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THE NIEMAN FOUNDATION FOR JOURNALISM AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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Teaching Journalism in the Digital Age

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Teaching Journalism in the Digital Age

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In our Winter 2006 issue, Goodbye Gutenberg, journalists described the ways in which digital technology affects their work, and adjustments being made within newsrooms were front and center. What wasn't told, however, was how those who want to be journalists are being educated and trained to take on vastly different roles than those once assumed—or studied about—by faculty now teaching them. In this issue journalism educators write about what is happening—and what needs to happen—in classrooms to prepare future journalists for the demands of the digital age.

Dianne Lynch, dean of the Roy H. Park School of Communications at Ithaca College, sees in students entering college that "a childhood lived as much online as off" has given them the necessary building blocks "to be journalists in a digital age." She writes about a pilot project of "innovation incubators" at seven journalism schools where ideas generated by students and faculty mentors will be transferred "from the academy to a news industry." In doing this, she says, "we'll have reexamined the very nature of journalism education in a participatory media culture."

At Kent State University, **Karl Idsvoog**, an assistant professor of journalism, writes that the j-school recently moved into "a new building with wireless Internet, high-speed video servers, and a converged newsroom." Yet the long-standing "imbalance of university requirements vs. faculty relevance [that] has always been a part of journalism school's uneasy fit inside the academy" continues to pose the greatest challenge. In this digital era, he argues, "the fit isn't just uneasy, it's untenable." As former Newsday Editor **Howard Schneider** went about designing a new approach to teaching journalism as the incoming dean of the School of Journalism at Stony Brook University, he realized that it would not be enough to focus academically on only those who want to become journalists. His goal—made possible with a News Literacy class open to all students—is to also educate consumers of news to "differentiate between raw, unmediated information coursing through the Internet and independent, verified journalism." **Kim Pearson**, an associate professor of English and interactive media at The College of New Jersey, also addresses this issue of how best to "promote news literacy among children who spend increasing amounts of their time finding and sharing information online." She offers suggestions of ways to engage middle- and high-school students through such groundbreaking approaches as the use of "database-driven presentations" in place of hard-news storytelling.

With a new content management system in place, **Nicholas Lemann**, dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University, describes the ripple effect that technological change is having as class-based Web sites proliferate. "As much as we groan at budget time over how heavily we are investing in technology," Lemann writes, "we can afford to get ourselves much closer to professional levels of production on the Web than we can in the print or broadcast media." As dean of the City University of New York Graduate School of Journalism, which opened in the fall of 2006, **Stephen Shepard** explains why students "choose a media track—print, broadcast or interactive" on which to focus, and content specialties are taught, while all students are "required to do assignments across media platforms." **Jean Folkerts**, dean of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Journalism, seeks out alumni "to learn what graduating students need to know." As changes in teaching respond to what's taking place on the Web and in

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newsrooms, Folkerts is mindful that "establishing trust with readers and viewers is as important in digital journalism as it was before the telegraph was invented."

After 13 years as an editor at The New York Times, the syllabus **Mark J. Prendergast** prepared for his journalism students at the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University "overlaid traditional journalistic values onto new-media realities of the sort I had encountered on the Times Continuous News Desk, a pioneering bridge between the paper's newsroom and its Web site." Photographer **Lester Sloan** looks at lessons of visual storytelling being taught in journalism schools as he contemplates the changing demands that digital media place on photojournalists. "One inescapable challenge visual journalists will have is to simply keep up with not only the rapidly changing tools of their craft but also the demands of the industry," he writes. In an article adapted from his book "The Big Picture: Why Democracies Need Journalistic Excellence," **Jeffrey Scheuer** suggests that "it will require a paradigm shift to see journalism and education as tap-roots of the same democratic tree and part of an information environment cohabited by citizens, journalists and scholars. It will mean relaxing the boundaries, and perhaps the very definitions, of academic and journalistic institutions."

When **Lou Ureneck**, chairman of the journalism department at Boston University, talked with a colleague from the economics department about how journalism is taught, he emphasized not the new technologies but the "journalistic value system" with idealism and skepticism at its core. These values and others, he writes, "are what make someone a good journalist, and they are what lift this work above the trivial." **Mike McKean**, who is department chair of the convergence journalism faculty at the Missouri School of Journalism, begins with the declaration that "convergence journalism, as we teach it at Missouri, is more about new attitudes than new skills." He includes among these attitudes the "need to be humble in the face of overwhelming social changes made possible by digital media." **Jerome Aumente**, professor emeritus at Rutgers, contends that "the key word that encompasses these changes in the classroom is 'interdisciplinary.'" Given his experience at Rutgers with instituting a multidisciplinary approach, Aumente talks about the value of such an integrated effort in teaching journalism in a time of digital change.

Guillermo Franco, content manager of new media at Casa Editorial El Tiempo and a professor in postgraduate journalism programs in Bogota, Colombia, worries that at a time when online journalism is so prevalent, too many Latin American journalism schools employ the "strategy of using patches, of adding an elective here and an elective there." "Instead," he argues, "entire programs must be completely redesigned" so that the next generation won't be reminded "of how bonded we are to the old way of doing things." **Michele McLellan** and **Tim Porter**, coauthors of "News, Improved: How America's Newsrooms Are Learning to Change," point out that "only a third of news organizations increased their training budgets in the past five years .... Yet nine in 10 journalists say they need more training and nine in 10 news executives agree." They also highlight examples of news organizations in which newsroom training has been implemented and the impact these initiatives have had. □

Incubating Innovation at Journalism Schools

With the online generation entering college, some key ingredients for new ways of practicing journalism are arriving with them.

By Dianne Lynch

In 2001, as a columnist for ABCNews.com, I interviewed a 13-year-old girl whose AOL screen name was UWannaLoveMe7. I asked the obvious question: Why would a nice girl like her adopt a screen name like that? "I have different screen names for when I am feeling different ways," she explained. "I use that one when I want more attention." I called UWannaLoveMe7's mother, who was unaware that people employ pseudonyms online or that her daughter was trolling virtual space in search of "more attention." "My Melissa?" she squeaked. "UWannaLoveMe7? Are you sure?"

That was five years ago, an eon in Internet time. Since then, I've devoted much of my professional life to exploring the experiences and identity development of kids in virtual spaces. UWannaLoveMe7, a member of the first generation of digital natives, spent hers growing up in a virtual world.

That world changed permanently the year she was born, the same year that CERN[1] and Tim Berners-Lee launched the World Wide Web. She and her peers were fourth-graders when Shawn Fanning's Napster upended our notions of copyright and intellectual property; fifth-graders when Wikipedia replaced the Encyclopædia Britannica as the source of universal knowledge, and high-school juniors when YouTube became the site of all-things-video and MySpace the glorification of all-things-me.

This fall, UWannaLoveMe7 and her friends will arrive on our college campuses. They'll come to us as eager as freshmen always are. But it's a watershed, nonetheless, one as worthy of note as the relative trends in their collective SAT scores and high school GPAs. For these are the kids who grew up online, whose childhoods evolved in a virtual universe as interactive and age-blind as it was dynamic and immediate. That experience exposed them early to pornographic images and sexual advances.

It also prepared them to be journalists in a digital age.

Participatory Culture and Journalism Education

Henry Jenkins at MIT has proposed a new definition of literacy appropriate to our "participatory culture." It privileges play, negotiation, transmedia navigation, and collective intelligences over reading, writing, arithmetic and iconic deconstruction. In fact, it captures precisely the characteristics of our class of 2011:

- They're information junkies who define knowledge production in terms of access rather than storage.
- They're multitaskers who process input at broadband speed, who assume that content morphs easily from one medium or platform to another, and who are certain—always—that the answer is out there somewhere, waiting to be discovered. By them.
- They're bricoleurs,[2] who grew up playing with technology (and are perplexed, therefore, by journalism education's collective obsession with the tools of media production: If you need to learn Photoshop, you learn Photoshop. What's the big deal?).
- Many are gamers, masters of collaborative engagement and targeted outcomes; all have performed multiple identities in virtual spaces and understand intuitively how to tailor a message to a particular audience.

Contrary to our persistent (and self-righteous) complaint that they cannot discern credible from incredible content, they value truth and accuracy—and a decade of virtual experience has produced in them the ability to recognize both. And they operate from a set of assumptions that defies the premises of our journalism schools and the profession it serves: In the worlds they inhabit, online and off, content is free, knowledge production is collaborative, and media are participatory.

That means they'll listen to us talk about intellectual property, the authority of the "professional" journalist (not to mention the professional faculty member), and the inherent credibility or value of longstanding journalism traditions and structures (like the inverted pyramid, for example, or newsrooms). They may even nod and take notes (it could be on the test). But their experience—as valid and

[1] The European Organization for Nuclear Research.

[2] As defined on Wikipedia, bricoleurs are people who engage in a design approach called bricolage, meaning that they invent their own strategies for using existing materials in creative, resourceful and original ways.

real as our own—instructs them that such ideas are historical artifacts of a pre-Web culture, leftovers from how things used to be.

And they are certain (and right) that that's not how things are anymore.

Emergent Innovation

About 18 months ago, a friend of mine, the executive vice president of one of the country's largest media companies, was describing his frustration with corporate culture. "After you've been in the corporate environment for more than six months, it's impossible to have an original idea," he told me. "So we all end up just talking to ourselves, telling each other what we want to hear."

It reminded me of my colleagues in journalism education during the past few years, all struggling to figure out how we're going to inject convergence and "new media"—whatever that means—into curricula that haven't changed all that much since pre-cable TV.

We've done, in good faith, what our own experience tells us we should do: We've set up committees and attended workshops. We've benchmarked the programs that looked like they knew what they were doing (even as they benchmarked us). And we've earnestly debated the banal: Are bloggers journalists? (Answer: When they're doing journalism.) Will they replace "real" journalists? (Answer: No.) Should we incorporate "new media" into all of our courses or create a "new media" requirement for all students? (Yes. Both.) And we have drummed into our students—with an archaic resolve—that there is no moral difference between sharing a music file and shoplifting a CD. (Is it possible we believe that? Really?)

We've been talking in circles. Just like our corporate counterparts.

But there is one significant difference: Every fall, we enjoy the privilege of newness. Millions of first-year students arrive on our collective doorstep, perpetually 18. And increasingly, those newbies will be culturally literate as Jenkins defines the term, multitasking bricoleurs armed with the confidence of youth and the perspective of a childhood lived as much online as off. That represents a whole slate of challenges—to our egos, to our pedagogy, to the core mission of the academy—which we have not yet begun to anticipate. But in an era of extraordinary chaos and unpredictable change, that also may be among the greatest and most undervalued assets we have.

In the worlds they [the students] inhabit, online and off, content is free, knowledge production is collaborative, and media are participatory.

A corporate colleague and I decided to test that theory, to leverage that creative capital in a process of open innovation that would produce executable results. Last summer, we piloted an innovation incubator with six students at Ithaca College. We worked with his executive team, which established the deadlines and served as our client. And we gave the group a single instruction: Create something new in the online travel market.

That was it. No rules. No grades. No limits. No answers. It took six weeks, and it challenged the students in ways they didn't expect; in fact, they were furious when we refused to set parameters, answer questions, or provide direction (that's what faculty do, isn't it? Well, isn't it?) It was an open playing field and, at the end of the project, they hit it out of the park.

Now we've expanded the model. Under a grant from the Knight Foundation's News Challenge project, seven journalism schools across the country are collaborating on a network of innovation incubators.[3] We're testing John Seely Brown and John Hagel's notions of productive open innovation: big ideas, firm deadlines, and clear outcomes.

And the project's faculty mentors are tracking the processes through which students collaborate and generate original ideas as a baseline for future research and model development. By spring, we'll have produced three "marketable" projects, field-tested them with media partners, and piloted a system for transferring intellectual innovation and creative capital from the academy to a news industry desperately in need of both. And just as important, we'll have reexamined the very nature of journalism education in a participatory media culture.

Following the Leaders

That process must begin with an admission that cheap paper—no matter how familiar—is a lousy platform for content delivery. That doesn't mean journalism is irrelevant; it just means we've stopped reading newspapers. And contrary to the handwringing going on in our newsrooms and our classrooms, that's the result not of cultural crisis but of a failing business model. It's also a wake-up call for American journalism education, a signal that our own future depends entirely upon our willingness to move beyond the tools of our trade and the practices of our past.

For starters, we need to stop teaching software (except, perhaps, to each other). Our students will come to us knowing it, or knowing they can learn it when they need to. We need to stop conflating the newspaper industry with journalism itself. When we see yet another study about how kids

[3] The participating schools are: Michigan State, University of Kansas, Kansas State, Western Kentucky University, Ithaca College, University of Nevada-Las Vegas, and St. Michael's College.

aren't reading daily newspapers, we should worry less about the democracy and more about the insularity of our research frame: Journalism is alive and well on digg.com, YouTube, Crooksandliars.com, and The Smoking Gun.com. And when our students challenge our authority or fact check our proclamations during class, we need to stop scrambling for classroom management techniques and start addressing the widening gap between their assumptions about knowledge production and our own.

In short, our core mission, as educators and as journalists, is platform neutral—even if we are not. And our currency and credibility will depend not upon our ability to provide access to equipment or train students for a moribund industry, but upon our capacity to nurture collaborative innovation that produces accurate, informative and interactive content—for every screen and every audience.

Fortunately, our future is as participatory as it is inclusive; we have all the intellectual capital we need, right where we live. Her name is UWannaLoveMe7 and, if we pay attention and adjust our assumptions—and our pedagogy—accordingly, her generation will lead us everywhere we need to go. □

Dianne Lynch is dean of the Roy H. Park School of Communications at Ithaca College.

Adapt or Die of Irrelevance

The clash between academic requirements for professors and the education students of journalism need to have grows more intense.

By Karl Idsvoog

I'm doing something few university student journalists ever do. I'm writing an article to be published on the pages of a magazine. There won't be an iPod version, or a video to accompany its eventual appearance online, or interactivity for discussion and debate about what I say, or a blog or slide show—just words on the page. Only gradually is Nieman Reports adapting to what every journalism student must adapt to quickly—the evolving multimedia environment. With university journalism education, we can no longer train print journalists, or radio or TV journalists, or photojournalists; today, these are all pieces of a larger pie we call multimedia journalism.

