

Reinvigorating Journalism Education

A Review of News21, 2005-2011

June 1, 2011

Prepared For

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Prepared By

JM Advisory Group

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Methodology	5
Project Findings	
Quality of Journalism Education	6
Content Development and Distribution	10
Student Outcomes	12
Key Insights & Recommendations	15
Appendix	
Appendix A: Technology and Innovation Highlights	17
Appendix B: News Leader Interview List	18

Executive Summary

In 2005, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation formed the Carnegie-Knight Initiative for the Future of Journalism Education, a campaign to transform journalism education. The initiative launched in the wake of an influential McKinsey study, *Improving the Education of Tomorrow's Journalists*, which demonstrated a belief amongst news leaders that journalism education ill-prepared students for careers in journalism.

A key component of the Carnegie-Knight initiative has been News21, a program that provides fellowships to journalism students to perform investigative reporting projects overseen by professors and distributed through media outlets. The program strives to demonstrate to both university presidents and news leaders that journalism schools have a major role to play in the future of news.

News21 and the Knight Foundation decided to perform a review of the program's impact in early 2011 in order to inform next steps. The review was performed by JM Advisory Group and yielded the following key insights:

- **News industry leaders think journalism education in the United States has improved over the past six years.** Although leaders say quality still varies significantly from school to school, 16 of 26 news leaders interviewed (61 percent) think journalism education has improved. Five additional news leaders felt specific schools improved but reserved comment on all of journalism education. Factors driving improvement included better leadership and faculty, and a greater emphasis on programs offering practical experience and digital skills. The schools most frequently mentioned as inspiring new attitudes about journalism education are Carnegie-Knight schools. Also, participating universities report they have transformed their teaching of digital journalism during the five-year life span of News21 and cite the program as a catalyst for this change.
- **News21 has positively impacted students.** News21 teaches best-of-craft investigative reporting and presentation skills. Students worked on in-depth journalism projects and produced significant innovation in storytelling, design, interactivity and data presentation. Of 318 News21 graduates, at least 241 are employed full or part time in media or communications, and News21 student hiring rates in 2010 exceeded the national average. News leaders reported hiring more graduates directly out of college to fill entry-level jobs created by the web.
- **News21 is at an important juncture.** News21 has established that students can produce investigative journalism that matters. Their transportation-safety project published by The Washington Post, MSNBC.com and other media in 2010 proved the point. Now, News21 must find a way to sustain itself and focus its efforts for maximum impact.

Introduction

Six years ago, the Carnegie Corporation of New York commissioned a report exploring the views of news industry leaders about the state of journalism education in the United States and what they thought journalism schools could do to elevate the profession's standards.

The depressing conclusion: industry leaders didn't have confidence that journalism schools could give students the skills they need to succeed in a rapidly evolving media environment. Some news leaders continued to question the relevancy of a journalism degree.

In 2005, in an effort to reshape and reinvigorate journalism education, the Carnegie Corporation and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation formed the Carnegie-Knight Initiative on the Future of Journalism Education. Among its chief goals: to draft a blueprint for reforms and demonstrate to leaders both in the news community and in academia that journalism schools have a major role to play in the future of news.

News21 is a key element of the initiative, funded with \$7.5 million by the Knight Foundation since 2005. The program provides fellowships to top journalism students to perform investigative reporting projects overseen by carefully selected, professionally accomplished university professors. The student reports are distributed nationally through both traditional and new media.

The Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University, which leads the project on behalf of 12 participating universities, describes its purpose this way: "to change the way journalism is taught in the United States and train a new generation of journalists capable of reshaping the news industry."

The project outlined three specific goals in grant documents: to result in high-profile jobs for graduates, place important new stories in the national news stream and, above all, to show that journalism schools have a role to play in the radically changing future of news.

