the reader has no incentive to click the link. Conboy offers an example of:

When we revealed the Pittsburgher of the Year, we actually, I think maybe our first tweet actually said the Pirates were the Pittsburgher of the Year, we had a million re-tweets and a bunch of people favorited it. Well, actual click throughs on that were very disappointingly low.

In retrospect he feels it was because the post gave away the story. Although a Pirates fan might see it and favorite it, that fan really has no incentive to click. What does especially well on Twitter for the magazine is, "10 Best things to do in Pittsburgh" – a reoccurring

print feature that focuses on art and entertainment. “This always gets a ton, a ton on re-tweets, and I think it’s inherent in the nature of it; there’s a value proposition there,” Conboy said. The magazine is still trying to figure out what hits best on Twitter.

*Pittsburgh Magazine* is really trying to use Twitter technology in an entirely new way for the publication and its readers. Recently editors came up with the idea of a Twitter food truck tracker. Now this is a separate Twitter account that would hopefully get the magazine and local food trucks more attention online. The idea unfortunately was not as big of a hit as the editors expected due to a low reader following. Although it was a miss, this at least was an innovative idea to try and adapt to social media in a new way. Conboy wants to learn how to make it better or at least find more information as to why it’s not working. Conboy elaborated:

If we had a social media manager on staff, this is the thing that they would be devoted to. But as far as my gig, I mean there’s only - I can only devote about 10 percent of my time to these sort of queries.

Twitter has the potential to help the *Pittsburgh Magazine* digital readership grow but without proper staff, its growth is halted.

### **Twitter Analytics.**

The magazine helped readers adapt to its page by taking not only reader re-tweets and likes into consideration but also comments when deciding what to write and post about.

You can just hit re-tweet on stuff all day long too. I don't think that there's a whole lot of value added to that. It's better for us to actually have conversations with people. Have them tell us, 'yea I like this,' 'no I didn't like that.'

Reader responses help the magazine figure out what works and what doesn't. Conboy tailored the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page to its readers by using Twitter analytics. Rogers implies that innovation observability, shows the adopter visible and easily measurable results. Although Twitter did not always have page analytics openly available as quickly as Facebook, those analytics tell the story of the magazine's online readership. Sean explained in-depth what their audience looks like:

So we looked at Twitter and we saw that on Facebook we have more female followers than we have male followers. Well on Twitter we have more male followers than we have female followers. I can't remember the exact percentages, but that's a pretty significant thing to know about those two different audiences and how you may craft your messages on those two different platforms. But then we say on Twitter, the number 1 interest of our fans is the Penguins, even more than the Steelers, which I think a lot of people would find surprising. So what does that mean? Penguin fans are different than Steeler fans. Demographically, socioeconomically, they're a different kind of person. So obviously sports are going to be a big interest. But restaurants was up a couple times there for our Twitter followers. You can almost imagine this person, you start listing these attributes and you can see, this is new Pittsburgh vs. old Pittsburgh.

Through analytics the magazine gains a clear understanding of what its readers want and what subjects will make them engage with the magazine and fellow readers. Through success and failure, the editors of the magazine get a better view through analytics of what they need to post in the future.

Through analytics the magazine tracks the new monthly followers, total number of click-throughs and re-tweets. Pittsburgh Magazine measures the results of using Twitter by looking at the reach vs. engagements. Conboy said:

If we know in a month we had 2,000 re-tweets but ok then I'm going into Google Analytics and saying ok well that's 2,000 re-tweets but only 1,000 people have

come to our visits from referral traffic on Twitter. Well what happened there? Why is that the case? Why didn't we have 3,000 people vs. those 2,000 re-tweets. Why didn't the network effect hit? Why weren't people clicking through?

Through those numbers and a year of serious Twitter posting and looking for reactions, Conboy learned what's going to work and what's not.

Lash uses analytics to measure *Pittsburgh Magazine's* Twitter results. She would like to see more post re-tweets in the future to grow the amount of users that could potentially see their page. It means more to the magazine to see someone re-tweet a post because it essentially means "hey, this is can't miss stuff." Krenn explained that on Twitter the magazine is looking for re-tweets and the amount of engagement on posts. She prefers re-tweets to favorites because the exposure grows as well as the chance for clicks. She said that she does not put a high value on Twitter direct messages because of the high amount of spam and junk mail.