Boom! That's the sound heard as journalism schools blow up their curriculum. That's what we're doing here at Kent State, and the leadership comes from a pleasantly surprising place—Fred Endres, the senior faculty member, who is like Thomas Edison in that he will stop coming up with innovative ideas on the day he dies. A former print reporter turned professor, in 1987 Endres started the computer-assisted reporting course at Kent. He then developed our first online journalism class in 1999, and three years later started a collaborative course where print and broadcast journalists fight—I mean work with each other—on news projects.

With university journalism education, we can no longer train print journalists, or radio or TV journalists, or photojournalists; today, these are all pieces of a larger pie we call multimedia journalism.

"It is all about multimedia, interactivity, 24-hour deadlines, and new methods of delivering the news," says Endres. "It's more than we ever expected of students 10 to 15 years ago."

In every class, students are forced to think—and perform—across a variety of platforms. Photojournalism professor Teresa Hernández observes that "multimedia has become the way of the still photographer," and this means the visual gets immersed in sound. "People want to hear and see things more and read less," she says. "Like it or not, that is the reality." There's another reality, too, that every journalism professor must recognize—the job market. "Many of the photo internships are now for multimedia," Hernández says.

Jan Leach, a journalism professor who came to Kent State a few years ago from a print newsroom, shares this experience. "I'd be surprised if any newspaper editor would hire a student right out of j-school who didn't have a good understanding of writing/producing online," she says.

In the school's legal issues class, Barrett v. Rosenthal is to the Internet what New York Times Co. v. Sullivan is to libel, as citizen journalism becomes the

"next major battleground" for online speech, in the view of Professor Tim Smith. In the courtroom as well as the newsroom, the news media landscape is changing rapidly, so for students to succeed, the classroom—and the university in which it is embedded—must change as well. "If we want our kids to be competitive, we need to prepare them for the world they are about to enter," Smith says.

In Kent State's audience analysis class, Professor Max Grubb's students don't analyze only the TV Nielsen ratings, but they also examine the use of the Web. It's no longer just about circulation and ratings. Grubb, who spent 15 years on the sales/marketing side of the broadcast business, contends that blogs, citizen journalism, and interactivity have transformed the structure of the media business into what he calls the "architecture of participation." "As media professionals," says Grubb, "our students need to understand and facilitate rather than resist it."

Resisting Change

Creative thinking consultant Roger von Oech contends that nobody likes change except a baby whose diaper is wet. Too many j-school students seem proof of that notion. Beginning this fall semester, the j-school is moving into a new building with wireless Internet, high-speed video servers, and a converged newsroom. Student leaders are working with faculty to develop the organizational structure for student media. At a recent planning meeting, one of our brighter and more talented students listed a few potential stories, then asked the student from the school newspaper what she would put on the front page. He then posed the same question to the student representative from the TV station; how would she lead her newscast? He was demonstrating the ways in which newspapers and broadcast media approach the telling of news differently. But nobody raised any questions about how to cover these stories for a multimedia Web site. Each saw coverage only from inside of his or her own silo.

Such attitudes spell doom—in contemporary newsrooms and classrooms. "The more ostriches in your newsroom or on your faculty, the more likely your organization will quickly join the list of endangered species," Endres cautions. Amid the downsizing of newsrooms now going on, even veteran journalists are finding it essential to learn new skills. And some are returning to school to do so. Kent State's graduate coordinator, Von Whitmore, recognizes that "graduate programs will have to adapt to this new demand by developing alternative ways for working professionals to take classes [that] must teach students about multiple platform content from the very first course in the curriculum." Graduate student Susan Kirkman spent 20 years working as a journalist at the Akron Beacon Journal, most recently as the managing editor for multimedia and special projects. Kirkman's advice to journalists for managing change applies as much to newsrooms as it does to journalism schools: "Figure out how to create cultures that support innovation."

This is the toughest challenge we face—given how difficult cultural shifts can be to make within a university. "Some faculty will never be able to collaborate with those in other disciplines; others will do so, but reluctantly," says Endres. "Still others, maybe a third of current faculties, will find the move out of silos to be exciting and invigorating. You can probably identify those faculty members already. They're the ones with all the most forward thinking and aggressive students hanging around their offices."

Building a J-School Faculty

It's impossible to teach what you don't know, yet learning new software programs and developing multimedia skills requires the investment of time, resources and money. "It's the trifecta of money, time and personnel," says Whitmore. "[But] foundation money for journalism programs is shrinking while federal and state support for higher education has all but vanished."

Without universities willing to bring in faculty members with the skills and experience necessary to prepare students to meet the rapidly changing demands by getting rid of some academic barriers—such as requiring faculty members to have a PhD—journalism schools will remain on the precipice of becoming irrelevant to the profession. Editors are not determining which stories to tell and how to tell them by reading academic journals, yet universities reward publication of such articles more highly than they do teaching or passing on cutting-edge multimedia skills or figuring out how to get students to think creatively and broadly about how journalistic values mesh with the changes brought about by technological progress.

With this in mind, the requirements posted in the advertisements in The Chronicle of Higher Education for jobs as j-school professors seem all the more troubling. Recently I checked 20 of them, and all but one indicated that a PhD was required or preferred. Most did not require or give the preferred number of years of professional experience, though for one position the ad stipulated two years of professional experience. (I certainly know how much I knew after only two years on the job.)

Why so little experience would be deemed sufficient by any journalism program pinpoints a major disconnect between academia and the demands of the marketplace. Hiring someone to teach a reporting class who has never reported is like signing up a doctor who's never been in the operating room to teach surgery, or asking a lawyer who's never had a client or filed briefs or been in a courtroom to teach law. Educating journalists has always required more than an academic orientation—and this imbalance of university requirements vs. faculty relevance has always been a part of journalism school's uneasy fit inside the academy. But today the fit isn't just uneasy, it's untenable.

Universities will need to adapt or their j-schools will die of irrelevance. With soaring tuition costs, prospective journalists will refuse to waste time and money learning what they don't need to know while a glance over their shoulder

will spot plenty of young people finding stimulating, on-the-job tutorials in places other than classrooms.

Journalism's Importance

Kent State understands this. In its rich mix of faculty—in which nearly every member has spent years working as a journalist—a tenure-track professor can focus either on research or on practice. At a recent Investigative Reporters and Editors conference, a professor from another university asked me how I could be on a tenure-track position without having a PhD. At Kent State, I am the only faculty member on staff who has worked professionally in digital media. Indeed, our situation may currently be out of the norm, but to survive, it's the direction j-schools that want to remain relevant must head. To achieve that, those directing j-school programs must be able to explain to provosts and deans and university presidents the ways in which journalism differs from other scholarly pursuits—and why the mesh of classroom learning and on-the-street and in-the-newsroom reporting lessons and experiences are essential.

At Kent State, the faculty also appreciates what many news corporations have forgotten—that journalism is essential for our democracy to function. In the Winter 2006 issue of Nieman Reports, former Nieman Curator Bill Kovach stressed the importance of the "journalism of verification." Journalism isn't rumor, isn't about repeating gossip, and isn't about celebrity. The statement of purpose for the Committee of Concerned Journalists—the organization Kovach founded—should be placed at the entryway of every school of journalism. It states, "The central purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with accurate and reliable information they need in order to make informed judgments in a self-governing society." As former "Nightline" producer Tom Bettag in his article "Evolving Definitions of News" so aptly stated, "Credibility is so valuable today because it is so scarce."

For these reasons, and so many more, journalism education has never been as important as it is today. All of the software, streaming video, interactivity, flash animation, blogs and audio all become irrelevant when the journalism they are called to serve isn't solid. Students need to learn how to secure and dig through documents, to comprehensively prepare for interviews, to determine whether a story holds up to tough scrutiny or loses its legs as more information is gathered and assessed, and to appreciate what journalism is and why it matters. "The major obstacle facing journalism schools is the stark realization that students need to have critical thinking skills first, and then we need to ask them to start applying the multimedia skills on top. Without the first, there can be no use of that second that makes any sense," says Kent State journalism professor Barbara Hipsman.

Delivery platforms for news and information have changed—and at breakneck speed they will continue to change. In the past, it might have been possible, if not ideal, to pass along to students the fundamental principles and skills of journalism even if professors never had direct engagement with newsroom techniques and skills. Too much is changing too quickly in the digital news environment—and consequently in the marketplace these students will enter—to allow this mismatch to continue. □

Karl Idsvoog, a 1983 Nieman Fellow, is an assistant professor at Kent State University.

It's the *Audience,* Stupid!

At Stony Brook University, thousands of students are learning how to critically examine the news they encounter.

By Howard Schneider

The road to conceiving a radically different approach to journalism education—one that not only focuses on training future journalists but on tens of thousands of students with no journalistic aspirations at all—began for me in November 2004, when I abruptly left my job as the editor of Newsday. My sudden departure after 35 years of employment was prompted by a series of escalating disagreements with our new publisher over the direction and future of the paper.

On Election Night that year, I struggled mightily to write a nuanced headline that proclaimed the President's apparent reelection. One week later, my only occupation was how to best remove two decades of accumulated debris from the family basement. I was exhausted and drained of ambition. I was determined to defer for several months any thinking about the future, my own or of the future of journalism, my lifetime profession clearly roiling—one might even say wallowing—in turmoil.

Forty-eight hours later, all of that changed when I received a telephone call from the president of Stony Brook University, the largest research university in the New York State public college system. The campus was renowned for

its hard sciences, presided over for the past decade by a politically savvy, native Texan who had earned her academic stripes as a scholar of 18th century British drama. As editor of the dominant newspaper on Long Island, I had casually encountered Shirley Strum Kenny on many occasions, had been charmed by her Lone Star patois, and impressed with her intelligence, but I hardly knew her. Now at our first meeting in her homey but cluttered third-floor office, with the nameplate "Steel Magnolia" affixed to the desk, she kicked off her shoes and revealed why she had called.

"I want to do something big with journalism," she said. "It's time. I want to know if you will help me."

I muttered something about the basement.

"We have the chance to create a program for the future, not the past," she went on. "We can do something with distinction. But I need a plan. Will you at least think about it?"

We talked more, and I promised an answer. In a week's time, three factors convinced me to help Kenny create her program. I discovered that in the entire New York State public college system—which sprawled across 64 campuses with 415,000 students—there was not one accredited journalism program or undergraduate school of journalism.

Second, my extended conversation with Kenny had revealed an abiding interest in the press. I learned that she had graduated with a journalism degree from the University of Texas, had become only the second female editor of the Daily Texan, and had set off to become a reporter in Austin before a dumb, but not atypical male editor of the 1950's, had exiled her to the women's pages. She would be a trusted and committed partner in this venture.

Finally, in the week between my two visits, my anger had been rekindled at the pessimism, shortsightedness, panic and even cowardice that had marked so many decisions by top media executives in recent years. A former colleague even asked me, "How will you sleep at night knowing you will be training students who can't find jobs?"

No, I was a hopeless believer that responsible journalism would endure if only we could inspire young reporters with the courage, skills and passion to act in the public interest. Creating a journalism program would be my revenge—a powerful statement of optimism about the future. The question was, how to do it?

Charting a New Course

I set out to interview dozens of deans of journalism programs, industry leaders from the "old media" and gurus from the "new," visionaries, scholars, professors, authors, TV producers, and newspaper editors. We talked about convergence, the digital revolution, the inability of many journalism graduates to write a clear, declarative sentence, and the growing gender gap that had resulted in women occupying two-thirds of the seats in many communications programs. I visited huge communications schools that warehoused thousands of majors—of whom only a relatively few majored in journalism.

Always, there were the same questions: What values and skills will students need to succeed in the future? How will we sustain quality journalism in the face of a 24-7 digital news cycle, unprecedented competition, audience fragmentation, unreasonable financial goals, and the devaluing of serious news coverage?

It wasn't until later that I realized that many of the answers were unfolding right under my nose. I had agreed to teach a class called "The Ethics and Values of the American Press" so I could get to know Stony Brook students, a student body remarkable for its diversity and drive. About half the students were the first in their families to attend college, nearly 20 percent were not yet naturalized citizens, and many had SAT scores of 1,200 or higher. On the first day 35 upperclassmen stared back at me, representing majors from more than a dozen departments.

"I want you to do something antithetical to everything you have learned here," I told them. "I don't want you to think. Just react to the two words I put on the board." Then I wrote THE PRESS.

Words and phrases tumbled out. "Nosy." "Bias." "Ratings." "Lack of privacy." "Crime." "Liberal." "Sensational." "Television." "Not patriotic." "Slanted." "Nonstop." "Controversy." "Orange juice." (This last association came from a rare student who had grown up with a newspaper at the breakfast table.)

In the following weeks, I probed the students on how they made their news decisions. (To varying degrees, they all consumed news.) I deduced that about a third believed *everything* they watched or read that came from a "news brand," though they equally trusted news from an obscure Web site, an entertainment magazine, or The New York Times. Another third believed *nothing*—cynics at 19, convinced the mainstream press was hopelessly captive of greedy corporate interests and corrupt government spinmeisters. The last third often didn't know what to believe, confused about what news accounts to trust or who even was a journalist. Was Jon Stewart? Oprah Winfrey? Bill O'Reilly? Michael Moore?

Spirited discussions ensued on what freedom of the press actually means, on whether Stewart is a journalist (despite his disavowals, more than a third of the class turned to him as their *primary* source of news), on whether news decisions are driven more by profit motive or social responsibility and—using a series of hypothetical cases based on my own experiences—to what extent journalists exercise ethical decision-making.

Meanwhile, outside of class, I felt I was making good progress on my plan for a journalism degree program. It would be comprehensive, requiring majors to earn 47 credits in journalism—far more than most programs—and an additional 80 credits in the arts and sciences. It would emphasize the fundamentals. There would be three news-writing courses, a rigorous grammar test, and a writing immersion program for those who failed the test. It would be innovative. We would teach students to thrive across all media platforms. It would be practical. We would prepare students

to compete for entry-levels jobs in a new digital "newsroom of the future" that we would build on campus.

But again and again scenes from my classroom forced me to think in new directions. There was the afternoon a student asked if O'Reilly was a reporter or commentator, and what difference it made. (Only a handful of students, it turned out, had ever seen a newspaper editorial page.) Or the day the class had a fierce debate about whether news coverage of the Iraq War was too negative, with students digging ideological bunkers that were impervious to incoming evidence. My informal survey found the class equally divided as to whether the press had too little power or too much. (That semester a Knight Foundation survey of more than 100,000 high schools students revealed that 37 percent felt that newspapers should first get their stories approved by the government.)