Twelve universities participate in News21 – eight are "incubator schools" that host student fellows during semesters when investigative reporting projects occur. They are University of California at Berkeley, Columbia University, Northwestern University, University of Southern California, University of Maryland, Syracuse University, University of North Carolina and Arizona State University. Four additional schools send fellows to the other campuses to participate in reporting projects. These "contributing schools" are University of Missouri, University of Nebraska, University of Texas and John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Methodology

News21 and Knight Foundation sought to examine the broader impact of the program on journalism education as well as the level of innovation exhibited through individual student projects. This report, developed by JM Advisory Group, focuses on changes to journalism education and examples of student outcomes. A complimentary report¹ was developed by Jim Brady, former executive editor of WashingtonPost.com, to review the journalism reports produced by News21 students and assess their quality and impact on digital innovation.

This review examined news leaders' perceptions about shifts in journalism education and the impact of the News21 program through one-on-one interviews with 26 prominent news leaders² at print, broadcast and online media outlets. The feedback offered by news leaders was kept anonymous. The review also explored the development and distribution of content by News21 as well as outcomes experienced by students. News21 progress reports to Knight and other grant documents were analyzed to gauge the performance of News21 related to project goals. Additionally, six program alumni were interviewed about their program experiences.

This study's author is Judy Miller, former Miami Herald managing editor, and editor or writer for several other Knight Foundation reports in recent months including an analysis of the Inter American Press Association's project to lessen the impunity of those who kill journalists in the Americas, and an evaluation of the digital transformation of the nonprofit investigative reporting organization, Center for Public Integrity.

¹ News21 Technology & Innovation Evaluation, Jim Brady, April 2011. Highlights included in Appendix A.

² News leader interview list included in Appendix B.

Project Findings

The review analyzed News21's impact in three areas: 1) Quality of Journalism Education; 2) Content Development and Distribution; and 3) Student Outcomes.

Quality of Journalism Education

News Leaders Have Improved Their Perceptions of Journalism Education

News leaders' perceptions of journalism education are better than they were six years ago when the McKinsey study showed broad dissatisfaction. Twenty-one of 26 news leaders (81 percent) agreed journalism education is better in general or at specific leading institutions. This is a significant change from the McKinsey study which did not indicate much positive sentiment.

"Six years ago I might have said I'm not sure what benefit journalism schools bring or that they were places where some of the best ideas were generated," said one newspaper editor. "I've completely flipped on that. I think some of them are, or have the potential to become, a leading force for change in the industry."

An editor of a national news service added that journalism schools are "wiser" and "more aware" and noted that "the students benefit and we benefit because we are hiring more of them." A corporate executive cited "tremendous progress," saying many schools now had "eyes wide open," yet also reported that some schools remain stagnant. In agreement, another executive said key journalism schools six years ago were still graduating students with a decades-old curriculum, but many journalism schools today are doing a far better job of "preparing students for the newsrooms of today."

Of 26 prominent news leaders interviewed, five were uncertain that there had been an improvement in journalism education. No one said it was getting worse. The rest agreed that many of the nation's leading journalism schools are in an important period of reform that will benefit students and the broader profession. News leaders frequently mentioned Carnegie-Knight schools as inspiring new attitudes about journalism education.

Several News Leaders were Familiar with News21 and Similar Programs

Of 26 news executives interviewed, 10 were very or somewhat familiar with the News21 program; six vaguely recalled hearing about it and 10 were completely unaware of it. Those familiar with the project knew about student work on major investigative stories, but few could cite digital innovations produced by News21.

Understandably, those only somewhat familiar with News21 said the project should have better connections with professional outlets. But those who were aware of the project were able to cite that students last year had a major investigative project on transportation safety published by The

Washington Post, MSNBC.com, Yahoo! and the nonprofit Center for Public Integrity – an achievement demonstrating that important relationships exist.

Journalism Schools Have Stronger Leadership and Teaching Capacity

News leaders cite leadership as *the* defining factor in whether a journalism school earns their respect. Schools with good leaders produce graduates who can not only succeed in new-media jobs, but also bring transformative ideas for the evolving newsroom. They say the nation's 500 schools or departments of journalism are quite uneven in quality.