### **Twitter Goals.**

One goal Leah Krenn has for the magazine Twitter page is to have something trend. Getting more Twitter followers is more of a secondary goal for the magazine. Most importantly, just like Facebook, the editors would like to push more traffic back to [pittsburghmagazine.com](http://pittsburghmagazine.com). Krenn said that the magazine could do a lot more in this social media space:

Making sure that we're tagging people and maybe paying a little bit more attention to what is trending and what is going on. A goal for the future would be being a little bit quicker and more topical from news of the day.

This goal may have to wait until the magazine can support a staff member to focus solely on social media. She thinks the magazine is doing a decent job but has room to improve and be more engaged.

Conboy says the magazine's goal for Twitter is to double its followers in 2014.

I think we should do this organically through content. I think just that installed base, the network will get us there, but there are definitely things we could do to directly outreach, just to add more fun daily stuff that's not just our content.

This is a goal he had for the magazine for a few years, but he hasn't had someone on staff to devote to that task. He would like the magazine to start tweeting things that are Pittsburgh centric that don't necessarily link back to pittsburghmagazine.com. "With twitter I think more actual community outreach is something that is very necessary," Conboy said. Unlike Facebook which he feels will grow organically through shares, Twitter requires more time and effort to succeed. Lash's goal for Twitter and Facebook are ultimately the same: to engage readers, drive traffic to the website and encourage more interest in the print product.

### **How did the *Pittsburgh Magazine* readership community evolve to use *Pittsburgh Magazine's* Facebook and Twitter pages?**

For this study nine participants were chosen from print subscriptions and digital subscriptions. A total of 18 reader interviews were conducted. All nine print subscribers interviewed did not adapt to utilize *Pittsburgh Magazine's* Facebook and Twitter pages. Eight out of nine digital subscribers used Facebook. Two out of nine digital subscribers actively used Twitter.



The 9 digital subscribers evolved to use Facebook to seek out more information, although they would seek out breaking news from TV and newspaper pages more than *Pittsburgh Magazine* social media. They actively sought out and liked the page, but most don't seek information; instead they wait for posts to scroll through their feeds. The Facebook users share articles with others but also monitor the frequency of their posting to avoid annoying others. Some readers would like to receive more information from the page while others were satisfied.

The two digital subscribers evolved to use Twitter to seek more news compared to Facebook. The Twitter users rarely visit the page; they prefer to wait for posts on their feed. They actively refer the page for others to use without the Facebook sharing hesitation and often see their friends utilize the page. Readers thought the magazine was missing posts on breaking news and politics.

### **Print Subscribers**

Reasons why the print subscribers didn't use the magazine's social media pages were divided into two groups. The majority group, six out of nine, either disliked or hated the thought of using Facebook and Twitter. The print subscriber age range of those interviewed was from 25 to 75. The minority group, three out of nine, were confused and did not use either social media page. In his theory, Rogers reports that innovation compatibility is measured by how it fits the intended audience. These print subscribers did not adopt social media because they found the innovation to dissatisfy or confuse them.

#### **Dislike and Hate.**

Six out of nine print subscribers didn't use social media because they either didn't

like it or went to the extreme of hating it. One reader, Becky, said that she does not read the magazine online or on social media; she just likes reading the hard copy in the mail. “I’m not a tweeter or anything. I don’t like a lot of things on Facebook. It’s nothing against the magazine. I really enjoy *Pittsburgh Magazine* and I look forward to it every month” (Becky, 43). Sandra does not like to use Facebook or Twitter because of the opportunity reading the print edition gave her. “I like the printed edition cause I have time. That’s my relaxation” (Sandra, 69). This portion of the group gave the most positive answers and gave explanations as to why they wouldn’t evolve and adapt to social media. This technology wasn’t compatible to them because they still preferred the print edition.

The next portion of the group gave more negative answers as to why they wouldn’t use social media. Dennis explained that he preferred the printed copy but shut down when asked why he didn’t like social media or the magazine’s pages. “Do not do any of that. I don’t want to” (Dennis, 63). Jean said that she would not read anything other than the printed edition.

Yea; I think it’s a total waste of time. I wanna see what I’m doing. And I want to have it in context and I want to see it in color. On my lap. I’m old fashioned, I guess. It’s just a waste of my time to sit in a chair and watch a silly little screen. And I won’t do it, period. For anything. I won’t succumb to watching a little tiny screen. (Jean, 75)

Her answer mocked the new technology available. She expressed that she is a better person for not using it.