As the deadline for getting my proposal to Kenny drew near, I knew I had to make a major change. A journalism school of the future would need two missions, not one. Our first mission was daunting enough: to train the next generation of reporters and editors in a period of media transformation. But the second mission was of equal—perhaps greater—importance: to educate the next generation of news consumers.

Preparing News Consumers

An open, cacophonous, freewheeling press always would include those who practiced the dark arts of the information age: disguising reality through sleight-of-hand and half-truths, conjuring up assertion as verification, masquerading ideology as news analysis, and morphing news values into entertainment hype, not to mention the veritable journalistic sins of sloppiness, laziness and naiveté. The digital revolution might bring the promise of enlightenment, but in its pathological lack of accountability might just as easily spread a virus of confusion and disinformation.

The ultimate check against an inaccurate or irresponsible press never would be just better-trained journalists, or more press critics and ethical codes. It would be a generation of news consumers who would learn how to distinguish for themselves between news and propaganda, verification and mere assertion, evidence and inference, bias and fairness, and between media bias and *audience* bias—consumers who could differentiate between raw, unmediated information coursing through the Internet and independent, verified journalism.

Our first mission was daunting enough: to train the next generation of reporters and editors in a period of media transformation. But the second mission was of equal—perhaps greater—importance: to educate the next generation of news consumers.

Yet most journalism programs largely ignored the issue, choosing to focus almost exclusively on the supply side of the journalism equation. We would focus on the *demand* side, as well, and build a future audience that would recognize and appreciate quality journalism.

I told this to Kenny in our last meeting that spring. I proposed a course called News Literacy—a class on how to use critical thinking skills to judge the credibility and reliability of news reports. I urged that she make it available to all students on campus. The university would nurture a more informed citizenry. Our students would acquire a lifetime asset: the ability to assess what to trust and distrust in the news media, when to act on information and when to suspect it, whether in choosing a President, a controversial medication, or a news "brand."

About a month after receiving my "dual mission" proposal, Kenny called back.

"Let's do it," she said.

In the two years since we launched Stony Brook's School of Journalism with nearly 30 new courses, we have taught News Literacy to several hundred students from across the campus. The syllabus for the three-credit, 42-hour course continues to evolve, but its backbone has hardened. The class begins with a 48-hour news blackout imposed on the students—no news, ball scores, or even weather for two days. Some students report they are so anxious they can't sleep, others carry umbrellas as insurance, and almost all are surprised by the ubiquity of news and to the extent to which it intrudes in their lives.

After teaching the course for one semester, we made a major adjustment. We realized that before we could help students assess any journalism, we had to help them find the journalism. So we employ a grid to demonstrate the differences between news, propaganda, advertising, publicity, entertainment and raw information, with particular emphasis on areas where the lines are often blurring—or collapsing.

Journalists visit the class and describe how they make decisions. Students study the inherent tension between the press and government in America and how the U.S. press differs from the press overseas. (Unfailingly, students are shocked when they visit the Web site of the Committee to Protect Journalists. "I couldn't believe how many people want to kill journalists," one student said. "I had no idea.")

But the heart of the course is a sequence of classes on "deconstructing the news." Students critically examine news Web sites, newspaper stories, and cable and broadcast news reports, separate information that is asserted from information that is verified, analyze each source in a story based on five guidelines that help them judge reliability, and seek out any evidence of bias, including their own.

A powerful metaphor for verification emerged during a discussion of Hurricane Katrina. According to one erroneous news account, the bodies of 40 dead citizens had piled up in a freezer at the Morial Convention Center. The reporter based his story on second-hand information from two National Guardsmen. In his subsequent mea culpa, the reporter regretted never looking inside for himself. Students seized on the image and suggested a new rule for news consumers. Before believing any story, always ask, *"Did the reporter open the freezer?"*

Student evaluations have been largely positive. In a story in The New York Times one sophomore said," I think I learned more skills that I'm going to use for the rest of my life than I did in any other course in college."

Our work has just begun. With the help of a $1.7 million grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, we launched a program this fall to teach News Literacy to 10,000 students during the next four years. The Knight grant also will allow us to test over time whether the course makes a significant difference in their academic, professional or personal lives. And in May, Kenny established a national Center for News Literacy at the School of Journalism. Its goal is to extend our mission to other universities, high schools, and even the general public.

Needless to say, I never finished cleaning out the basement. □

Howard Schneider is dean of the School of Journalism at Stony Brook University.

Start Earlier. Expand the Mission. Integrate Technology.

A journalism professor offers a fresh approach to training journalists alongside those who consume news and one day might publish it.

By Kim Pearson

Most journalism majors don't become journalists, but most journalists are graduates of journalism programs. This means that how educators approach the preparation of students in this digital age will shape journalism's future direction in significant ways. And in this transformational time for journalism, what is best represented by a liberal arts education needs to be placed front and center so those who become journalists will be, at their core, ready to act as intellectually sophisticated producers and disseminators of information.

Sensing this need, the Knight Foundation and Carnegie Corporation of New York sponsored blue-ribbon conferences and demonstration projects aimed at reshaping undergraduate and graduate-level journalism programs. In May 2006, they issued a progress report entitled "Journalism's Crisis of Confidence: A Challenge for the Next Generation."[1] It stressed the need for curricula to ensure that aspiring journalists be educated to become worldly intellectuals who retain the common touch necessary to reach audiences in an evolving media landscape of almost infinite complexity. With this in mind, a few programs, such as Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, Northwestern University's Medill School, and USC Annenberg's School for Communication, are in the process of designing enhanced curricula and joint degree opportunities with other departments and schools. In September 2006, a task force of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication reported on the state of its affiliated doctoral programs,[2] and spoke to the need for improving theoretical engagement with key issues and smoother integration of communications research into craft-focused undergraduate and master's-level courses.

Neither report sheds much light on exactly how the suggested approaches will prepare journalists to deal with the enormous challenges and opportunities of the digital age. Nor is much attention paid to assessing the roles journalists or journalism educators might play in shaping the technological and economic frameworks in which newsgathering will be practiced. And no consideration is given to what journalism education might do at the pre-college level to promote news literacy among children who spend increasing

[1] www.carnegie.org/pdf/journalism_crisis/journ_crisis_full.pdf

[2] www.aejmc.org/_scholarship/_publications/_resources/_reports/taskforcereport_06.pdf

amounts of their time finding and sharing information online.

Fortunately, some academic leaders are undertaking new initiatives, such as the new Graduate School Journalism Scholarship for students with undergraduate computer science degrees. However, we must do more to prevent a widening gap between academic preparation and the technological and economic forces of the digital age into which students will emerge. And the consequence could be that the valued place journalists have long held in our democratic process could be endangered.

Seeking a New Approach

There are ways to act on critical aspects of these problems. For example, while it's not unusual for middle and high school English teachers to have students create print and online newspapers and magazines as a way to teach writing and information gathering, journalism education—including media literacy—needs to be more directly infused into the curricula. Multimedia research and communications skills are essential for students as they become critical consumers and producers of information and news; but they must also take to heart the rights and responsibilities that accompany this privilege.

To do this requires the development of a degree track for teachers with certifications in language arts, art education, and computer science. Therefore, undergraduate journalism education should offer a liberal arts track *and* an education track, just as happens often with other liberal arts disciplines.

Concern is now being expressed about the future of investigative reporting as newsroom staffs and reporting resources are cut. So I offer some examples of how such an approach might help in this regard:

1. If middle and high school students practiced the skills of online journalism in the course of their studies—researching public records, assembling databases from information they gathered, doing podcasts of interviews and their own production—then their lifelong connection to news and to the importance of its reliability could be strengthened.
2. Young people taught in this way might be more likely to enter the newsgathering field, either as journalists or as publishing entrepreneurs.
3. Even the majority of students who don't become newsgatherers might become more civically engaged, perhaps using online sites such as YouTube as places to practice their own local watchdog reporting.

The challenge for journalists—and journalism educators—is to think about ways to create dynamic curricula to enhance the practice of journalism.

The challenge for journalists—and journalism educators—is to think about ways to create dynamic curricula to enhance the practice of journalism. Such a challenge lends itself to the development of new and closer partnerships among journalists, technology specialists involved with communications tools, economists looking at new business models, and educators working with the next generation of potential journalists.

Adrian Holovaty, a programmer involved with journalism Web sites, eloquently argues that journalists need to move beyond the linear narrative and think of stories as chunks of data to be segmented and cross-referenced so readers can easily find what interests them.[3] His new direction relies on the database capabilities of content management systems. But Holovaty's experience working in newsrooms has shown him that for this to happen, those who manage newsrooms need to learn to treat their technology people as partners, not as mere support staff.[4] In the future, especially if students emerge from school with greater adeptness with technology, this divide might be lessened.

But Holovaty goes further in proposing that journalists abandon hard news storytelling in favor of database-driven presentations. This question is one I've been researching with a computer scientist. Her background is in computational linguistics and gaming; mine is in literary journalism and narrative theory. Together we are trying to create a prototype storytelling engine that delivers chunks of story content from a database that is programmed to allow the end-user flexibility and control while ensuring that related chunks of material—which might be text, image, audio or video—are presented in a sequence that preserves context and coherence. We are well on our way to designing the information architecture for the prototype. We presented our research at the 2007 summer conference of the New Media Consortium. Notes on the project, including links to the slides from the presentation, are available at the blog, The Nancybelle Project.[5]

It's impossible to know how well such content management systems will function as future tools of journalists in terms of their power, flexibility and esthetics. What we do know is that undergraduate and graduate journalism curricula need to provide opportunities for students to participate in and reflect on the intersection of storytelling and technology. Exposure to linear and nonlinear storytelling should already be happening. As for techno-

[3] www.holovaty.com/blog/archive/2006/09/06/0307

[4] www.holovaty.com/blog/archive/2006/10/02/2300

[5] www.kimpearson.net/nancybelle.html/

logical knowledge, it will be important for students to understand the limits of artificial intelligence technology, because those limits constrain the ability to use gaming as a journalistic medium. They ought also to grapple with ethical questions raised by the semantic recognition programs and recommender systems that power the most advanced search engines and e-commerce marketing software programs.

High-quality research will inevitably lead to new communication technologies and techniques, which can be employed earlier in the educational process and will likely end up in the toolbox of future journalists. If this approach to journalism education takes hold, it might also improve the media literacy and civic engagement of non-journalists. And in the digital world of our future, those who see themselves as readers today are increasingly likely to become publishers and editors of their own words tomorrow. □

Kim Pearson is an associate professor of English and interactive multimedia at The College of New Jersey, a contributing editor for BlogHer.org, and former contributing writer for the Online Journalism Review. She is a senior investigator in a research project funded by Microsoft Corporation that teaches advanced computer science skills using a multidisciplinary game-design curriculum.

The Web Resides at the Hub of Learning

'For us, the Web is entirely positive: It is a journalistic tool with wondrous powers . . .'

By Nicholas Lemann

The academic year now underway is the first one in which all professional students at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism will have been trained to work on the Internet. Our school was relatively early to embrace the Internet and other new technologies for delivering journalism. We established a New Media major back in 1994. But we treated the Internet as one of several forms of journalism in which a student could specialize. The size of the New Media major waxed and waned with the fortunes of the Internet economy. In my first year as dean, 2003-04, we had only a handful of New Media majors.

Since then a lot has changed. First, jobs that end in ".com" are waxing again and as a result so is our New Media concentration. This year we have 38 New Media majors, by far our largest number ever. Second, and more important, many of our students who major in one of the old media are finding, when they graduate, that they spend much of every day working for their news organization's Web site.

So we have been making a lot of curriculum changes at the school. We invested in a content management system—something most news organizations have—that permits students and faculty members to post lots of material to their own class-based Web sites, without needing to consult a Webmaster. All faculty who teach our core skills courses are required to be trained to use the content management system, and many other faculty have chosen to be trained as well. Every section of our basic reporting and writing course now operates its own Web site, and every student learns to write for the Web and also to gather images and sound about news stories and post them to the Web. We have hired a small squad of Web experts who go from class to class helping to iron out whatever problems arise in this new regime.

It's amazing to us how quickly and pervasively the Web is permeating nearly everything we do at the school.

We have also launched this fall three sections of a new class called New Media Newsroom. Here the idea is not to emulate the new life of a newspaper reporter but to experiment with the capabilities of Web journalism in a way that assumes no anchoring presence of another medium. The students experiment with new ways of delivering information, using all of the Web's rich capabilities for interactivity, linking, and the use of words, sound, and still and moving images. The written "news story"—an 800-or-so-word piece of text meant to be read from beginning to end—is not assumed to be necessarily the basic unit of journalistic production.

It's amazing to us how quickly and pervasively the Web is permeating nearly everything we do at the school. Quite a few classes other than the ones I just mentioned (including the class I teach) operate their own Web sites. On our school's home page, click on

"Student Work" to find an assortment of Web sites that reside in specific classes.[1] We also operate a site called "The Columbia Journalist," which is a juried selection of some of the best work students in various classes are producing.

Our Columbia Journalism Review now publishes daily on the Web, as well as six times a year in print. The participants in our brand-new Punch Sulzberger News Media Executive Leadership Program—senior executives in news organizations—spend much of their time trying to figure out the economics of journalism on the Web. Another of our new ventures—an initiative to create business school-style case studies about journalism—is developing material that explores the challenges and opportunities that the Web's ability to efface the line between professional and "citizen" journalists poses to editors and reporters and will also use the Web as a teaching tool for all cases, whether or not they deal substantively with the Web's impact on journalism. When we teach the history of journalism, we take special care to include material on moments in the past when new communications technologies changed everything.

What makes the Web so attractive to us is that the barriers to entry are so low. As much as we groan at budget time over how heavily we are investing in technology, we can afford to get ourselves much closer to professional levels of production on the Web than we can in the print or broadcast media. The Web has the greatest inherent capability of any journalistic medium we use at the school and the lowest production and distribution cost. And, although we are interested in the economic challenges the Web poses to news organizations, so far it has not been a "disruptive technology" in the economic sense for graduate schools at research universities. For us, the Web is entirely positive: It is a journalistic tool with wondrous powers, and to the extent that its advent requires a rethinking of journalism's professional norms, well, what better place for that than a journalism school? □

Nicholas Lemann is dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University and serves as its Henry R. Luce Professor.