“It does seem to me that journalism schools are very dependent on the leadership of the school,” said a broadcast executive, echoing others. “They [the good schools] are being more experimental and exposing their students to top quality journalists.”

The fight for relevancy in an evolving media landscape has re-energized journalism school leadership at the elite schools and beyond, several news leaders said. Top journalists, many of them refugees from a shrinking traditional media industry, are arriving on campus and making a difference in the quality of teaching and in leadership.

“Certainly the quality of the faculty is significantly better than 10 years ago,” said the editor of an investigative nonprofit. “The eruption of the web and its destruction of the business model have made academia a more interesting place for leading journalists.”

“Schools now have professors who rose up the ranks and had stellar careers,” noted a network news executive. Said another: “Some of the faculty they are attracting really have deep newsroom experience. Journalism schools used to be a place you went to die.”

As working journalists move into academia, they are “awakening” journalism programs, said a regional newspaper editor. “They are saying, ‘Do you understand what’s going on out there ... you need to get with reality.’ I think the journalism programs have heard that enough now that they are getting their heads out of the sand.”

Journalism Schools Seen as Becoming More Innovative

As news leaders’ respect for journalism schools has risen, so have their expectations. Several said they hope journalism schools will help lead their highly dynamic industry in new directions rather than simply serve a 20th century-style role as a pipeline of apprentices. Toward that end, they praised the experimentation under way at the country’s top journalism schools.

“A lot more incubation and nurturing of new ideas is happening in journalism schools than in the past,” said a longtime newspaper editor. “There is something about not being tied to the distribution methods of the past that is freeing for them. They seem to have a renewed sense of purpose and pride, and they are bringing new and exciting stuff to the table.”

As the industry changes, “there is evidence of experimentation in j-schools and that’s a good thing,” a leading newspaper editor said. Added a colleague: “The schools need to be out ahead of the industry. We are looking to them for graduates who will lead us in new directions rather than just [serve as] apprentices here.”

Participating Journalism Schools Praised News21 for Driving Improvements

Every school that participated in News21 said its students greatly benefited from the program. Students got trial-by-fire experience working with top professors and professionals, and exposure to storytelling techniques valued in today’s newsrooms. Importantly, several schools directly credited News21 for acting as a catalyst for the evolution of their journalism programs. They cite specific improvements in their digital curriculum and outline plans for in-depth reporting projects that incorporate new ways of telling complex stories. These program elements match the very curriculum reforms that news leaders praised in interviews.

According to Jim Brady’s report, visual storytelling is now a part of most writing classes at Columbia, a development some faculty there credit to the presence of News21. Many faculty members at Columbia also use News21 projects as teaching tools to show students what’s possible when the full range of storytelling options are employed. At Arizona State, a faculty member said that News21 has “launched a new cultural standard” for the journalism produced at the school, one in which students and faculty now understand and embrace the wide range of tools at their disposal.

Some schools plan to spin off their own programs with Knight’s help; Columbia, for example, is developing New York World, a student-staffed media site that will offer in-depth reporting on city and state government. At University of Texas at Austin, the lessons of News21 will be incorporated to launch a multimedia course and to produce content for the school’s Reporting Texas website. The future impact of these projects seems quite bright, in that they are tailored to what makes sense in the markets where the schools reside and within their own programs, which have developed since News21 began.

Here is a sampling of what the schools reported:

“As a measure of how far we have come ... and the integral role News21 has played, we recall that when News21 was launched, the concept of website for a journalism class was in itself new.”
– Columbia University

“It wasn’t long ago that The Washington Post would have dismissed with little contemplation the notion of News21 content, especially on an investigative piece. Now the stuff gets on A1 on a Sunday. We’ve come to incorporate News21 as an important asset to our program, and not just a bauble ... participants have brought back new skills, commitment to experimentation and an approach to journalistic teamwork that have aided other students and faculty.” – University of Texas at Austin