The last portion of the group expressed their feelings toward social media by using the word hate. William, 47, said that he used the print edition, but when asked if he

used the social media pages he replied, “absolutely not.” When pressed further he said that he “hated” Facebook but gave no reason as to why. Something pushed him to use a word as strong as hate, but also made him shut down when asked to explain more. Justin, 25, preferred the print edition because he didn’t want to “turn on” anything else. He said he didn’t use social media and he didn’t like it. When pressed for more reason as to why he said, “I don’t have Twitter; I don’t believe it’s right. I hate when people track where they are all the time. I don’t trust everything online. I trust print. Social media is out of the question for me.” This group has little chance of evolving to use social media because of their negative perception.

### **Confusion and Apprehension.**

Three participants of this group didn’t use *Pittsburgh Magazine* social media pages because of their confusion or apprehension. Complexity is used to find, “is the innovation easy to use?” James preferred the print edition but actually used the Internet (the magazine website) as a backup to the print edition when he needed more information. Although he does use the Internet, he is unsure of social media. “I don’t use social media for anything. I don’t even know how to do Twitter and Facebook and any of that stuff” (James, 69). He did evolve to use the Internet and the magazine website but then stopped because he didn’t have enough information to adapt to social media.

Chrisie evolved one step further and learned how to use both Facebook and Twitter. Although she used both channels, she had no knowledge of the magazine’s social media pages. “I didn’t know that that existed. I didn’t know they had a Facebook page” (Chrisie, 35). The magazine’s lack of information to print subscribers about digital channels slowed her evolution to use those pages. Although she had no prior knowledge

about them, she was eager to learn more and use the pages, “I’m gunna find out about them now” (Chrisie, 35). Her prior adaptation made her more open to new adaptation.

Carol used both Facebook and Twitter but didn’t like the magazine’s pages for a different reason than Chrisie’s. “The more things I like, the more things pop up on my page that I’m not interested in following on a daily basis” (Carol, 53). She did adapt to use social media, but prior experience halted her from adapting to the magazine’s pages. If she had adapted to the pages, she would have realized that the magazine does not post too frequently, especially on Facebook.

### **Digital Subscribers**

Eight out of nine digital subscribers used the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page. Only two out of the nine digital subscribers use the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page. The digital subscriber age range of those interviewed was from 33 to 54. Compatibility is one adaption characteristic Rogers uses to find if the innovation fit the intended audience. All nine digital subscribers were asked which way they preferred to get news from *Pittsburgh Magazine*: the print edition, website, blog, Facebook or Twitter. In total five digital subscribers found Facebook to be the most compatible while three picked the website and only one chose Twitter.

#### **Facebook.**

The *Pittsburgh Magazine* readers surveyed utilized Facebook for local news, to read Virginia Montes’ Pitt Girl articles, to find places to eat and to shop. A majority of the users relied on the magazine for information on local restaurants and felt they received the right amount of information from the page. Overall they weren’t overwhelmed about the amount of information they received although a minority would

like to see the magazine post more frequently. Readers often saw their friends using the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page through their feed, and for some that's how they first found the page.

Readers liked the page because of a friend referral or because they were searching out news channels to follow in the area. Chastity, 33, liked the magazine on Facebook to keep up do date with news in the area. She didn't like having print editions lying around the house. "I think I probably did that as a way to condense all of my news feeds into one location without having something physical," (Chastity, 33). Jessica, 39, liked the magazine on Facebook because she went to the best restaurants party. The event gave her the knowledge of the magazine's social media channels. "That was my go ahead and do it" (Jessica, 39).

A majority of Facebook page users don't actually visit the page but instead wait for something to scroll through their newsfeed. Judy, 34, said that with her busy schedule she looks through her feed to find information about Pittsburgh but doesn't always have time to visit the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page. Barbra, 54, said she will seek out information from the page if she's coming into Pittsburgh for a Pitt football game or some other event downtown. "I'll specifically look to see if there's something particular going on in the city that I need to be aware of traffic wise or different activities, or places to stop and eat on our way home from the game" (Barbra, 54).

Overall readers found the Facebook page benefited them, although most couldn't recall a specific time. "You know things just kind of scroll through your Facebook feed and you like "oh that sounds cool" and you kind of forget where it comes from," (Chastity, 33). She can't remember a time reading a restaurant review then going to that

restaurant, but she did find the last feature on transportation useful. Jeff said that although the magazine doesn't have timely posts, it usually posts interesting things about Pittsburgh, which he reads and often shares with friends. Jessica, 39, likes the page better than other traditional news outlets in the area. "I feel like they definitely have a good hold on what's going on in Pittsburgh" (Jessica, 39).