[1] www.columbiajournalist.org/

How a New J-School Takes on a Changing Profession

CUNY is integrating new digital technologies with the 'eternal verities' of reporting, writing and critical thinking.

Stephen Shepard became dean of the City University of New York Graduate School of Journalism when it opened its doors to students in the fall of 2006. Prior to his appointment in 2005, he had been editor in chief of Business Week since 1984. To delve into some of the challenges confronted in preparing students for digital journalism—and to explore the opportunities—Shepard borrowed from Socrates his method of rhetorical examination, asking and responding to questions that he, his faculty, and students are hearing and discussing all the time.

This is a helluva time to start a journalism school. Where are your students going to get jobs?

I hear this sort of thing quite a lot, ever since we announced plans to launch the Graduate School of Journalism at the City University of New York. And, yes, it's true that hardly a day goes by without word of another layoff at a major news organization or a decline in audience and advertising. But that is only half the story. The more encouraging news is that every day also brings talk of phenomenal growth at a newspaper Web site or the launch of a new innovation that enhances storytelling. Think of podcasts. Or citizen journalism. Or YouTube.

This bad news/good news moment is actually a wonderful time to start a j-school, an opportunity to participate in the re-imagining of journalism now going on throughout our profession. It is a time for students to learn the new tricks of the trade—what Jeff Jarvis, who runs our interactive program, calls the new "tool kit."

Universities, after all, are the natural incubators of new ideas in every field. Why not journalism? Let's think about the possibilities that technological change brings. Let's think about new business models, or about hyperlocal content for newspapers, or how journalism can become a genuine conversation with our audience, or about the role of "citizen journalists" as eyewitnesses, using laptops, cell-phone cameras, and audio/video recorders.

As a new graduate school, we start with a clean slate. But we cannot escape a basic question facing all schools: What is the proper balance between teaching the new techniques of the digital age and imparting the eternal verities of journalism—the reporting, writing, ethical concerns, and critical thinking that are more important than ever? Like

other schools, we are still grappling with these and other questions, but I believe we have taken some important initial steps.

Let me try to anticipate some of your questions:

Why did you choose a three-semester program?

We felt strongly that one year was too short to teach everything these times require. A three-semester program enables us to run a summer internship program between the second and third semesters. It gives us the time to go beyond teaching only the craft of journalism (reporting, writing, ethics) and add content specialties. We chose four: urban reporting, business/economics, arts/culture, and health/medicine. Each specialty offers three courses, enough to build a substantial base of knowledge, enabling students to develop the expertise and sources to do more sophisticated stories.

Finally, of course, a three-semester program enables us to teach all those new technologies—from Dreamweaver to GarageBand. Students can still choose a media track—print, broadcast or interactive. But they are all required to do assignments across media platforms.

How does your building lend itself to this new digital age?

We have more than 40,000 square feet built from scratch on two floors in the old New York Herald Tribune building in midtown Manhattan. The whole facility is wireless and, as our 50 pioneering students walk around with their Macintosh laptops (required), they are connected to the Internet from any place in the school. We have a large newsroom, TV and radio studios, and editing suites. In short, we have the Tribune's traditional DNA in our walls and the new media convergence in our very air. It's the perfect metaphor for what we hope to become as we gradually ramp up to more than 100 students.

Why even bother with media tracks? Why didn't you just converge the entire curriculum?

Three reasons: First, when we studied other schools that had tried it, we saw lots of problems, primarily an overemphasis on technology at the expense of journalistic skills. Second, the idea of convergence is still developing, and many students and faculty feel more comfortable with traditional media tracks. Third, many news media companies demand specific skills, particularly in broadcast. The job market hasn't yet shifted as much as rhetoric would suggest.

Will the day ever come when you'll abolish media tracks?

Maybe. We talk about it all the time.

What is the most popular media track selected by your students?

Even in this day and age, print is the most popular, followed by interactive, then by broadcasting.

But isn't print obsolete?

Print isn't just about ink on paper. It emphasizes in-depth reporting, analytical writing, and critical thinking. It is journalism that seeks to provide understanding, context, insight and, on our best days, something approaching wisdom. This kind of journalism, which people associate with newspapers and magazines, can and should be done in all media formats.

Sounds very lofty. How, then, will you teach convergence?

In several ways. First, all students take a first-semester course called "Fundamentals of Interactive Journalism." They discuss how technology is reshaping the media world. They learn to create Web sites, videos and podcasts. They blog. They learn to use the new tools.

What else?

We created something called the January Academy, a four-week intersession in which we offer workshops in new media technologies. For example, print and interactive students can take a workshop in audio and visual tools and production. Or learn how to use Final Cut software. Or take instruction in Photoshop. Throughout the year, we offer evening and weekend seminars in various multimedia skills for interested students.

Sounds like you're training technicians.

No. We're simply giving them tools to tell a story in new and different ways. It's up to them to decide how best to report and present a story—in words, pictures, audio, video or interactively with a community. There's more choice, more opportunity.

What about the eternal verities you mentioned earlier?

The traditional tools—reporting and writing—are the first tools they learn here. They remain front and center in every course. And if students want to become long-form magazine writers, they'll find plenty of help here.

How do you teach convergence in the subject specialties, like business/economics?

Glad you asked. Let's say we have a print student specializing in business journalism. In each of the three business reporting classes she'll take, the student will do at least one story in another media format—for example, as a multimedia, interactive piece. It will likely be a Web-based package, with audio and video, with interactive elements, with links.

Can your faculty handle all this?

Some can. For example, our business and urban programs are headed by Sarah Bartlett, who was a reporter and editor at The New York Times and Business Week. She also worked at Oxygen Media and knows a lot about interactivity and multimedia. She'll be

able to evaluate the students' work for both content and presentation.

But surely that's not true for all of your faculty, right?

Right. That's why we're also training our faculty in these new tools. And if a faculty member doesn't feel qualified to judge a video clip or podcast, we'll ask Linda Prout, who runs our broadcast program, to take a look, or Jeff Jarvis, or Sandeep Junnarkar from the interactive program. We also plan to use multimedia "coaches" to work with faculty and students on these cross-platform projects.

How are the students taking all this? Some of them must be a bit confused.

Some of them are. Times of profound change are often confusing. I recently talked with two students about their choice of media tracks. They wanted all the advanced writing they would do in the print track, but they also wanted to use the new tools in the interactive track.

What did you tell them?

There's no one-size-fits-all answer. We talked about their career goals, their strengths and weaknesses, their experience before they came here, and what they could best learn at school vs. on the job. I emphasized that, regardless of their choice, they would have opportunities to learn both sets of skills at CUNY.

What did they decide?

One chose interactive because he felt his reporting and writing skills were already pretty strong, and he wanted to work more with the new tools. The other chose print because she wanted to do more advanced writing and felt she could learn the technical skills on the job, if she needed them. They each made the right decision.

Have your views changed?

Sure. I'm learning along with everyone else. It's great fun for an old magazine guy like me to participate in such profound change. □

Credibility Resides at the Core of Teaching Journalism

The challenge involves adjusting to the new rigors of the practice and getting students to think in digital ways.

By Jean Folkerts

It was nearly 150 years ago that Washington and Lee University inaugurated journalism education in the United States. By this action, which took place soon after the Civil War ended, the university sparked an enduring debate about the appropriate balance between a university education and on-the-job training. Not even momentous changes in the technology that enables people to communicate—the telegraph, telephone, radio and television, and now the Internet—have put an end to the arguments about the role of journalism education and what form it should take. But amid this disagreement has been acceptance of a shared goal: to prepare those who will practice journalism to be able to provide citizens with accurate and credible news and information to ensure participation in the governing process.

To achieve this end, journalism education has changed only slightly from the 1960's until the mid-1990's. The most noticeable change has been the rising influence of broadcast media as educators came to regard radio and television as important forms of journalism and as schools expanded to include multiple forms of mass communication, such as advertising and public relations.

More recently the Internet has upended our world by calling into question the ways that most journalism teaching happens. At a time when many universities had developed specialized sequences of courses in print, broadcast, advertising and public relations as a way to resolve debates about how these disciplines could share an academic home, the fast-moving digital revolution—with its varied multimedia dimensions to storytelling—challenged this model.

Some journalism schools have merged specialized sequences of course study into two categories. One is called "journalism" or "news and information," and this includes reporting and writing news for print, broadcast and the Web, along with "info-graphics," design and broadcast and multimedia production of stories. The other carries adjectives such as "strategic" or

"persuasive" before the word "communication," and this category combines advertising and public relations. Some of these schools require a generalized multimedia or visual communications class as a basic course. Others teach writing, information gathering, and multimedia production in a single course.

There are two problems with this structure:

1. In some curricula, beneath the newly required visual communications course, much of the rest of what students study looks just the same as it did in the separated sequences. The same courses are taught, with a heavy emphasis on traditional examples.
2. The other problem is one of depth. Can news writing, reporting skills, programs such as InDesign and Flash, along with photography, be taught in a single course? Can one person be all things to all media?

Seeking Guidance

Since I became dean of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill in July 2006, I've spent considerable time talking with alumni, turning to them to learn what graduating students need to know. I seek their advice about how to best address the decline in newspaper circulation and the ascendancy of the Web. Our alumni journalists are concerned more about whether our students master substantive knowledge than they are with how students master technology. Alumni believe they should be learning more about world and American history, how the economy and business decisions affect social and political behavior, and media ethics and media law.

Journalists have offered me good examples of how such substantive study paid off in their newsrooms. I recall one of them telling me how he'd cautioned his editor to move slowly when Richard Jewell was named a bombing suspect by various news media at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. He said he could hear his ethics professor whispering in his ear about leaping too fast with limited evidence. But the editor responded, "CNN is using it." Days later, when Jewell was exonerated, the editor apologized. Jewell later sued a number of news organizations.

Given their experiences, our alumni think digitally—and they assure me that everyone must be able to "think" digitally. What this means is that we need to reorganize our teaching about how to report and produce a story across media platforms. One alumnus working for USA Today told of her trek from Basra to Baghdad; carrying a video camera and sound equipment, along with her pen and notebook, she joined the swelling ranks of backpack journalists.

Given their experiences, our alumni think digitally—and they assure me that everyone must be able to 'think' digitally.

Our journalism school is known for its in-depth education and for preparing students to be ready to work in the business when they graduate. Students take at least 80 of the 120 credits required for graduation outside of the school, as the accreditation council for journalism schools requires. At the journalism school, students must take a course in media law, ethics and news writing, and complete a mix of theory and skills courses.

A Different Direction

Like other journalism schools, how we are teaching—and what we are teaching—has been in the midst of change for a decade or more. Ten years ago, when educators started exploring convergence, the head of the visual communications sequence at our school, who was trained as a photographer, taught himself computer programming so he could understand better the underpinnings of multimedia. Out of this experience, he developed a superb sequence of courses; today this sequence is updated constantly and prepares students to work as newspaper and Web designers, to compose info-graphics, to be photographers, and to create multimedia documentaries and shorter multimedia news stories. Students who take these courses are much in demand in the job market. A visual communication graduate recently found himself deciding between job offers from The New York Times and MSNBC.

However, core skills taught in broadcast and print sequences are not replaced by visual communication alone. Students still need to learn to develop quality story packages for television and to study writing, reporting and editing. They need specialized information to master areas such as business journalism.

As we think hard about how to move forward—merging sequences or creating new ones—we want to add depth to our students' education. So we are considering which nine or 10 classes are the ones to best prepare students to work in the new media world. And we are thinking about what happens if we require students to take additional credits as part of their study at this school (we now require 28 credits): Would such a requirement shortchange their liberal arts education—a vital part of the education journalists need? Would this curtail their opportunity to take business courses, which are increasingly important for journalists?

At a minimum we must make sure that students and faculty think and work across a range of media platforms. Our challenge isn't relegated to the combining of sequences or adding new courses, but involves progressive professorial practice and interaction with working journalists as we enable students to think in digital ways. Learning such critical thinking is essential if they are going to participate in shaping the digital environment in which they'll be working. Our approaches include the following:

- We must teach students to work with others; students in a graphic design

class and a magazine editing class work in teams across course lines.
- Our business journalism professor writes a popular blog and is a contributing editor and columnist for a monthly magazine, Business North Carolina. In his classes, students think and work across media platforms.
- A professor who teaches editing explores alternative story forms; he works with the Poynter Institute using new curricula to assess their impact.
- One of our design professors is coauthor of a column on digital design for the University of Southern California Annenberg's Online Journalism Review.
- Broadcast students stream their newscasts on the Web.
- A professor's advanced design students do readability and eye-tracking tests for a new Web design at a nearby television station.

Research done by our graduate faculty reflects the new communications landscape but also emphasizes the ongoing study of journalism history and law—traditional strengths of our school. In the midst of rapid change, graduate inquiry into what has happened in the past, as well as the legal environment of this practice, contributes to shaping—and not just reacting to—the emerging digital era. This year we also will add a senior person to our faculty who specializes in digital media economics.

Just as 19th century pioneers at Washington and Lee led the way into uncharted academic territory, journalism educators today are responsible for helping their students navigate through this territory of upending change. My advice is this: While we find ways to integrate new skills into our teaching, let's be sure to keep our eye squarely on what has remained a stationary goal—to have students leave our classrooms with the wisdom and skills they need to provide citizens with accurate and credible information.

The digital revolution, wherever it takes us, will not erase the need for educated professionals whose work is trusted by readers and viewers. The news may come to us in amazing ways. It may look different. Citizens who are not professional journalists might help construct it. It might be mixed with a thousands bits and bytes of random and even entertaining information. Establishing trust with readers and viewers is as important in digital journalism as it was before the telegraph was invented. The next generation of journalists will engage a host of new challenges and opportunities, some of which we will likely be unable to foresee. But accuracy and credibility should never feel like outmoded ideals. Passing on tools to keep those principles at the core of journalistic practice remains our greatest responsibility. □

Jean Folkerts is dean of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Prior to her appointment in 2006, she was professor of media and public affairs and associate vice president for special academic initiatives at George Washington University. Before entering higher education, Folkerts was a general assignment reporter for The Topeka Capital-Journal and an editor and writer at other publications.