“News21 ... students have been widely recognized, and the program is a point of pride for our school ... I am sure News21 has had a significant impact on tomorrow’s media leaders.” – University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

“It is a showcase for our students and also a recruiting tool. It empowers our professors to do something different – in the classroom and also in the end product – that might be difficult to do with their own class. Students produce the highest quality content of their young careers and enhance their employment prospects.” – Syracuse University

“There is no question that those who have completed the fellowship have had a much higher success rate in acquiring news industry employment ... [and] the project has helped faculty learn and think about new ways to teach our students how to report multimedia journalism. As a direct result of the News21 project, our school launched Annenberg Digital News and the 24/7 online publication Neon Tommy.” – University of Southern California

“Our fellows produced outstanding, professional-level reports, and we saw enormous growth in their knowledge of the subject. They learned how to operate as professionals, work independently and put together large, multi-media multimedia-rich, in-depth story packages. All this will make them competitive in the ever-tightening journalism job market.” – Arizona State University

Journalism Education Must Continue to Improve and Evolve

While welcoming the new focus on digital skills, some executives said they worry that some schools may not be up to the challenge of teaching both new and timeless skills. Most of them think digital reporting skills are still being taught *alongside* classes that drill in the fundamentals: reporting, writing and ethics. But there was a palpable worry that the former might overtake the latter to the detriment of students and their future employers.

“One of the negatives is that it’s very easy to get consumed by the toys, the shiny objects and technology and in doing so shortchange the fundamentals,” said the editor of a regional newspaper, who nonetheless thinks journalism education has improved.

An executive with a leading newspaper chain joined others in saying journalism schools do a better job teaching multimedia skills, design and technology – all welcome changes. “There is a flip side to that,” he warned. “Some of the fundamentals of good thinking, good writing and good conceptualizing have been left behind.”

“I was in the camp several years ago that thought the industry was changing rapidly and it was hard for journalism educators to keep up. I still think that’s true,” said a metropolitan newspaper editor, noting that his paper has difficulty finding qualified computer-assisted-reporting talent and others with technical skills.

So even though many journalism schools are seen as improving, they need to continue to emphasize instruction on critical thinking, in-depth reporting and ethics – the same timeless skills leaders cited in the McKinsey study. Said one network broadcast leader: “We get lost in

the fact that there is going to be a new way of telling [and] distributing the news. ... Students need to learn to think, to analyze and to challenge preconceived notions. Too many still put together 2 and 2 and get 5.”

Two editors – one from a prominent paper and one a network executive – don’t approve of journalism schools that still funnel students into separate broadcast and print tracks. “Broadcast journalists would benefit from a traditional print curriculum and print people would be a lot better prepared to go on broadcast and radio if they had that training,” one said. Still, both agreed journalism education is improving.

“In some ways they are doing a fine job and in some ways they are still lagging like we are,” said a newspaper editor. “I’m seeing examples of journalism schools being in the forefront of developing skills we need, but I don’t see many of these peaks.”

Content Development and Distribution

Newsrooms Increasingly Use Students for Basic Coverage

Many newsrooms are engaged in successful content collaborations with journalism schools and their students. Driven by newsroom cutbacks, these collaborations most commonly involve students covering hyper-local beats, providing breaking news feeds or writing blogs for media websites. While media outlets are still overwhelmingly reliant on professional staff, significant barriers to content from sources other than full-time in-house professionals have dropped, opening the door in many places for student journalists.

“We can’t afford to cover a community of 65,000 with a fulltime reporter so we sought to deepen our relationships with [the local journalism schools],” said an editor at a leading U.S. paper. Several other editors said that top students – supervised by campus professors and professional newsroom staff – are providing coverage of areas that in better times would have been assigned to a beginning reporter.

The editor of an influential national paper predicted students may someday gain an even larger role. “I think they are going to step into the void and provide ‘coverage’ journalism and beat coverage,” he said. “There is a great opportunity for journalism schools to take on that content at local papers [so] we can use our journalists for things of higher value that are more difficult.”