A minority of readers felt that the *Pittsburgh Magazine* page wasn't a better place to receive information about Pittsburgh than any other news source. Those readers felt that the magazine wasn't very timely and rely on local newspapers and television stations for breaking news.

I don't necessarily think of *Pittsburgh Magazine* as like a news source. If there's something crazy going on in Pittsburgh, I would probably go to one of the TV channel pages before I would go to yours really. Breaking news type, if that makes sense. I think of you guys more as like a cultural news source. (Judy, 34).

Most readers didn't expect the magazine to have breaking news.

Facebook users don't often share articles with others unless they find it useful.

Melissa tries not to share on Facebook because she dislikes it when others overly share.

I know it sounds ridiculous talking about social media but I try to only share things that I feel are exceedingly important or quite honestly that are tied directly to my job. So when a client's work has an event and I'm sharing about it or asking people to attend or asking people to donate, I don't want them to see 5,000 things from me and then have my work thing be 5,001. (Melissa, 40).

Chastity, 33, said that she liked the page a few years ago and has been sharing articles frequently if she finds it useful for others. Jeff tends to share Pittsburgh centric articles.

Judy, 34, sometimes shares articles and tends to scroll through her feed in the evening but

most of the time it's random. Julie, 39, has never shared any articles; she expressed that it would have to be pretty impressive for her to share. Overall reader sharing seems random and based on personal interest and whether they want to share their personal interests with others.

### **Twitter.**

Two out of nine digital subscribers use the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page. Three out of the seven digital subscribers don't use Twitter. Jeff, 45, simply preferred Facebook. Julie, 39, said that she doesn't tweet. It's not that she wouldn't follow the magazine, she just isn't on Twitter. Barbra, 54, said that she did not use Twitter, "mainly cause I don't know how to use it." The lack of information she has on this type of social media prevents her from evolving to use it.

Four out of the seven digital subscribers have Twitter accounts but don't use their accounts actively. Chastity, 33, said that she has an account but never uses it so she never has a chance to look at the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page. Judy, 34, believes that she might follow *Pittsburgh Magazine* on Twitter, but she doesn't use that social media network very often.

Craig, 45, follows the magazine on Twitter but doesn't use that social media network as often as others. "It's something I can't keep open all the time. I usually check it first thing in the morning and maybe once later at night" (Craig, 45). Melissa does not follow the magazine on Twitter but does follow one of its bloggers, Virginia Montanez a.k.a Pitt Girl. "I tend to only follow people on Twitter not companies and magazines" (Melissa, 40).

Jessica, 39, decided to follow the magazine on Twitter as a news source to find more informational pieces. She uses Facebook almost solely to connect with her friends. Following the Twitter page benefited her because she tends to see more news posted by the magazine on Twitter compared to Facebook. She believed that the page was a good place to receive up to date information about Pittsburgh.

Michele, 41, has personal Twitter account but only follows *Pittsburgh Magazine* on her business account. She decided to like the magazine on Twitter because she once had a subscription. When cutting back on print magazine subscriptions, she found the page a reliable reference as to what's going on in the city. Following the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page has benefited her by, “Just keeping me up to date with Pittsburgh pop culture happenings, new restaurants, things like that. Otherwise I probably wouldn’t know about it.” She also said that the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page is, “about the same” as any other news source in Pittsburgh.

Jessica, 39, followed the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page while she was at a *Pittsburgh Magazine* sponsored event. While she was at the “Best Restaurants” party she was prompted to follow its page on Twitter. She does not go to the page for information but instead waits to see posts scroll through her feed. She usually scrolls through her feed in the evening when she has more free time and refers other to follow the page as well.

Michele, 41, knows that she liked the page within the last three years and liked it to find more Pittsburgh specific news. She explained that she didn’t want “hard news.” She was looking for more information on culture spots and events in the area. She visits the Twitter page one a month on average, but usually waits for its links to scroll through her feed. She doesn’t look at Twitter at any normal reoccurring time of day because her



social media schedule scrolling times change constantly. She has referred the page for others to use, and confirms that she has re-tweeted articles in the past.

Jessica, 39, believes that the amount of information that she gets from the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page is “just right.” She couldn’t recall that the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page is missing anything that another news source might offer. She does remember seeing her friends utilize the page as well.

Michele’s opinion matched Jessica’s; she believed that the magazine’s Twitter page gives her enough information. “I don’t think they oversaturate like other accounts can, so I think it’s just enough” (Michele, 41). She believes the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page is missing the hard news that newspapers might offer. “What they lack would be your know breaking news, more news like about politics, and things like that. But I don’t think that that’s really what its meant to cover” (Michele, 41). She has seen friends and acquaintances share links from the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page.