Teaching What We Don't (Yet) Know

A course about change becomes a constant work in progress as it looks to the newsrooms, audiences and forms of the future.

By Mark J. Prendergast

The core question as I moved from newsroom to classroom last year was what should I teach? After a 30-year newspaper career, the temptation was to dip into the well of experience to pass on the time-honored skills of our craft. But that approach didn't feel right at a time of such tumult. So at the suggestion of Ohio University's E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, where I had accepted a visiting professorship after 13 years as an editor at The New York Times, I developed an experimental, forward-looking seminar I called "Journalism in Transition."

Inspired by research I had recently done for my master's degree at Columbia University, it was intended as a timely look at where we are and where we may be headed. But at its heart, the syllabus overlaid traditional journalistic values onto new-media realities of the sort I had encountered on the Times Continuous News Desk, a pioneering bridge between the paper's newsroom and its Web site.

The course began with readings and discussion about the core questions of who is a journalist and what is journalism in a media universe in which anyone with a computer and access to the Internet has instant, global reach in reporting "news" and the ability to claim the title "journalist." In that spirit, we considered just what "truth" might be and how it should not be assumed to be synonymous with "facts." We discussed objectivity,

agendas, advocacy, privacy, identity and allegiances, the public sphere, the journalistic process, and the perilous reportorial shoals of Google, Drudge, Facebook and Wikipedia. We argued over the effects of moving from a print culture to a visual culture, of pictures rather than words driving stories, of emotion trumping intellect through the power of imagery.

In the context of an ever-expanding universe of bloggers, citizen journalists, "I-reporters" and the like, I offered a five-point test for ruling out what should not be considered journalism. The students avidly dissected, debated, employed and poked at the criteria throughout the course. My underlying purpose, one that I believe was realized, was not to formulate hard-and-fast, all-encompassing definitions for journalist and journalism, but to have these aspiring young practitioners contemplate the nature of their chosen field in a time of niche news, crowd sourcing, e-paper, multimedia platforms, 24/7 news cycles, and information centers focused on the hyperlocal.

Some students were unsettled by my message that the traditional j-school track system of newspaper/magazine/broadcast needs to be rethought and broadened and that 21st century journalists of all stripes need to possess some level of facility in multimedia skills beyond their chosen genre. But I argued that the Internet is a new, dominant medium that will resist efforts to wholly graft existing forms onto it and that their generation might well be the one to mold it into an effective, sustainable journalistic form.

Crucial to that task is an understanding of audience, and I pressed the students to explore just who's out there now. Our resources included Pew research surveys, the Project for Excellence in Journalism, and even Robert Putnam's "Bowling Alone" Web site, along with Time magazine's rebuttal of his thesis.

We paid particular attention to how advances in communication technology have empowered audiences to bypass established media and seek out information on their own, share it with each other, analyze it, and validate or challenge it. We considered how the era of news by appointment is over. We explored ways in which journalists in the digital age might compensate for their diminished roles as gatekeepers and primary news providers by expanding their role as information arbiters to help audiences separate the wheat from the chatter. We also faced the fact that audiences now look over our shoulders as we work, ready to share their thoughts and assessments, for better or worse, directly with us or with the world—watchdogs for the watchdogs, and we had better get used to it.

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Journalism's Evolving Paradigm

A major concern I sought to convey was my belief that our business is in trouble—audiences shrinking even as the population balloons—in part because we have lost touch with our constituents, at least at the "big media" level, where I spent about half my career. Drawing upon the work of scholars like Robert Darnton of Princeton and Cass Sunstein of the University of Chicago, we considered how journalists are formed and why diversity in the newsroom—including that of perspective and background—is critical for news organizations if they are to connect with the larger public they purport to serve. And we considered how newsmakers—government, political, commercial and other interests—were progressively finding ways to bypass the journalistic filter and reach around us directly to audiences and how readers, listeners and viewers were reaching back.

We took a cautionary look at journalism scandals in the context of professional credibility and accountability and examined secrecy, national security, and varying cultural sensibilities in a world where online anywhere means online everywhere. We weighed the rise and the role of "soft" news and the nature of reporting on communal tragedy in a diverse society. The Poynter Institute site, especially its Romenesko page,[1] became required daily reading and the spark for many class discussions that the syllabus never anticipated.

To help everyone appreciate that the future is now, I embraced a graduate student's suggestion in the fall to devote a week to student media, both on campus and far beyond. The use of peer-produced newspapers, magazines and edgy Web sites fanned the students' enthusiasm, because they could identify with the material and the people producing it. It proved a perfect illustration of the benefit of knowing your audience.

To accommodate such productive detours, I kept the course schedule flexible, and the world of news did not disappoint. When the Don Imus controversy erupted during the spring term, we spent a week researching it, writing about it, and discussing it. The episode dovetailed nicely with my planned examination of the coverage of a racially charged street crime in New York City in 2005. In that exercise, students read and analyzed reams of first-day newspaper and wire service

[1] www.poynter.org/ and www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=45

accounts. After class discussion, they watched an episode of the Bravo cable channel's "Tabloid Wars" series[2] chronicling how the New York Daily News had covered the story as it unfolded. In the fall term, I persuaded two senior Daily News editors to talk about the coverage via speakerphone. In the spring, I showed "The Paper," Ron Howard's riveting 1994 film about a fictional New York City tabloid's handling of a racially charged street crime.

In each term, virtually all the students said their initial, critical views of how the story was covered had been softened by watching "Tabloid Wars." I took that as a testament to the power of visual imagery, a growing force in media and culture that we explored elsewhere with examples as disparate as Abu Ghraib, convenience store hold-ups, the Muhammad cartoons, car chases, and dogs stuck on ice floes. "Tabloid Wars" was also an argument for greater media transparency; sometimes watching the sausage get made can have a salutary effect, conventional wisdom not withstanding.

In the spring, we departed from the script to spend a week examining coverage of the Virginia Tech shootings from almost the moment the news broke. Early on, I took a survey of my students as to where they had turned first for information. All but one had gone straight to established mainstream news media—either online or on cable—before heading off to their more usual informational Web haunts like blogs, news aggregation services, and start-up sites with attitude. Even the students were surprised at their collective behavior, and the finding underscored the seminar's message that credible, authoritative journalism is worth serving and preserving regardless of the medium.

Putting It All Online

From my previous experience as an adjunct professor at St. John's University in New York City and the three years I had spent studying part-time at Columbia for my master's in journalism, I was already aware of the limited appeal that "dead tree" formats held for today's students. So instead of spending hours at the photocopy machine churning out reams of paper handouts, I put all my class readings—or links to them—online at a Web site I created and paid for until I could gain access to Ohio University's restricted academic Intranet. Further, I insisted that all written assignments be filed via e-mail—no hard copies allowed—which I corrected using the "track changes" and "comment" modes in Word and then returned via e-mail.

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I took advantage of the high-speed Internet connections in the school's classrooms to pull up Web sites that augmented class discussions. We also went online to watch videos of network news programs and PBS documentaries, live netcasts of news conferences, replays of "The Daily Show" segments, snippets from YouTube, and slide shows and podcasts shot, narrated and produced by dyed-in-the-wool print reporters to accompany their articles on nytimes.com.

At first, I rather smugly regarded all this as somewhat cutting edge, but I came to learn that for Americans of a certain age, watching TV online—even network news or prime-time entertainment shows—is becoming unremarkable. One disappointment, however, was my inability to arrange high-tech video teleconferences with the dozen or so speakers who addressed my students from afar. I had to settle instead for low-tech speakerphone engagements.

From the outset, I emphasized that since this was a journalism course, not only would I demand fine writing but also rigorous research. One result was a highly successful spring exercise in which students trolled the Web for two examples of novel storytelling—one good, one bad. Most cast a wide net and collectively returned with a bounty of highly informative, diverse examples of how our craft is evolving. I devoted four hours in each section to collective dissection and discussion. I could probably have developed a whole course from that exercise alone.

Fittingly, for a course about change, one of the biggest challenges was finding material with a shelf life. By the time September 2006 rolled around, information and even themes I had plucked in June or July had already withered or been overtaken by events. Similarly, the course I taught in the spring was dissimilar in many respects to the course I taught in the fall. Now I'm preparing for a new fall term at a different university, and already I know my seminar will be a significant departure from its two previous iterations.

Everything new is old again. □

Mark J. Prendergast is an associate professor at St. John's University in New York City. He was the Scripps Howard Visiting Professional at the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University in 2006-07.

[2] www.bravotv.com/Tabloid_Wars/index.shtml

Digital Media Push Images to the Foreground

In the midst of big changes in the working lives of photojournalists, a former news photographer looks at how journalism schools and programs should respond.

By Lester Sloan

In 2001, D. Michael Cheers returned to the United States from South Africa, where he had headed up the Johnson Publishing Company's unsuccessful efforts to produce an African edition of Ebony magazine. That five-year experience, along with 25 years he'd spent as a photographer on the staff of Ebony and Jet, provided him with enough knowledge and professional experience—he thought—to handle anything the academic world that he was about to enter had to offer.

What he wasn't prepared for were the vast changes sweeping through journalism as a result of the Web's demand for convergence strategies and multimedia storytelling, as well as diminishing revenues in the newspaper and magazine business. It wasn't so much that the fundamentals of journalism were no longer valid; it was just that students' needs seemed so much greater. They had to be taught to multitask their efforts at a time when diminishing newsroom budgets meant news organizations could no longer hire people to do a single task. Even with his considerable academic credentials—a PhD in African Studies and Research, master's degrees in Journalism and African American History—and his professional experience, Cheers's impending return to the journalism classroom got him thinking anew as he attended seminars and technology shows and sought out online instruction sites so he could prepare students for the jobs awaiting them.

In 2002, he joined the staff at the University of Mississippi, where he taught the basics along with as much of the new technology as he had mastered. Each semester, he found more he needed to know, and his engagement in these emerging new media arenas played an important part in reorienting the journalism program. In the spring of 2007, Cheers was hired by San Jose State in California and given a mandate to revamp the school's photojournalism program. Working in partnership with the San Jose Mercury News, he created a program in which he will take a class to South Africa, where his students will produce stories for all of the newspaper's platforms—providing a workshop environment with genuine expectations but also the promise of mentoring as they learn. The paper agreed to also pay the expenses of a staff photographer who will work with them as an instructor.

Like other journalists, photographers are being asked to take on greater responsibilities as storytellers—providing pictures, both still and moving, along with capturing sound to use with the images on different media platforms.

Lessons in Visual Storytelling

Like other journalists, photographers are being asked to take on greater responsibilities as storytellers—providing pictures, both still and moving, along with capturing sound to use with the images on different media platforms. In assuming their new role, photographers now threaten the entrenched hierarchy of the newsroom. Greater responsibility warrants greater respect, which might point to the end of expressions like "my photographer" being used so often by reporters.

According to Dirck Halstead, a former staff photographer for Time magazine, a journalist working today is seen as a "producer" and not identified as a photographer, writer or editor. Ten years ago, Halstead put his still camera aside and became an advocate of video as the medium best suited to addressing the needs of the profession today. And he started a program called The Platypus Workshop to teach the skills of video shooting and the editing of tape and sound. His is a short-course taught in a mobile classroom.[1]

As the years went by, more and more newsrooms began sending their photographers to his two-week seminars. In assessing why journalism schools have been much slower to respond to these kinds of changes in the craft, Halstead is blunt: "They didn't get it. Most journalism schools are populated by reporters who haven't been in a newsroom in the last 10 or 15 years." Steve Shepard, dean of the City University of New York's (CUNY) School of Journalism, is more charitable: "We're creatures of habit. It was the same with

[1] http://digitaljournalist.org/workshop/weekend-short.html

television's arrival. But these were profound and revolutionary changes."

Shepard, who was editor of Business Week for 20 years and a senior editor at Newsweek, heads up CUNY's start-up degree program, one he describes as being a "new model in journalism." [See Shepard's article on page e15.] He believes mistakes have been made—at news organizations and at journalism schools. "The newspaper industry was trying to 'repurpose' what the print product was and that was a mistake. They were not taking advantage of the new medium, which is interactive and multimedia." Schools, he said, weren't striking a proper balance between teaching journalism's principles and practices and applying them to the new demands of the new media.

Cheers stresses the need to help future visual journalists develop storytelling abilities with whatever technology they have to use. He agrees with Halstead that video works well as a medium since it forces its user to think in terms of a beginning, middle and an end. For photographers, this is not a giant step to take, especially for those who have done photo essays in which they've researched and developed a story from beginning to end. This past summer Cheers, as a fellow at National Geographic, used his time to develop his skills in this direction so he can pass on both his missteps and successes to his students.

One inescapable challenge visual journalists will have is to simply keep up with not only the rapidly changing tools of their craft but also the demands of the industry. No longer can a photojournalist's job be described as "go fetch;" now it is as much the job of the visual journalist to "tell the story" as it is the one who does so with words.

In its essence, the job of being a journalist has less to do with tools that we use and more to do with the breadth of knowledge that we bring to each story. History, economics, sociology and the arts are as important for photographers to absorb as they are for reporters. The Spanish artist Goya was one of the first visual journalists; familiarity with his work can inform how to visually report stories today. Every story is enveloped in history. While it's not always possible with breaking news to convey its broader context, there's a better chance of doing so when we are not simply reacting to the moment.

News organizations should work more closely with journalism schools and programs. Cheers's partnership with the San Jose Mercury News offers a promising model. And he is hoping to establish a similar working relationship with National Geographic. At a time when we have an amazing array of tools to gather information—and we encourage nonjournalists to send us photos and video via cell phones and other digital devices—what will distinguish the trained photojournalist from the amateur is the knowledge we bring to the moment and the preparation we have to seize it. □

Lester Sloan, a 1976 Nieman Fellow, was a staff photographer for Newsweek for 25 years. Prior to that he worked as cameraman/reporter for the CBS affiliate in Detroit. For a period, he was a contributing editor to Emerge magazine and an essayist with NPR's "Weekend Edition." He is a freelance photographer and writer based in Los Angeles.

Journalism and Academia: How They Can Work Together

'Neither the practical (newsroom) model nor a purely academic one is ideal for either the aspiring or the working journalist.'