News21 Story Pickup Expanded in 2010

In regard to media pickup, Arizona State reports³ “increased placements” of News21 content after somewhat faltering efforts when the task was handled by individual campuses, culminating with last year’s publication of the transportation-safety investigation by The Washington Post

³ News21 Media Placements, July 2009- October 2010.

and MSNBC.com that attracted five million page views from a million unique visitors in 18 days. Other partners in 2010 included The (Baltimore) Sun, KTVU.com, Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, NPR, The Oakland Tribune, San Francisco Chronicle and USA Today, and 35 smaller media outlets.⁴

Web statistics for the News21 site show strong growth last year. News21 sites averaged about 20,010 monthly unique visitors in 2010 – on pace with 2009. But adding traffic from partner sites last year, the number of unique monthly visitors soared to 137,039 – more than in the combined years since 2006. The biggest component of the traffic was the national transportation-safety project, “Breakdown: Traveling Dangerously in America.”

But no particularly persuasive statistics are available for the frequency of media pickups since the program’s inception; News21 reported that 16 media outlets picked up its single project in 2006 and 21 outlets picked up at least one of 98 stories produced in 2010, after more schools were added to the program. The important news: the 2010 project clearly topped the media distribution of any student-written U.S. journalism school project. The previous effort, widely written about by traditional media reporters, was Northwestern University’s student investigation that revealed wrongful convictions of death row inmates in Illinois.

News Leaders Cite Content Quality and Seek News Ways to Collaborate

Leaders of several organizations that published News21 content praised its quality. Most want to continue the partnerships, though they noted that these collaborations require significant investments of time by good teachers and professional editors, as well as adjustments to account for the academic schedule.

Leaders of digital media outlets – or traditional media outlets with industry-leading websites – expressed the most enthusiasm about using News21 content and working with its students.

At places like the Center for Public Integrity and Gannett, for example, specific story projects are under way, as well as a desire for ongoing collaborations. CPI in particular seems a good fit with News21, since the organization needs both additional reporters and digital storytellers to help flesh out findings from large databases.

Calling his organization’s collaboration with News21 “a model going forward,” the leader of an investigative nonprofit said professionals and students working together “can be very powerful in a resource-scarce era. We need bodies, so we are very interested in linking up with the university, because there is no cost. In return, we do a lot, and the results are incredible.”

“News21 is part of a changing ecosystem,” said another leader. “I do feel like the notion of student collaboration is spreading.”

⁴ News21 Media Partners, 2009 and 2010.

Important feedback for News21 was offered by newspaper executives. The news leaders said News21 should collaborate with professional media organizations at the outset of investigative projects, rather than seek distribution of nearly completed work. In this way, media partners can shape projects to fit audience interests. Others suggested that students partner with them on investigations needing attention in their communities (stories on their to-do lists), rather than on ideas generated on campus or elsewhere.

“They do their thing and then approach us about running the material,” said one editor. “I think it’s fantastic the opportunities students get, but I think the whole premise of doing what they want and telling newspapers ‘here you go’ doesn’t really work. You really should talk up front about how you are going to collaborate.”

“On the front end, I would certainly involve newspapers and TV stations to see what their needs are ... what stories they aren’t getting to that perhaps this News21 network could reach,” said another editor. “I’m impressed with the people involved in News21 [but] my perception is that the stories are being hatched up on campus.”

“As impressed as I might be by the work they did, which I was, it was not part of our mission,” said another newspaper editor, explaining why his paper didn’t publish a News21 project. Others said they didn’t have the capacity to distribute the work of their own professionals, “much less student work.”

If there were common complaints about News21, they boiled down to these:

- The push for a highly visible project was difficult to accomplish at the same time as the goal of developing storytelling innovations.
- News21 lacks a developed strategy for distributing content, and possibly needs a staff member to develop potential media partners and handle placements.
- It takes significant effort to get work from students that meets not just professional approval but the highest professional standards.