**What suggestions does the *Pittsburgh Magazine* readership community have on how to further enhance the qualities and functionalities of *Pittsburgh Magazine*’s Facebook and Twitter pages?**

Most of the subscribers had trouble coming up with suggestions as to how to *Pittsburgh Magazine* should enhance its Facebook and Twitter pages. Only two responded with answers that would reply to technical aspects while the rest focused on content. Jeff, 45, believed that the magazine does not post enough on social media because he rarely sees it on through his feed. Another reader also had a comment on posting frequency but it was the opposite opinion of Jeff’s. “I’ve been pretty happy. I haven’t, I don’t believe I unfollowed them for posting too much” (Michele, 41). She

expressed that when certain Twitter accounts post the same link multiple times she tends to get frustrated and unfollow the said account.

The rest of the suggestions focused on content that they appreciate in the magazine and content that they want to see more of. Barbra, 54 likes the articles about little-known restaurants in Pittsburgh that the magazine features. “There’s little places in Pittsburgh that I would never know to think about stopping” (Barbra, 54). She values that the magazine continuously offers her new information about restaurants in her city. She also values information about weddings in Pittsburgh.

I do like to look at those to see where they are in different parts of the city. I do like that in, being that my daughter got married actually a year ago yesterday in Pittsburgh we like looking to see photographers, wedding cakes, etc. Venus’s things like that. (Barbra, 54).

Her prior experiences with that particular magazine content makes her constantly look for more.

Chastity, 33, a local writer, would like to see more writers featured in the magazine. “Feature local fiction writers or provide reviews of local authors. I don’t know, something like that I think would catch my attention” (Chastity, 33). She is partial to this content because she is a writer, but she said it’s something she looks for when she reads a magazine. Melissa, 40, would like to see more information on non-profits because she works for a nonprofit herself. Craig, 45, requested more information on local music and local art. He felt that the magazine overlooked those two important areas and focuses too heavily on food and parties.

Julie, 39, and Melissa, 40, want more information that would be beneficial to families with children.

I just think activities would be a huge thing especially families are always looking for like different you know everybody knows you can go to the Children's Museum, everybody knows you can go to the Aviary, but like I don't know just different activities. (Julie, 39)

Melissa's opinion matched Julie's. She said that she would like to see more activities for young Pittsburghers to do.

I primarily use it for work; I don't use it for my home life because there aren't a lot of things that are relevant. I have young children and there are other things out there. I wanna find out about what's the goings on are for kids and families. (Melissa, 40)

Melissa said that if more on this subject was added she might use the magazine more instead of just using it to find a restaurant to go to with work colleagues. Julie also felt that the magazine publishes excellent reviews about restaurants and overall does a good job. "I definitely like you guys better than *Whirl Magazine*; *Whirl* just to me is so out of touch" (Julie, 39). Judy offered one suggestion, which was not to change. "I think you guys have a pretty good balance as it is" (Judy, 34).

## Chapter 5: Conclusions and Discussion

The goal of this study is to find the best strategies for *Pittsburgh Magazine* to communicate with its audience through its Facebook and Twitter pages. Through the participant observation and interviews, I found that readers wanted topic variety on social media. Although a majority of readers praised the magazine for its food and restaurant coverage, they wanted more information to fit different aspects of their lives. Most readers felt that the magazine shared enough posts but not too many to make them unfollow the page. Overall the readers interviewed didn't visit either social media page often, but instead waited for something interesting to scroll through their feed. Digital subscribers adapted to the social media pages, while print subscribers didn't due to dislike or confusion.

I found *Pittsburgh Magazine's* adaptation to Facebook and Twitter slow due to the lack of staff available to focus on the project. Its rate of adaptation is slow compared to other magazines with larger digital staff sizes. Initially the magazine was slow to adapt to the changing landscape of social media, recently it has met social media growth and success. From 2012 to 2013, the number of visitors to [pittsburghmagazine.com](http://pittsburghmagazine.com) who came from Facebook grew by 292 percent. From Twitter, that number rose by 284 percent. *Pittsburgh Magazine* editors acknowledge that they lack the staff to work on digital advancement. It's something the magazine would like to improve in the future once it has the resources. Overall the magazine is still evolving to learn best posting processes.

Through applying the Diffusion of Innovations theory to my research at *Pittsburgh Magazine*, I found that certain characteristics could and could not be applied.