By Jeffrey Scheuer

Journalists, like scholars, formulate knowledge by knitting facts to contexts. They need analytic and critical as well as narrative skills and substantive knowledge. The intrinsically hybrid nature of journalism—its dependence on both concrete skills and broader academic knowledge—cannot be resolved in the abstract; subject knowledge and practical skills will always jointly affect the quality of reporting, just as they jointly affect the quality of teaching.

What, then, can journalists learn in an academic setting, and when and how should such study combine with or yield to the actual practice of journalism? The first question is the easier one: Journalists should study whatever brings depth and sophistication to their work; without begging the question, that could be almost anything. Some forms of journalism require generalists, others demand expertise; specialization or expertise is what university campuses best provide at the graduate level, just as they provide general breadth to undergraduates. Columbia's master of arts program aims to do that through its four areas of concentration,

but why limit it to those? Why not offer, for example, a journalism track with a concentration in Arabic and Middle Eastern studies, or environmental science, or public health—or anything else of journalistic relevance?

A vast range of academic subjects are potentially of such relevance—including history, politics, law, economics, business, sociology, psychology, the sciences, technology, urban planning, regional and language study. History is perhaps most relevant of all, especially to the generalist, given its intrinsic connections to journalism; but it doesn't hurt to be a polymath. A master's degree in any of these subjects would be more useful than a degree in journalism per se; better still, a master's degree with a concentration in journalism, similar to existing joint-degree programs.

In addition to the many areas of possible specialization, there is a well-defined core of academic subjects that are directly relevant to all journalists. These include media history, law and ethics; media and society, or the interpenetrations of media and politics, and (especially) rigorous media criticism. Thus, it would seem logical to divide a journalist's education into four parts or phases: undergraduate breadth in the liberal arts; graduate-level specialization; core media-related courses, and skills training.

Journalism education should be refocused to pursue two overlapping goals: first, and most important, to better prepare journalists to strive for excellence and second, instrumental to that, to encourage stronger bonds between journalists and universities. Refocusing, in this case, means both broadening and narrowing: broadening the basic conception of what journalism is, and how education can improve it and even blend with it, while providing more concentrated, specialized learning for individual journalists. Here are some suggestions:

1. Undergraduate journalism skills courses should be actively discouraged, because they displace more important learning. They should be replaced by campus journalism and professional internships.
2. Skills training should also be phased out of graduate journalism school curricula. Again, campus journalism and internships are the better option. (Stanford's journalism department has moved in this direction.) Certain advanced courses, such as investigative and documentary journalism, should be retained, along with the core media courses (law, ethics, history, criticism, etc.), because they are important, fit naturally into an academic setting, and are difficult to replicate in the job environment. An interim measure would be to confine practical training to intensive short courses, preferably involving work at a news organization. The simulated-newsroom training that still predominates in j-school curricula could easily be condensed, leaving more time for core courses and specialization.[1]
3. A third improvement (however implausible) would be to abolish journalism degrees. Such degrees (unlike those in law, medicine, architecture, etc.) do nothing for news consumers; they merely underscore the awkward and synthetic nature of journalism education. The academic degree system is unsuited to the differing and complex needs of modern journalists and is probably inappropriate to many other fields as well. It radically simplifies and distorts the extent and depth of study, and the level of actual accomplishment, and ignores the disparate needs of different students. The degree thus functions as a kind of credentializing tollbooth for career advancement and little else. Instead, master's programs in the many fields relevant to journalism (as well as focused interdisciplinary programs) should be offered with journalism concentrations that involve actual reporting and collaboration between academic departments and news organizations.
4. More schools should implement the widely endorsed idea of offering short, focused seminars on the fellowship model for working journalists. The thrust of journalism education should shift to early and midcareer journalists. The diverse needs of recent college graduates, with and without campus journalism experience, and of journalists at various stages in their careers, require flexible programs of differing types and lengths—and cast further doubt on the value of granting degrees. As Orville Schell observes, "Journalism schools can … justify their existences by striving to become workshop-like places where older and more seasoned journalists team up with younger journalists to do actual projects that get published, aired or exhibited."[2]
5. All journalism schools should strive to be independent centers of criticism and debate about journalistic

Practical experience and intellectual knowledge both count toward excellence—along with curiosity, imagination and courage. The ideal journalist, in short, is both well rounded and an expert.

[1] In his report to the Bollinger Task Force, Nicholas Lemann proposed a short, intensive skills-based course in the summer preceding the academic year.

[2] Schell, "Some Ruminations on Journalism Schools as Columbia Turns," www.journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/debate/forum.1.essay.schell.html

issues and society (for which the Internet is an excellent vehicle) and should incorporate that critical spirit into their curricula. Students should learn by critiquing the work of their peers and that of the professional media and should study the principles and history of media criticism.

Neither the practical (newsroom) model nor a purely academic one is ideal for either the aspiring or the working journalist. What is needed is a more dynamic fusion of the two models and one that is more flexible to the needs of particular individuals. Practical experience and intellectual knowledge both count toward excellence—along with curiosity, imagination and courage. The ideal journalist, in short, is both well rounded and an expert. He or she will have a critical and skeptical temper, an understanding of the legal and moral parameters of the journalism profession, and a clear sense of its history, civic function, and critical standards.

Given the barriers that exist at present, and which are exacerbated by the marketplace, it will require a paradigm shift to see journalism and education as tap-roots of the same democratic tree and part of an information environment cohabited by citizens, journalists and scholars. It will mean relaxing the boundaries, and perhaps the very definitions, of academic and journalistic institutions. But since knowledge abhors artificial boundaries, and cultural barriers only serve narrow constituencies, this will no doubt happen eventually.

Perhaps the Carnegie-Knight Journalism Initiative, a three-year, six million dollar program begun in 2005 by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, can help to move journalism education in this general direction. This initiative, a joint venture with the Joan Shorenstein Center at Harvard and several leading journalism schools, is intended to "improve subject-matter education for journalists," develop investigative reporting projects, promote research, and encourage curricular enrichment and team-teaching between journalism schools and host universities.

Finally, journalism schools can serve as laboratories for alternative models of both teaching and doing journalism—and alternative economic models—in keeping with Joseph Pulitzer's vision of journalism as "one of the great and intellectual professions." In the long run, there is great potential for synergy between j-schools, universities, foundations and research centers, with or without the help of traditional news organizations. They can produce knowledge that is timely, relevant and accessible to the public, but also free of commercial constraints and enriched by society's deepest reservoirs of knowledge. That way points toward excellence. □

Jeffrey Scheuer's article is adapted from a chapter of his book "The Big Picture: Why Democracies Need Journalistic Excellence," to be published by Routledge in the fall of 2007. He is also the author of "The Sound Bite Society," published in 1999.

Values Reside at the Core of Journalism

It is these essential values that 'make someone a good journalist, and they are what lift this work above the trivial.'

By Lou Ureneck

I found myself at lunch one day trying to explain the content of a journalism education to a colleague from the economics department at Boston University. He is a world-class economist and scholar—the sort of man whose career affirms the importance of research and academic publication. Fortunately for me, he is also a professor who writes op-ed articles for newspapers on public issues and seeks a broad audience for his work. This put me somewhat at ease.

In explaining what I and others in the journalism department teach, I mentioned, of course, that we seek to give students the skills to be clear and direct writers. I also said that we teach them how to conduct interviews, search for documents, and be good and careful observers.

At some point in our conversation, the matter of whether newspapers have a future arose, and I told him that while I believed they do have a future, teaching students to practice journalism in other formats is important. I explained how we want print reporters to learn how to shoot video and record sound, but how that is just one part of how we are groping for ways to introduce more multimedia skills into the curriculum because of the obvious importance of the Internet to the future of journalism.

But at this point in our conversation, I turned back, importantly, to the content of a journalism education and found myself elaborating more on the values and attitudes we are working to inculcate into students rather than focusing on particular skills, especially

technical ones. A look came across his face—a look of surprise, curiosity, bemusement or maybe a combination of all three. I think it was my departure from a description of a body of knowledge or even a regime for research and analysis—and my emphasis on values—which he found unusual.

Replying to his expression, I said something like, "I try to teach students to challenge authority by asking hard questions. I want them to develop a strong sense of skepticism. In a sense, I'm trying to acculturate them into the profession of journalism."

Up until that moment, I don't think I had stated this point quite so clearly to myself. Yet as these words entered our conversation, I grasped the essential strength that comes with the teaching of values to student journalists. Yes, of course, I have taught the necessity of fairness and accuracy, but in the midst of this exchange I realized the significance of our ability to draw out more visibly and with more elaboration some of the fundamentals of what I call the journalistic value system.

Core Values of Journalism

As we move through a tumultuous period in journalism and journalism education, mostly forced on us by the Internet, it's important that we name these values. By naming them, we will then find ways to encourage and teach them. In enunciating these values—in reminding ourselves, then teaching our students—it might be that we will understand at a deeper level what it means to be a journalist.

Two critical values are idealism and skepticism. These seem oppositional, but in our craft their pairing can offer us a potent way to engage the world. For young journalists, these two values inspire as well as energize them to do useful, even penetrating, work.

The day-to-day and night-to-night work of a journalist can be grinding and difficult. There is all that travel and the phone squeezed for hours between the head and shoulder. To get it right, and to make it good, the work often takes one more phone call, one more check of documents, or one more trip to the scene of the story. The ability to stay with it requires that journalists have a reliable source of strength on which to draw. I can think of no better source than their idealistic belief that the story they're working on might in some, perhaps small, way contribute to improving people's lives.

Even as they draw on that idealism, reporters must cultivate their skepticism. In other words, they need to be hardheaded idealists, to ask to see the evidence, the documents, and check the numbers. They want a second confirming source and then a third. Their skepticism should be implacable.

Ultimately, the purpose of journalism has to be more than about distracting and entertaining an audience with 'content' that eventually is monetized for profit.

Joel Rawson, executive editor of The Providence Journal, told me a delightful story years ago that captures the spirit of inspired skepticism. It seems that a dog (Jess) that once had lived in East Greenwich, Rhode Island but had moved to Colorado with his owner was reported to have found his way back to his original home and owners—a trek that took him 18 months over 2,200 miles. It was a great feature story, of course, and it made the papers. But Joel was skeptical: He asked reporter Peter Gosselin to get to the bottom of it, and Peter did. The Colorado dog had a veterinary history that included an x-ray for a broken leg. The Journal had the second dog x-rayed, and—yes, you guessed it—the second dog's x-ray was clean. No broken leg, wrong dog. The second dog was named Smoky, and he lived less than a mile away.

A funny tale, yes, but think of how history might have unfolded differently if the Rawson standard had been applied to, say, Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction.

There are other values, too. Independence and courage come to mind. So does a certain prosecutorial zeal to nail the "bad" guys: the ones who game the system, steal from the public, or exploit those over whom they have power.

All of these values are a part of being a reporter. They are what make someone a good journalist, and they are what lift this work above the trivial. Ultimately, the purpose of journalism has to be more than about distracting and entertaining an audience with "content" that eventually is monetized for profit. In this regard, the core principals of journalism are well articulated by the Committee of Concerned Journalists[1] and in "The Elements of Journalism," the book written by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel. Among them are these: journalism's first obligation is to the truth, and its first loyalty is to citizens.

As journalism educators ponder how best to train future reporters—whose work might never appear in a newspaper or on television but will be seen and heard on the Internet—we'd do well to find ways to explain and demonstrate the importance of the value system that underpins how and why we do our work. □

Lou Ureneck, a 1995 Nieman Fellow, is chairman of the journalism department at Boston University and former deputy managing editor of The Philadelphia Inquirer. His book, "Backcast: Fatherhood, Fly-Fishing, and a River Journey Through the Heart of Alaska," was published in 2007 by St. Martin's Press.

[1] www.concernedjournalists.org/

Passing Along the Value of Humility

'Students need to be open-minded about the best way to tell each story rather than seeing rich media as mere add-ons to word-driven narratives.'

By Mike McKean

Convergence journalism, as we teach it at Missouri, is more about new attitudes than new skills. Don't get me wrong. We do our best to train students in audio, video, photo, graphics and Web production. We emphasize strong writing skills. We put them to work in all of our news operations—a daily newspaper, an NPR affiliate, a commercial TV station, plus various Web sites and mobile services. Students blog, make podcasts, create Flash animations, design interactive databases, and widgets—things they have to know to find good first jobs in today's media environment.

Still, who among us in the profession or the academy can predict the exact hardware, software and distribution systems that freshmen entering j-school this fall will need to know by the time they graduate and hit the job market in 2011? Sure, we're trying to develop reliable standards so they can more easily create compelling multimedia stories, organize our newsrooms so they can produce those stories consistently on deadline, and identify stable economic models so they can count on a rewarding career when they leave here. But the finish line is constantly moving.

The attitudes we need to instill in our students, however, seem clearer to me. They need to thrive on constant, rapid change. Students need to be open-minded about the best way to tell each story rather than seeing rich media as mere add-ons to word-driven narratives. They need to embrace teamwork. Very few lone wolf, backpack journalists can do it all with equal skill and panache. And they need to be humble in the face of overwhelming social changes made possible by digital media.

Humility is not something journalists model well. Professionalism, integrity, social responsibility—sure. Humility? Not so much. But a YouTube/Facebook/Blogger world demands we do better. Our dwindling, skeptical audience is increasingly capable of creating and sharing its own news, however they define the term. Traditional journalists can belittle these "amateurs" or embrace them in a new reporting system that makes us both better. But we can't stop them. User-generated content, citizen journalism—whatever one wants to call it—is here to stay.

... we push ahead with various approaches to keep well-trained journalists relevant at a time when we believe they are needed more than ever.

Teaching Convergence Journalism

There's still a crucial place in society for professionally trained journalists. So here's a glimpse at what's been happening at the Missouri School of Journalism since we created a formal convergence major in the fall of 2005.[1] Sophomores and first-semester graduate students begin with a skills course, Convergence Fundamentals, in which they learn the basics of still photography, audio-video recording and editing, slide shows, and some simple Web design. During the final few weeks of the semester, students break into teams to produce in-depth, multimedia feature stories. We team-teach this course, as we do all of our required convergence courses. Convergence Reporting is next, and in this class students split their time between weekly deadline features reported in teams and individual rotations through our newspaper, radio and TV newsrooms where they work on short deadline stories. Then, in Convergence Editing, students learn more about personnel management and quality control as they again rotate through our newsrooms. They also spend four weeks acting as leaders of the teams working on features in the reporting class.