Student Outcomes

Students Develop Digital Skills and Obtain More “Real-World Experience”

Many news leaders agreed the best journalism schools are doing two things better:

- Teaching new digital and multimedia skills alongside traditional reporting and writing.
- Providing students practical experience by organizing coverage collaborations with professional media outlets.

On the first point, the director of an online media outlet put it this way: “Journalism schools have caught up with the digital world.” Added a regional newspaper executive: “They are teaching

students to be multimedia journalists ... and also the values of accuracy, fairness and good writing. The skills they are coming out with are amazing and so much more than I had.”

As far as practical experience, one editor involved in journalism school accreditation noted, “There is far more awareness of the real-world skills that students need to do what we need them to do in the newsroom – a significant shift from a theoretical approach to a more pragmatic approach.” Another newspaper executive specifically cited Columbia as being a leader in “giving their students real-world news skills ... and emphasizing digital journalism in a way that a couple of years ago was rare. They are shaking things up.”

Journalism Students Enter News Organization Ready to Contribute

These shifts at leading journalism schools are producing tangible benefits for both students and the profession. Most of the news leaders interviewed said they now sometimes hire graduates right out of college, something they did not do a decade ago. This trend is driven by the web’s creation of entry-level multimedia jobs, such as video journalist, web producer and interactive graphics producer. (It is still rare for a recent college graduate to get a reporting job on a metropolitan daily newspaper or at the national TV networks.)

“This says something about the quality of journalism education and that papers are looking for reporters with different skills sets than just print reporting,” said an executive at one of the nation’s most influential newspapers, noting that her paper recently hired two graduates from Knight-Carnegie schools.

One news leader said graduates are more prepared to make a difference in a newsroom now vs. five years ago. Some credited the fact that students are “digital natives,” having grown up in this new age, but others noted wildly new skill sets, such as the a young print hire who impressed her “grizzled editor” by inventing an iPad application.

News21 Alumni Pursue Careers in Journalism and Communications

Arizona State reported⁵ that about two-thirds of News21 students – hand-picked for the program to ensure that they can handle its rigorous requirements – found full-time jobs in the industry after graduation.

Of 318 fellows from 2006 to 2010 for whom News21 had tracking data:

- 220 (69 percent) work full time, including 13 freelancers or independent journalists.
- 36 (11 percent) work part time or freelance part time.
- 45 (14 percent) remain in school (most are graduate students; several are in law school, doctoral programs or completing their undergraduate degrees).
- 17 (5 percent) are seeking jobs.

⁵ News 21 Grant Report, Aug. 21, 2010.

Arizona State benchmarks hiring rates using the *Annual Survey of Journalism & Mass Communication Graduates*⁶ which provides employment measures for journalism graduates. As the following chart demonstrates, News21 employment rates exceeded the national average.

Employed full time	Becker 2009*	News21 2010**
MA graduates	60%	78.6%
BA graduates	46.20%	57.1%
Communications Jobs	48.30%	94%
*Employment status as of Oct. 31, 2009		
**Employment status as of Oct. 26, 2010 (n=56 at time of report)		

News21 tracking reports⁷ from 2006 to 2010 show many of the graduates were hired into web jobs that require special skills; others found employment as reporters and producers. Fellows accepted jobs at NPR, WGNTV.com, ABC News, Los Angeles Times, NBA.com, Discovery TV, Fox, ESPN.com, PBS News Hour, Associated Press, Bloomberg News, BBC, The Washington Post, CNN, NBC News, MSNBC, Time Magazine, The Orange County Register, The (Portland) Oregonian, Chicago Tribune, St. Petersburg Times, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and (New York) Daily News, among others.

This report is consistent with the news leaders’ interviews, showing that national organizations not traditionally known for hiring graduates directly from school now are doing so.

News21 alumni interviewed said the experience was a valuable piece of their journalism education. Many said they got jobs or job leads, and all developed professional networks and digital skills.