There was no clear relative advantage to these social media channels compared to previous technology, because nothing similar was available previously. The only way to compare advantages would be to compare Facebook and Twitter to each other. For the magazine, Facebook provided the opportunity to reach new communities while Twitter offered the same opportunity with the advantage of being able to post more frequently with fewer penalties, so in that sense there were relative advantages. They both offer immediate feedback through analytics, which wasn't previously available to the magazine prior. The magazine uses that immediate feedback to better connect with its audience.

Compatibility asks, "does the innovation fit the intended audience?" In this scenario both the magazine and the audience had to adapt to use both social media platforms, it didn't fit either audience flawlessly. The magazine is constantly evolving its Facebook strategy based on the ever-changing algorithm. On Facebook and Twitter the magazine had to adapt to writing web SEO headlines for articles and blogs because print headlines were not effective online. The Facebook and Twitter page was a better fit for digital subscribers compared to print subscribers.

Complexity asks, "is the innovation easy to use?" Again both the audience and the magazine had to adapt so it wasn't necessarily easy. Specifically the magazine had to expand from a monthly long form print publication to add short, quick daily content. For the print subscribers, it was impossible to adapt because of their negative feelings or confusion towards social media channels. Digital subscribers found the Facebook and Twitter pages easy to use and find information about the city.

Trialability asks, "can the innovation be used before making a decision to adopt?"

This characteristic could not be applied because both the magazine and the readers had to adopt the technology to use the innovation.

Observability asks, “Are the results of the innovation visible and easily measurable?” Overall the magazine measured its results by using analytics to review past success and failures. Facebook is a main driver of traffic to the website and the 412 blog often gets not only reader likes but also shares because of its daily content. The readers had a hard time recalling specific posts that benefited them but overall they found that the magazine covered food and drink topics very well. By using this theory it helped me learn about the adaptation process from both the magazine’s and readers points of view.

The magazine evolved to use Facebook and Twitter to reach new communities its print edition couldn’t. On both platforms, the magazine wants its audience to share its posts to: gain more followers, increase the amount of users who can see a post, spur interest in print content and drive traffic back to [pittsburghmagazine.com](http://pittsburghmagazine.com) to be a consistent revenue stream for the publication.

*Pittsburgh Magazine’s* coverage is being influenced by the people who are following the magazine on Twitter and Facebook. *Pittsburgh Magazine* editors have learned how to adapt to digital readers because of analytics. Readers determined what they would see in the future, and they might even do it unknowingly. The article they liked, commented on or shared told the magazine what to do in the future. That not only affects the digital space but also what’s in the print magazine and on the cover. The readers increase in utilizing mobile technology also pushed the magazine to upgrade its website to an HTML 5 responsive site.

The magazine has gained more followers and readers through its Facebook and

Twitter pages and those new readers yielded positive results for the website. In 2013 the *Pittsburgh Magazine* website doubled its unique audience and eclipsed 6 million pageviews. The magazine's "quality-first" engagement tactics on Facebook and Twitter earned it three minutes four seconds average time on page for its eight blogs. Although the magazine is lacking sufficient staff to use both Facebook and Twitter to its best extent, it's earning positive results with the staff available. Conboy summed up the magazine's overall adaption process best: "We're slowly but surely transitioning from 'Here's what's essential about Pittsburgh this month' to 'Here's what's essential about Pittsburgh today.'"

## **Facebook**

### **Magazine evolution.**

*Pittsburgh Magazine* evolved to use Facebook because of the opportunity to reach different communities, to compile immediate feedback through analytics and to feature its strong photography. Lash, Conboy and Krenn believe that Facebook analytics help the magazine further connect with the audience at a faster rate than previously available before. *Pittsburgh Magazine* editors had to adapt to posting on Facebook by: altering headlines for SEO, starting blogs for different interest groups, creating an online voice, learning when/ how much to post, focus new posts based on past analytics and utilize sponsored content to boost the number of readers.

*Pittsburgh Magazine* doesn't actively promote the Facebook page to find new readers. The magazine could do more with advertising options but would prefer to grow through friend referrals. The magazine learned to post sparingly because of the changing Facebook algorithm. If the magazine posts something that doesn't get enough likes,

shares and comments, Facebook will penalize the page. Subjects that have hit well in the past and posts that have value for the reader guide editors to new post topics.

*Pittsburgh Magazine* measures the results of using Facebook by individual post effectiveness, referral traffic and traffic driven to the website for longer periods of time.