It is at this point, if it hasn't happened already, that our students typically decide how to solve their "jack of all trades, master of none" challenge. We don't want them to leave Missouri until each has a strong grounding in at least one journalistic specialty. So we require them to choose one of several, two-course concentrations designed by the faculty with a focus on newspaper and magazine writing, radio-TV reporting or producing, investigative reporting, photojournalism and design.

While completing their concentrations, students sign up for their final required course—Convergence Capstone. Again they work in teams, this time to research a practical problem or need, then create a journalistic product to address it. Students have designed

[1] Details about this major are available at http://convergence.journalism.missouri.edu/

everything from an interactive voter guide and a high school video-sharing service to a cross-platform advertising campaign for a local auto dealer and a Web 2.0 collaboration with a local documentary film festival.

Is our approach working? Two years is too soon to reach a conclusion. But our first graduating class in May landed some great internships, and they're now finding well-paying jobs as online sports editors, magazine designers, newspaper video editors, TV newscast producers, and Teach For America volunteers from Billings, Montana to the Rio Grande Valley to Orlando, Florida.

The convergence sequence has quickly become a popular major, and it can be difficult to get into. We're limited by a relatively small faculty (three full-time teachers) and lab space we share with our radio-TV colleagues. Those bottlenecks should be cleared when the facilities of the new Reynolds Journalism Institute[2] open at the Missouri School of Journalism with the fall 2008 semester. At that time, we'll hire more instructors, equip a larger lab, and open a technology demonstration center from which we will take its best ideas into our so-called "Futures Lab" to gauge their practicality in a working newsroom.

Collaboration and Convergence

Let's return to the value of humility and our desire to imbue students—and ourselves—with it. We know we don't have all the answers to teaching and practicing convergence journalism, but we push ahead with various approaches to keep well-trained journalists relevant at a time when we believe they are needed more than ever. At the same time, we make students aware of the increasingly interactive quality of their endeavors by offering new learning opportunities, some of which are highlighted below:

- Ask the audience what they want. We explore how major convergence projects should be based on sound research before launch and carefully evaluated after.
- Give the audience a voice. We've created a local Web site modeled on South Korea's OhMyNews that pairs student editors with citizens who want to write stories or share pictures, sounds and video on topics they care about.[3]
- Find industry partners in the technology sector. We've been working with digital media firms such as Apple and Adobe Systems to keep abreast of what technology is emerging and to learn how to exploit those changes, especially in mobile communications. We're also starting to do regular visits with technology leaders, including some of our alumni, in Silicon Valley.
- Give students a larger voice. Let them choose and design their own projects. For example, we're about to launch a student competition to come up with the best desktop widgets to support the content and business sides of traditional media companies. Finalists will receive development money and programming support. The winning team will split a significant cash prize.
- Find nonjournalists on campus who know what you don't. In the competition (above), journalism students will team with students from computer science, education and business. Professors in those and other disciplines can also plug holes in traditional journalism curricula.
- Look beyond the borders. Journalists and journalism educators in other countries are finding new and better ways to tell compelling stories with digital technologies. Our partners at Moscow State University's Faculty of Journalism, for example, are focusing most of their convergence efforts on independent documentaries because of severe government limits on newspapers and television news. Our partners in China are studying how citizens with cell phones can sidestep media censorship to shine a light on important social problems. Broadband mobile companies in Japan and South Korea are showing us what will be possible with live video, GPS mapping, and gaming when third-generation cellular networks finally become available in most American communities.

[Students] need to be humble in the face of overwhelming social changes made possible by digital media.

The convergence faculty at Missouri makes significant changes to each required course every semester, and yet we still can't keep up with all the new ideas and best practices. Our convergence major is just two years old, but most of the faculty already see it as only a temporary solution. If we're still here in our present form five years from now, I'll be surprised. In fact, we've already started a wholesale, school-wide curriculum review designed to ensure that all students are exposed to convergence journalism skills. Now that's a humbling experience for any turf-protecting department chair. □

Mike McKean is the department chair of the convergence journalism faculty at the Missouri School of Journalism.

[2] http://journalism.missouri.edu/reynolds/about-reynolds.pdf

[3] www.MyMissourian.com

Multimedia Journalism Changes What Universities Teach

'Creating multimedia stories will require flexibility, a collaborative spirit, and strategic planning,' and these are essential skills that must now be learned.

By Jerome Aumente

Just as print and broadcast news media are reinventing themselves to fully embrace the Internet and newer media, schools and departments of journalism and communication are revamping their courses to acknowledge the Web's growing dominance, powers of interactivity, and the convergence of print, broadcast and online environments. But how rapidly or radically the changes will happen are difficult, unanswered questions for the media and the universities.

In a short time since the emergence of the World Wide Web, the news media, especially newspapers, have significantly altered their attitude toward the Internet. After earlier bouts of arrogant skepticism, anger and denial, the traditional mass media now concede the seismic transformations of the newer media are irreversible. Google, with a market value of $144 billion from its Internet-based businesses, commands attention from a newspaper industry worth $55 billion in the United States and experiencing steady meltdown in circulation and advertising revenue.

Tom Curley, president and CEO of The Associated Press and a champion of online journalism, told me that while some in the newspaper industry still are "trapped in the 'word world' and need to go 10,000 feet higher into the multimedia world," most have accepted the transition to online journalism. Internet users number more than one billion worldwide, and many eagerly participate in the interactive exchange as news-as-lecture gives way to the news-as-conversation. None of this is lost on the 458 universities and colleges in the United States and Puerto Rico from which 48,750 students graduated in 2005 with bachelor's degrees in journalism and mass communication (and 3,500 with master's degrees), according to a survey by Professor Lee B. Becker at the University of Georgia.[1]

Though change can come slowly in the conservative, consensus-driven and budget-strapped halls of higher learning, it is underway.

Paradigmatic shifts in information exchange are causing universities to revise their course offerings, internships and applied research priorities. Though change can come slowly in the conservative, consensus-driven and budget-strapped halls of higher learning, it is underway. My experiences related to founding and directing a journalism department and journalism resources institute and then in helping design an interdisciplinary communication school at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, reminds me of challenges involved in keeping pace with rapid and significant technological changes.

Aligning Lessons With Newsroom Changes

Last year, I interviewed editors and publishers from all the daily newspapers serving New Jersey and many of the weekly community chains. My inquiries were made for a book I published in 2007, "From Ink on Paper to the Internet: Past Challenges and Future Transformations for New Jersey's Newspapers," when the New Jersey Press Association (NJPA) celebrated its 150th anniversary as the oldest continually operating press association in the nation. NJPA supported my research.

With these editors and publishers, I discussed two topics in particular:

- What they regard as the fate of newspapers 10 and 30 years from now and why.
- How universities can better educate future journalists or train existing newspaper staff.

I've written extensively about newer media, including a book on electronic publishing in the embryonic days of

[1] Becker's 2005 survey also found that eight of 10 graduates believe people will get most of their news via the Internet in 20 years. Most of them already get most of their news from the Internet. The median salary of entry-level, Web-related journalism jobs was $32,000 entry salary compared with $28,000 for daily newspapers, $23,000 for TV, or $26,000 for radio.

videotex, teletext and online databases, which were prelude to the explosion of personal computers that paved the way for the Internet's mass appeal in the 1990's. Many from print media who once were so dismissive of interactive media today regard the Internet as central to their survival. Larger metro and midsized dailies are reinventing themselves as 24/7 news centers, distributing multimedia news, and smaller community papers are also involved. When we spoke, many predicted that in three decades newspapers would survive but in sharply altered form and in a secondary role to their multimedia, online Web sites, with many more print niche publications. Some even wondered if their papers would exist at all, and many foresaw a major financial shift, with their print profits being eclipsed by their online revenues.

The task faced by journalism and communication schools and departments in upgrading their curricula is akin to training pilots to fly experimental planes that are only partially operational for an aviation industry being totally transformed. Some are headed toward wholesale revision of their course offerings; others are choosing to retrofit their existing courses to accommodate the interactive, multimedia world. A go-slower, gradual revision approach might work best for some programs, or it might simply be dictated by the lack of a budget to do much more. But all agree that new course work is required so students have a comprehensive, hands-on experience working simultaneously in doing stories for print, broadcast and the Web. These skills—taught until recently as separate majors—must be converged in the curricula as they are now being used in newsrooms.

Such flattening of curricula is not easily done. Until now, faculty have been hired and promoted as specialists, while interdisciplinary experts—who are willing to teach—have been more difficult to recruit at a time when interactive multimedia news is still so new. Those who have this expertise command a higher salary. Graduate programs are preparing multimedia teachers, but this, too, requires resources and time. Universities also must be responsive to their students, many of whom remain focused on print or broadcasting and may resist being forced into a multimedia curriculum experiment. The fine line universities walk today is to be enough ahead of the change curve but not so far out in front that their graduates cannot perform in the print and broadcast environments where most jobs still reside.

The task faced by journalism and communication schools and departments in upgrading their curricula is akin to training pilots to fly experimental planes that are only partially operational for an aviation industry being totally transformed.

Recognizing—and avoiding—short-lived media fads are other challenges. "Synergy" was seen as journalism's path to a prosperous future just a few years ago, as media companies gobbled up competitors to create conglomerates of newspapers, magazines, television and radio, cable, satellite and online services. The belief was that once these media worked together in harmony—sharing content and consolidating newsroom resources—financial stability and journalistic success would materialize. Instead, the debris of such endeavors—with the travails of the Tribune Company and Time Warner—ought to be part of what students learn today. The dismantling of the revered Knight Ridder chain last year would serve to remind future journalists of how even an enlightened company investing in good journalism and newer media became a victim of stockholder feeding-frenzy.

Students should be taught to function in this age of convergence. "Repurposing" news and information might be an achievable strategy for future economic survival, but these students should be taught the necessary journalistic imperatives that go along with such use of material. And the dumping of news reporting into a super-processing vat and piping it out through multiple channels of print, broadcast and the Web can be seen as an easy task, but doing this becomes more meaningful work when it is done with an eye toward keeping journalism's basic principles in mind.

Learning to work collegially in a wholly reorganized newsroom will be a skill that no student can afford not to acquire. Creating multimedia stories will require flexibility, a collaborative spirit, and strategic planning. These attributes are not now sufficiently emphasized in newsrooms or in classrooms. Yet these abilities must be part of what a potential journalist is able to offer an employer who now knows that success will depend on the Internet being fed stories told in multimedia ways. And some of the news and information to tell these stories will arrive from citizen journalists, Web forums, and Weblogs; finding ways to seamlessly integrate these various avenues of news will be essential, too.

To accomplish this, various approaches can be tried:

- Universities can test the possibilities and limits of convergence and multimedia journalism in controlled classroom news laboratory settings.[2]

[2] These labs can offer students relevant exposure to the Internet, Web site building, experimentation with Weblogs, hands-on work with software packages for graphics and photos, and lots of time to report, write and edit for a range of platforms with text, graphics, sound, video and photos digitally mixed.

- Faculty can work closely with news organizations, which might be able to provide extra resources and equipment and monitoring.
- Internships can offer students a chance to participate in multimedia story-building in newsrooms.
- Journalism faculty doing applied research can measure what happens to their students in these classroom and professional settings through field visits and seminars.
- Universities must assess their faculty's increased time pressures and the skills needed to teach effectively in this multimedia environment to prepare students for the realistic expectations of the workplace.

Editors and publishers told me they want to hire journalists who have multimedia skills and experience. Young people already come to them attuned to the Internet, but some newspapers, such as Newark's Star-Ledger, train every incoming journalist in computer-assisted reporting and database research. Increasingly, however, most papers will likely want journalists to have a firm foundation in these skills when they arrive.

Restructuring the Curricula

The key word that encompasses these changes in the classroom is "interdisciplinary." Twenty-six years ago the provost at Rutgers asked me, as the head of the journalism department, to join the directors of communication and library sciences to design a new School of Communication, Information and Library Studies. Since then, information technology and several other centers focused on the media have been added. At that time, some thought this collaborative experiment would fail; as we attempted to do this, we endured critics who felt we were being unfaithful to our separate disciplines. Instead, this new school thrived, receiving many additional resources, and was positioned well when it came time to integrate new media advances. Since then, many schools have duplicated this multidisciplinary approach.

At European universities, there is much interest in this integrated approach, and Rutgers has shared its curriculum and training in many countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

'Repurposing' news and information might be an achievable strategy for future economic survival, but these students should be taught the necessary journalistic imperatives that go along with such use of material.

Presently, I am a program evaluator for a joint program of the journalism schools at the University of Missouri and Moscow State University in which its centerpiece has been funding of a new convergence news lab and curriculum, brought to Russian students by the talented Missouri faculty.

Media management courses should be used to help future journalists learn how to work with complex budgets, strategic planning, personnel issues, and decision-making about technology in this multimedia environment. Communication law courses can be used to help students become familiar with ethical, privacy, libel and copyright concerns that grow out of online delivery of news and information and media convergence. Other topics deserving careful academic attention include: audience and reader analysis; the behavioral impact of interactivity; social and educational policy; technological understanding of computers, the Internet and mobile devices, and the storage, retrieval of secondary use of information.

Journalism majors can be imbued with the excitement of gaining mastery of multimedia toolboxes. These will be tools they will use not only to get short-form news reports out quickly but also to develop longer, narrative accounts with links to documents to enhance credibility and the use of video, audio and graphics to place readers vividly at the scene. With these tools they will also be able to offer readers multiple perspectives on global stories as well as many dimensions of coverage of local news. And by knowing how to benefit from interactivity, these journalists will be able to tap into reader reactions, develop a network of new and valued sources, and gather reporting tips.

The editors and publishers I interviewed emphasized that universities should keep as their priority the core curriculum strengths of journalism education. These include teaching of solid research, interviewing, reporting, writing and editing skills; the broad knowledge of liberal arts and science studies; critical thinking and analysis, and high ethical standards and knowledge of press freedom and responsibility. Only when grounded in the fundamentals of journalism will this tree—from which many multimedia branches are now sprouting—be strengthened by the changes that are coming to our classrooms. □

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Pushing and Prodding Latin American Journalism Schools to Change

A Colombian journalist makes it more likely that students will learn how to 'think online' so they will be prepared to enter the job market in this digital era.