“I definitely got valuable skills out of the program,” said a Maryland graduate who is content-production manager for a group of suburban papers in Atlanta. “It honed my multimedia skills. It got me thinking about data and how to visualize it and how to make stories more compelling.”

A Syracuse student said he learned multimedia skills and “expanded my professional network.” Said an Arizona State graduate: “I think a lot of the people who were in News21 took the paradigm of News21 with them – a willingness to experiment, to have the confidence to fail, to not be afraid of risk and to confront the challenges that lie before us rather than be shackled by the past.”

⁶ Produced by Lee Becker, Tudor Vlad and Devora Olin of Grady College, University of Georgia.

⁷ News21 Alumni Report.

Key Insights & Recommendations

News21 discussed four specific benchmarks in its 2008 grant from Knight Foundation: 1) double the number of incubator schools from four to eight; 2) quadruple the number of contributing schools from one to four; 3) increase the number of participating students from 44 to 93; and 4) increase web traffic to newsinitiative.org (or News21.org) to 30,000 unique monthly visitors (including visitors to partner sites). News21 met – and even exceeded – these goals.

Arizona State also strived for News21 to achieve larger goals: it would result in high-profile jobs for graduates, place important new stories in the national news stream and persuade news leaders that journalism schools have a role to play in the radically changing future of news. Though this has not been completely accomplished – the news leaders’ belief in journalism schools is not unanimous – News21 made solid progress on these broader program objectives.

Students clearly derived the most immediate benefit from News21, gaining practical experience and skills that undoubtedly helped them find jobs. Journalism schools added a valuable program that emphasized instruction sought by future employers – digital and in-depth reporting skills. News21 pushed along broader curriculum reform at a critical moment for journalism schools. For the industry, News21 produced skilled graduates who will influence their newsrooms and a body of journalism worthy of publication in prominent media outlets. If there is a disappointment, it is that the industry is not deeply aware or using the innovations taking root on campuses.

While it’s not possible to draw a direct link, it is clear from speaking with news leaders that the Carnegie-Knight initiatives and the Carnegie-Knight schools are improving perceptions of journalism education. Their comments show they strongly support education programs that emphasize practical experience and digital techniques, both fundamental elements of News21. Further, the Center for Public Integrity, Gannett and several other media outlets already have significant projects under way with News21 – further evidence of support for the project.

The program is at a planned crossroads. Funders envisioned a leadership program that would transform leading schools and eventually reach beyond them. Arizona State is stepping up to continue News21 as a national project with about 16 fellows, consisting of an all-star team of journalists from *any* school that wants to participate. Arizona State will fund 80 percent of annual operating costs and commit its nationally known professors to the program. Carnegie will provide operating funds, and a capstone Knight grant will create a \$2.1 million fund to generate operating money over the next decade to match that committed by Arizona State.

Arizona State has a proven track record – and the will, the means and the credibility to carry forward this national initiative.

At the same time, key participating schools are proposing grants to start their own News21-like projects in their own markets, such as Columbia's New York World site focused on in-depth (and undercover) state and local news. These projects incorporate News21 aspects as a regular part of what the journalism schools do and allow them to strengthen their relationships with media in their markets, with the potential to deliver the tailored content that news leaders seek. It makes sense that leading schools should now go forward as they see fit, growing their programs within their markets and contributing fellows to the national initiative as funding and competing priorities allow.

Going forward, the program might consider:

- Developing a partnership strategy that allows News21 students to showcase in-depth reporting *and* innovative storytelling skills. A big print partner, a big online partner and a big broadcast partner make sense. The transportation package provides a good template.
- Limiting the national program to fewer, larger media partners rather than trying to drive up the number of outlets picking up content. The value should be readership, not the number of outlets that pick up stories.
- Deepening the level of collaboration by giving partners a more hands-on role.
- Generating better lists of potential partners based on subject, package elements and partner interest. A good first step: generate a matrix of potential partners and list the subjects and storytelling devices of likely interest to each. The New York Times, for example, might be especially open to interactive graphics and strong photography. MSNBC might be more interested in video, databases or user-generated content.
- Formalizing contacts at the top 25 news organizations in the United States so that relationships build over time and more pickups occur in places where there are no personal or professional connections.
- Exposing News21 work to a wider audience through links with other universities, journalism labs and professional news associations, such as the Online News Association.
- Partnering with the innovation labs at Arizona State, Northwestern, American University and elsewhere, so ideas for innovations could be shared and built upon.