### **Digital reader evolution on Facebook.**

The Pittsburgh Magazine readership evolved to use Facebook to find more information on: local news, events, restaurants and places to shop. A majority of readers felt that liking the page has benefited their lives, but it wasn't the best place to get information about Pittsburgh compared to TV or newspaper pages. All subscribers interviewed found that the Facebook page offered insight on topics that interested them and most found the page to be easy to use and find information about the city. A majority of users don't actually visit the Facebook page but instead wait for something interesting as they scroll through their feeds.

Most readers liked the page because of an article they saw in their feed. These readers do share articles on Facebook but are also actively conscientious about what and how much they share. More readers felt that they received enough information from the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page than those who wouldn't mind seeing more posts. A majority of the digital subscribers see their friends using the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page through their feed.

### **Twitter**

#### **Magazine evolution.**

*Pittsburgh Magazine* evolved to use Twitter because of the similarity between what readers and what the magazine tweets about. The Twitter page gives the opportunity



for further connection with the audience because editors can post more frequently without being intrusive and provide readers more content. Conboy said the magazine could improve Twitter posts by having conversations with the community and tweeting informational things that don't always link back to their website. *Pittsburgh Magazine* editors had to adapt to posting on Twitter by: writing shorter pieces, adapting to character limits, reviewing reader analytics, creating a voice for the platform and using the new teaser image feature.

On Twitter it is harder for readers to learn about the page compared to Facebook because the magazine doesn't use paid advertising on this platform. To combat this lack of advertising Lash shares magazine posts on her personal accounts and encourages others on staff to do the same. The magazine measures the results of using Twitter by new monthly followers, clicks to the site, re-tweets and post reach vs. engagement.

#### **Digital reader evolution on Twitter.**

The *Pittsburgh Magazine* readership evolved to use Twitter to: seek more news compared to Facebook, find what's going on in the city, know when a new Pitt Girl column is launched and for information on the "Best Restaurants" edition. Readers found the Twitter page was an easy way to find information about pop culture, entertainment, dining and fun things to do in the Pittsburgh area. The Twitter users don't usually go to the page but instead wait for posts on their feed. They referred the page for others to use with no posting hesitation compared to Facebook. Readers found the magazine's Twitter page gave them enough information although it was missing posts on breaking news and politics. They also see their friends utilize the page.

#### **Print Readership Lack of Evolution**

Every print subscriber interviewed preferred the print “hard copy” to any digital form available. Two readers preferred the print edition because they valued the experience. Four readers felt negative emotions towards social media in general, not specifically the *Pittsburgh Magazine* pages. Reasons for their emotions evoked responses of dislike, hate and distrust towards the web and social media. Three readers felt confusion towards social media because they either: didn’t know how to use it, didn’t know the magazine had social media pages or prior page adaption experience.

### ***Pittsburgh Magazine* Readership Community Suggestions**

The *Pittsburgh Magazine* readership community had a difficult time coming up with suggestions on how to improve the magazines social media pages. After some further discussion their ideas started to flow more in the interviews. Two readers responded on how to improve more technical aspects while all the other comments pertained to new content ideas. The technical comments focused solely on posting frequency. During the interviews most readers felt that the magazine posted the perfect amount of times a day where they didn’t feel overwhelmed by the page. Only a small number of the readers felt that the magazine could be posting at a higher frequency. With such a fine line between these two variants it’s important that the magazine sides with the majority on this topic and doesn’t post too frequently.

Most readers praised the magazine for its restaurant coverage in the area. They also liked receiving new information about the Pittsburgh area that other news sources don’t offer. Some readers were unique in their needs for information, basing their requests on their personal lives. One requested more information on Pittsburgh weddings to be posted because her daughter was recently married. Another wanted more local

writers to be featured because she is a writer herself. Another reader wanted more information on local music and art because he believes the magazine was missing coverage about those huge topics in the area. Two women with families wanted more information about activities for their children, both wanted help looking for things to do with their kids. If these additions were added all readers proclaimed that they would rely on the magazine more for information.

### **Limitations**

This single case study is limited to findings on this particular magazine. The findings will not necessarily directly apply to any other magazine. To make sure that the findings are indeed valid and reliable, a variation of methods was developed.

### **Future Research**

Based on the findings, future research should be done on Facebook and Twitter adaptation from the perspective of other city magazines. To be able to compare and contrast different markets with different demographics could yield interesting results. To see how certain magazines with similar staff sizes and others that are significantly larger evolve to use Facebook would be beneficial to teach others in the publication industry how to adapt effectively. Through future research a model could be created for efficient magazine posting practices that would benefit not only publications, but also readers.