By Guillermo Franco

Not too long ago, C. Max Magee, when he was a graduate student at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, focused his research for his master's degree program on the topic of "The Roles of Journalists in Online Newsrooms."[1] It was an attempt, Magee explains, "to define which skills and intangible characteristics are most important in online newsrooms." His findings came from online surveys he conducted in 2005 with 438 people who work for online news sites. His goal was to identify "the skills and characteristics that hiring managers are looking for" and also to learn what online journalists need to know and do in the context of their typical workday.

Magee's survey identified 35 skills that he divided into four categories:

1. Attitudes and Intangibles
2. Editing and Copyediting Skills
3. Content Creation
4. Online Production Tools

Despite his precise recording of the comparative usefulness of each of these skills—and his helpful assessment of how and why many "old" skills still matter greatly—what Magee learned from online journalists is that the technical aspects of their work are not what sets them and their work apart from those working in "old media." Instead it is "a different way of thinking" that is characterized by "a willingness to learn new things, multitasking and teamwork." When summed up, the online journalists' attributes amounted to the ability to "think online," paired with convincing "others to do the same." It is these qualities that those who are hiring journalists for online media are seeking in applicants who come their way.

To think about Magee's findings—and his conclusions—is to challenge some of the ways in which our universities and graduate school programs in Colombia, and in the rest of Latin America, now approach the teaching and training of future journalists. It's very clear from studies such as this one (and other less rigorous ones conducted in Latin America) that students need to become actively engaged with online journalism. This means not only encouraging them to immerse themselves in what it is producing but also to help them analyze what they are reading and seeing and hearing. Additionally, they actually need to be producing it as part of their classroom experience.

Yet little of this appears to be happening in many of the 1,300 communication and journalism schools that exist throughout Latin America. Financial considerations—figuring out how to get the highest possible income from students—has convinced many programs on this continent to offer certificates and postgraduate study programs with pompous names and dubious quality without touching the undergraduate programs, which is where education designed to promote "digital thinking" should start.

One problem in having this happen is that to develop these online competencies would mean that many journalism programs would need to redefine their academic curricula. And this task would reside with scholars who, for the most part, are not prepared to do what is necessary to push their programs into the digital age. Often today, the students criticize their professors and administrators for not having contact with the "real" world of journalism, and this criticism is aimed at their separation even from traditional media.

Another consequence of gaining this level of understanding about online journalism is knowing that when students leave journalism programs the newsrooms they enter—if they even enter a newsroom at all—will define jobs in new ways. And the roles they assume are likely to be expanded as opportunities for serving other communities—such as online social groups and niche audiences—evolve. Job opportunities might also open up at Web sites looking for people to "manage content" in order for them to sell their products or services through the Web or to figure out how to use content in corporate Intranets, to mention a few possible directions.

The emerging journalist's multimedia abilities should go hand-in-hand with the spirit of an entrepreneur, and the attributes of entrepreneurship should be nurtured at college, too. Given the kind of less structured environment in which these graduates will be working in the future, acquiring these skills would provide more comfort for them in taking risks as they create new ways of distributing what they produce.

[1] http://journalist.org/news/archives/MedillOnlineJobSurvey-final.pdf

I share my pessimistic perspective with other journalists in Latin America, including my El Tiempo colleague Julio César Guzmán, with whom I published "The State of Online Journalism in Latin America" in 2004.[2] In our research, more than half of the Latin American journalists who responded to our survey told us that the quality of available journalism schools' academic programs were not good enough. Also, 77 percent of those surveyed said that the biggest need in terms of training was to teach students how to create multimedia content; 17 percent indicated that the second most important need was how to write for the Internet. (Those who responded to our survey included journalists responsible for the Web edition at 43 of the most important newspapers in Latin America.) In the 2007 version of our report, which will soon be published on the Poynter Institute's Web site, journalists insist again on the need for additional training for students while they are at school; these newsroom leaders also tell us that at least 55 percent of those working in online operations for the major Latin American newspapers do not have formal training in online journalism.

Another frequent approach in this region—one to be avoided since it only reminds the next generation of how bonded we are to the old way of doing things—is the strategy of using patches, of adding an elective here and an elective there. Instead, entire programs must be completely redesigned. Those who advocate the patch-here-patch-there approach tend to be the academics in Latin America; these are the same people who argue that this new direction in journalists' training—whose strongest advocates are often from the United States—is not valid here because our context is totally different from that in developed countries. They contend, for instance, that Latin America has a relative low rate access to the Internet or that interest in news at all is concentrated in the smaller realm of the higher social classes.

As journalists we insist on the importance of looking at this issue with its globalized context. What is going on now in more developed countries is showing us a path that sooner or later we will have to walk—and to prepare students now is our role and our responsibility.

'We Media'—in Spanish

In February of 2004 the Spanish edition of "We Media: How Audiences Are Shaping the Future of News and Information" was posted online.[3] I was involved in its translation, which I felt was important so that Spanish-speaking journalists could have access to the kind of information about online journalism that English-speaking audiences have been able to absorb. And this report offers plenty of evidence of why and how the Internet poses a big challenge to journalism schools in Latin America. But it also is a great opportunity for those who work at these schools to increase their level of understanding by gaining this access to material otherwise unavailable to them.

Commissioned by The Media Center at the American Press Institute, "We Media" can now serve as a textbook about online journalism at many schools where classes are taught in Spanish. According to its authors, Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis, the Spanish version has been downloaded almost 100,000 times since it was posted—more times than the English version.

The reasons for its online success—due to it being free and available in Spanish—speak to yet another difficult circumstance of many journalism schools in Latin America: their dependence on expensive and outdated course books. The reason: Spanish-speaking journalism programs do not represent an attractive market for book publishers who specialize in these topics, and the few translated versions there are take too long to reach our students. And this lag time is especially dramatic when it comes to receiving current information about the Internet, new media, online journalism, or convergence. Though few acknowledge it, especially at journalism schools, language becomes a great barrier to accessing available information. The development of and the most vigorous debate about journalism's digital challenge is happening and being documented most fully in English.

To try to repeat the successful experience of "We Media," a Spanish version of the manual "How to Write for the Web," a 300-page handbook, will be published and will be available for free at El Tiempo's Web site,[4] which is the leading Web site in Colombia. It provides a good balance of theory, research and real-world examples.

While these are examples of steps that can and are being taken in Colombia, it is important to point out that the developed world could—and should—make a greater effort to share its knowledge about journalism with those in the developing world and do so in languages that aren't English. This would be a good start toward prodding our universities and journalism programs to move out of the 20th century and teach our students for the jobs they will find as the 21st century marches on. □

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[2] www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=64532

[3] www.hypergene.net/wemedia/espanol.php?id=P64

[4] www.eltiempo.com

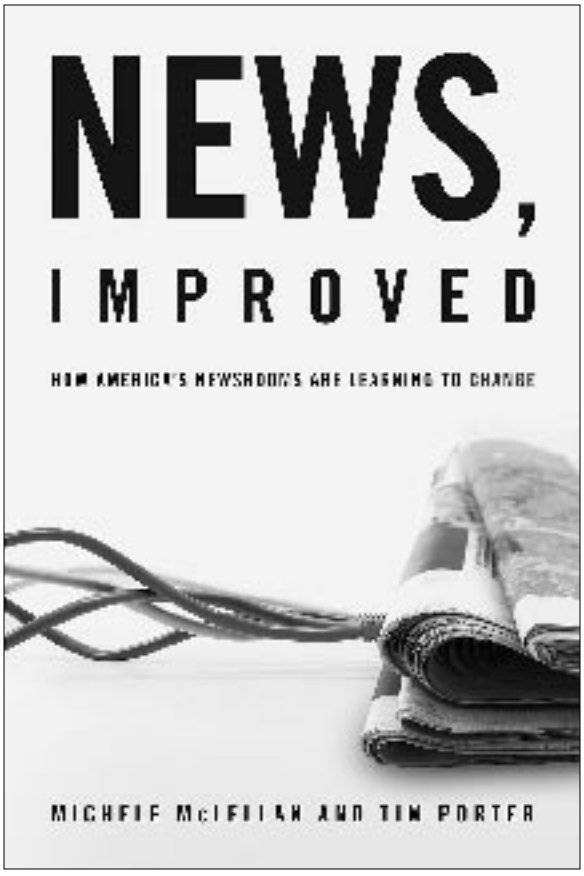
Newsroom Training: Essential, Yet Too Often Ignored

'Only a third of news organizations increased their training budgets in the past five years ….'

By Michele McLellan and Tim Porter

When The Atlanta Journal-Constitution's editor Julia D. Wallace announced a major newsroom reorganization and buyout offers in February, she made this pledge: "As we implement changes, we will boost our commitment to training."

This promise was impressive because Atlanta was already doing more training with its newsroom staff than most news organizations in the country despite facing the same financial pressures as other major U.S. metros. This newspaper is also in a minority of U.S. news organizations that have increased midcareer staff training in recent years. Along with several other savvy newsroom leaders, Wallace realizes that strategic training can help news organizations cope with the competitive and financial quakes now rocking the industry.



As the news industry strives to become a dynamic competitor in a fierce information economy, good newsroom leadership requires finding an edge to distinguish their news products from the glut of other media offerings. Improving reporters' and editors' skills, while raising their energy level and spurring motivation, can mean the difference between a news organization successfully reinventing itself and one that doesn't.

"We want people to perform new types of work, some of which is not yet defined. Offering training lowers the fear associated with changing job duties and roles and offers an incentive both for staff members and managers, as training promises to improve the work, " says Melanie Sill, executive editor of the Raleigh News & Observer, where newsroom training has been significantly increased.

Wallace and Sill have learned the lessons of the business world: Successful companies regard training as an investment, not as an expense, and lowering the fear factor is just one of the return benefits of consistent and continuous training. In other industries and professions—whether for pharmaceutical salespeople, Starbucks baristas, or even lawyers—training is a vehicle for financial success. Companies that invest in their people and create environments that support innovation adapt better to changes in their markets. They also have highly satisfied employees and outperform their peers financially.

"It's something the leaders in the best companies talk about all the time, says Amy Lyman, president of Great Places to Work Institute, which puts together Fortune magazine's "100 Best Companies to Work For" list. "If you want people to be innovative, they need to have the smarts and the skills and the knowledge, but they also need to have the freedom, the comfort, and the support to try things that are new and may fail."

That attitude is rare in the U.S. news industry, which trains only sporadically, relies mostly on training offered by nonprofit organizations, and inevitably cuts the training budget (if it has one) when revenues fall. On average, U.S. companies invest 2.3 percent of payroll on training, according to the American Society for Training & Development. In contrast, the newspaper industry invests less than one-fifth of that, 0.4 percent of payroll, according to an analysis by Inland Press.

Only a third of news organizations increased their training budgets in the past five years, according to a 2006 survey sponsored by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. About 30 percent have maintained training budgets in that time while 20 percent have cut them, according to the survey of 2,000 journalists and news executives conducted by Princeton Survey

Research Associates International. One in 10 newsrooms provides no training at all.

Yet nine in 10 journalists say they need more training and nine in 10 news executives agree. The executives—typically among the more experienced and knowledgeable journalists—say they need more training themselves, particularly in management and new media. Lack of training is the top source of job dissatisfaction among journalists, ahead of pay and benefits.

The Value of Newsroom Training

News organizations that have increased training budgets tend to take a more sophisticated approach, the survey found. These organizations train their staffs with specific goals in mind, have a training coordinator, and receive higher-than-average feedback from their staffs for the training that is offered.

That finding echoes what we and other program directors in Knight's $10 million Newsroom Training Initiative learned between 2003 and 2006. The initiative, which includes Tomorrow's Workforce, The Learning Newsroom, and Poynter Institute's News University, demonstrated in dozens of newsrooms that training linked to actionable goals and encouraged by forward-looking leadership drives innovation and audience appeal by improving newsroom culture and news content. The culture change is key to learning and reinvention, including development of print and digital content that is more engaging to audiences with links to many information sources.

Many of the newspapers, large and small, that were part of the Knight initiative found that an investment in training paid off. Among them:

- The Herald-Times in Bloomington, Indiana (circulation 29,000) participated in The Learning Newsroom project and designated a staff member to coordinate training just five hours a week. This training helped the newsroom become more adaptive and creative. Editor Bob Zaltsberg cites training as a factor in a 10 percent increase in single-copy sales of the newspaper and a robust drive to improve the Web site.
- The Waco Tribune-Herald (circulation 38,000), a Tomorrow's Workforce partner, achieved a more constructive culture that helped the staff embrace online journalism quickly and enthusiastically. Editor Carlos Sanchez said increasing the training also resulted in a 40 percent decline in turnover, which had been a significant drain on money and management time.
- One year after boosting its training in 2005, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution (circulation 350,000), another Tomorrow's Workforce partner, doubled the number of beat watchdog stories to 90 per year and turned its front page from one dominated by standard institutional stories to one that featured more engaging story forms. Improved culture and communication at the paper help to drive the newsroom's aggressive push onto its Web site. "The common understanding, the common language, the common sort of culture that you get from training everybody in the consistent way we have is a really big deal," says Bert Roughton, managing editor/print at the Journal-Constitution.
- The Oregonian (circulation 310,000), working with Tomorrow's Workforce, developed a staff-driven beat-reporting curriculum. "Our beat reporting has sharpened reporters' sense of news and ability to mine daily and enterprise stories, says Editor Sandy Rowe. "We are, more than ever, holding people and institutions accountable through document-driven reporting."

... training linked to actionable goals and encouraged by forward-looking leadership drives innovation and audience appeal by improving newsroom culture and news content.

The lesson from successes such as these is a simple one: When editors understand how necessary training is to achieve their goals, they will find ways to make sure it gets accomplished. Mike Jenner, executive editor of the highly innovative Bakersfield Californian (circulation 61,000) shares this view. He and his staff, working with The Learning Newsroom, radically improved its newsroom culture while pushing more news content onto the Web. By mid-November 2006, the Californian staff had produced 600 online videos that led to 120,000 downloads. By comparison, a year earlier the staff had produced just six videos. "Our overall page views are up," says Jenner. "Our posts and our comments are way up on our blogs. And downloads of our videos are through the stratosphere."

For Jenner, training made the difference. "This is a different place than it was a year ago, two years ago," Jenner says. "Training is really what's gotten us where we are today." □

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