Overall, this report finds that News21 benefits students, the profession and the relationship between journalism schools and the news industry. More work lies ahead, but the program has momentum – and an engaged, focused partner poised to build on progress. Importantly, future plans open the program to top students from any university. This will further broaden the initiative's impact beyond leading schools and amplify the many program benefits described in this report.

Appendix A: Technology and Innovation Highlights

Jim Brady evaluated the technology and innovations displayed within each student project. Highlights include:

- Berkeley’s “Moral Compass,” which allowed readers to spin a compass to learn the positions of established religions of a variety of issues.
- Columbia’s “Immigration: New Voters, Old Fears,” which included an interactive immigration timeline and data that could be massaged by readers.
- Berkeley’s “The American Dream,” which included a “Trade-Offs Calculator” where users could enter information and better understand some of the financial trade-offs they face as they grow older.
- Maryland’s “The New Voters: Identity and U.S. Politics,” which included a tag-based video player, allowing users to surface content; a mixed-media player, allowing users to play video while displaying text; and the talking bar chart, marrying audio and statistics. <http://thenewvoters.news21.com/database/age>
- Berkeley’s “Behind Bars: The California Convict Cycle,” which allowed readers to review and then render a verdict in an old murder case.
- Arizona State’s “Latino America 2010,” which featured a Media Box displaying added content at relevant points in the story.
- Columbia’s “Brave Old World,” which included an animated cartoon to suggest possible future life for the elderly, based on expected improvements in technology. <http://columbia.news21.com/2010/welcome-to-elderland/>
- UNC’s “Powering a Nation v2,” which featured an interactive graphic/game called “Energy Cocktail.”
- Syracuse’s “Apart from War,” which included a post-traumatic disorder simulator and gave users the ability to submit video comments.

Appendix B: News Leader Interview List

Jill Abramson, Managing Editor for News, The New York Times

Martin Baron, Editor, The Boston Globe

Dave Boardman, Executive Editor, The Seattle Times

Marcus Brauchli, Executive Editor, The Washington Post

Phil Bronstein, Editor at Large, San Francisco Chronicle/Hearst

Bill Buzenberg, Executive Director, The Center for Public Integrity

Jennifer Carroll, Vice President/Senior Editor, Gannett

Nicole Carroll, Executive Editor, The Arizona Republic

David Fanning, Executive Producer, Frontline

Anders Gyllenhaal, Vice President News, Washington Editor, McClatchy

John F. Harris, Editor-in-Chief, Politico

Gerould W. Kern, Senior Vice President & Editor, Chicago Tribune

Linda Mason, Senior Vice President, Standards & Special Projects, CBS News

David McCormick, Executive Vice President for Broadcast Standards, NBC News

Sandra Mims Rowe, Knight Fellow at Harvard's Shorenstein Center, former Editor, The Oregonian

George Rodrigue, Managing Editor, The Dallas Morning News

Jane Sasseen, Editor-in-Chief, Politics & Opinion, Yahoo!

Kerry Smith, Senior Vice President for Editorial Quality, ABC News

John Stack, Vice President Newsgathering, Fox News

Paul E. Steiger, Editor-in-Chief, ProPublica

Russ Stanton, Editor, Los Angeles Times

Rick Thames, Executive Editor, The Charlotte Observer

Julia Wallace, Senior Vice President News and Programming, Cox Media Group Ohio

Bruce Wings, Vice President & Editor, Akron Beacon Journal

Matthew Winkler, Editor-in-Chief, Bloomberg

Anonymous, CNN