More research could also be done on reader awareness of social media analytics. Do readers know that when they like, comment, share, re-tweet and favorite something on social media, they're interaction shapes what the magazine might post next? How do readership communities feel about their interactions being tracked? How do readers

decide when to interact? Do readers know that their lack of interaction could lead to fewer posts on a particular topic?

## Appendix 1

### Interview questions for staff members of *Pittsburgh Magazine*

Based on the stages in the innovation-decision process.

- What is your full name?
- When did you start working for *Pittsburgh Magazine*?
- What did you do before getting your job at *Pittsburgh Magazine*?
- What do you do as (job title here) for *Pittsburgh Magazine*?
- Have your duties changed since you first got your job?
- Has *Pittsburgh Magazine* changed since you arrived?
- (If yes) How has the magazine changed?
- How do you feel about these changes?
- What technologies do you use to connect with readers?

Topic: Facebook

Relative Advantage

- How was using Facebook better than the technology *Pittsburgh Magazine* had available before?
- What goals did you have in mind for this social media channel?
- With Facebook being an interactive platform, how did you want to use it to further connect with your audience?

Compatibility

- How did you think Facebook would fit with your publication? How did you adapt for it?

- How did you think Facebook would fit with your readership community?  
How did you tailor your page for the users?

#### Complexity

- Was Facebook easy to adapt to for magazine use?
- How easy do you think it was for the readers to adapt to the page?

#### Trialability

- How do you try to entice readers to utilize Facebook?

#### Observability

- How do you measure your results of using Facebook? Why do you measure the results that way?

#### Topic: Twitter

##### Relative Advantage

- How was using Twitter better than the technology *Pittsburgh Magazine* had available before?
- What goals did you have in mind for this social media channel?
- With Twitter being an interactive platform, how did you want to use it to further connect with your audience?

#### Compatability

- How did you think Twitter would fit with your publication? How did you adapt for it?
- How did you think Twitter would fit with your readership community?  
How did you tailor your page for the users?

#### Complexity

- Was Twitter easy to use for the magazine?
- How easy do you think it was for the readers to adapt to the page?

#### Trialability

- How do you try to entice readers to utilize Twitter?

#### Observability

- How do you measure your results of using Twitter? Why do you measure the results that way?

## Appendix 2

### Interview questions for print and digital subscribers of *Pittsburgh Magazine*

Based on the stages in the innovation-decision process.

- First name
- What is your favorite way to get news from *Pittsburgh Magazine*? Would you rather reading the print edition, website, blog, or through social media on Facebook or Twitter? Why?

#### *Pittsburgh Magazine* innovation

##### Facebook

##### Relative Advantage

- Do you “like” *Pittsburgh Magazine* on Facebook?
- Why did you decide to “like” the magazine on Facebook? Or Why not?
- Has “liking” the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page benefited you in any way?
- Is it better place to receive information about Pittsburgh than any other news source? Why/Why not?

##### Compatibility

- Does the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page offer insight on topics that interest you?

##### Complexity

- Is the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page easy to use to find information on the topics you like to read about? Why/ Why not?



### Trialability

- When did you first “like” the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page?
- How often do you visit the page for more information?
- Do you refer the page to others to use?
- When do you usually visit the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page? Why at that time?

### Observability

- Do you get enough/ too much information from the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page?
- Do you think that the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page is missing anything that another news source might offer?
- Do you see your friends use the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Facebook page?
- What suggestions do you have to further enhance your experience using *Pittsburgh Magazine*’s Facebook page?

### Twitter

#### Relative Advantage

- Do you “follow” *Pittsburgh Magazine* on Twitter?
- Why did you decide to “follow” the magazine on Twitter? Or Why not?
- Has “following” *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page benefited you in any way?
- Is it better place to receive information about Pittsburgh than any other news source? Why/Why not?

### Compatibility

- Does the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page offer insight on topics that interest you?

#### Complexity

- Is the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page easy to use to find information on the topics you like to read about? Why/ Why not?

#### Trialability

- When did you first “follow” the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page?
- How often do you visit the page for more information?
- Do you refer the page to others to use?
- When do you usually visit the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page? Why at that time?

#### Observability

- Do you get enough information/ too much from the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page?
- Do you think that the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page is missing anything that another news source might offer?
- Do you see your friends use the *Pittsburgh Magazine* Twitter page?
- What suggestions do you have to further enhance your experience using *Pittsburgh Magazine’s* Twitter page?

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