



COLLEGE MEDIA REVIEW

RESEARCH ANNUAL

Sender-Receiver, Receiver Sender:

A uses-and-gratifications study of student journalists' use
of social media
Vincent Filak

Campus Media Advisers' Credentials

Is there a doctor in the newsroom?
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Just Hit Reply

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What's in the Pages?

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Editor's Note

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Welcome to the second College Media Review Research Annual. Although College Media Review remains in an online format, we once again are compiling all of the year's research into an annual publication, in PDF form and also available in hard copy as a print-on-demand book.

The continued presence of the Research Annual is critical in three main ways. First and foremost, it serves as a vehicle for disseminating key research about the field. This research answers many questions both new and experienced advisers have about how college media operates outside of their campuses. Those who follow the CMA listserv know that it is peppered with questions from advisers about issues such as editor pay, content, advertising and ethics. As with last year's edition, this Research Annual is able to answer some of those questions, providing hard data for editors, advisers and deans, going beyond just anecdotal examples. Second, this journal also provides a publication outlet for CMA members. While a few other journals have published some studies about college media, there is no friendlier home for such research than College Media Review, and no place that encourages such diverse methodologies. Having this Annual be available in print form also helps scholars who are at institutions stuck in the 20th Century who are not as accepting of online journals for promotion and tenure consideration, even if those articles are peer-reviewed. Finally, the continued existence of College Media Review and the Research Annual and CMA in general (the Nordin Award for research, the CMA conventions and the CMA slot at the AEJMC convention) help promote future research—sort of a “if you build it, they will come” approach, except, of course, that College Media Review has been around for more than half a century. Hopefully that future research will answer more questions posed on the listserv and elsewhere.

In the meantime, this volume provides much useful information on a variety of topics. Vince Filak explores a very timely topic: student use of social media, through the lens of uses and gratifications theory. In a similar vein, Sara Baker Netzley studies student use of email, specifically for interviewing/newsgathering purposes. Lisa Lyon Payne and Thomas Mills provide an important snapshot of the content of hard copy college newspapers, looking at what topics are covered on their front pages. Using a qualitative research methodology, Kyle Miller and Carolyn Prentice examine college radio stations, a much understudied part of college media, employing co-orientation theory and administrator/adviser/student perceptions of the radio station. Bradley Wilson looks at advisers, students and professionals in his study about photojournalism ethics. Carol Terracina Hartman and Robert Nulph turn their focus solely on college media advisers, providing nationwide data for a key question in the field: should a Ph.D. be required for the skills-centered adviser position? Last, but definitely, definitely not least, Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver also provides research on advisers, giving a very useful broad-based overview on issues such as compensation, load and departmental placement, comparing the results of her 2014 study with a similar seminal study done three decades earlier. Both Kopenhaver and Wilson have companion articles that will be published in the next Research Annual volume.

I hope these seven articles not only provide useful information, but also serve to spark more ideas for research. There are many, many areas of college media that are fertile ground for future exploration. I encourage all of the readers to look through these first two Research An-

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nuals, through past CMR archives, and through the CMA listserv in looking for what has been done and what could and should be studied in the future.

As I leave the journal and hand over the reins to the very capable CMR team of Debbie Landis (executive editor), Bradley Wilson and Carol Terracina Hartman (managing editors) and Bill Neville (webmaster), I would like to thank all of the authors for their contributions to the journal and the field. I'd especially like to acknowledge the work of Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver, the associate editor in charge of research, for her work in coordinating the peer reviews of the articles. Finally, I'd like to thank Katelyn Canon, assistant editor for this Research Annual, for all of her hard work.

Sender-receiver, receiver-sender:

A uses-and-gratifications study of student journalists' use of social media

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Abstract

Uses and gratifications theory posits that audience members select media to satisfy specific needs. Social media, however, have allowed media users to select both media to consume and what media to produce/share. This study of student journalists (n=285) revealed differences between the importance of specific gratifications in terms of what participants consumed and what they shared. Additionally, the study examines which gratifications were most important in forming a positive attitude toward social media.

Introduction

Student media advisers often find themselves tasked with helping students advance into new realms while simultaneously making sure that the gold standards of media coverage remain the bedrock of their media outlets. The main media values experts often espouse include relevance, usefulness and interest as well as a general sense that content should remain focused on the needs and wants of the audience (Brooks, et al. 2011).

One of the more difficult parts of this process is not only trying to get the students to value a new approach, a new tool or a new concept, but also in trying to make sure that these tools, approaches and concepts are applied in that audience-centric way. For example, while many student newspaper journalists desperately want to write for the opinion page or earn the right to have a weekly column, they often fall into the trap of writing for themselves (Rosenauer & Filak 2013). Thus, their diatribes regarding parking problems, lousy food or disgusting roommates lack broader applicability beyond their own personal pet peeves. Other areas, such as multimedia use on student media outlets' websites also follow this pattern. Koretzky (2010) noted that while college journalists love multimedia content, they often fail to include it in meaningful ways when creating content for their own outlets.

In the Web 2.0 world and beyond, the growth of social media and the explosion of user-generated content have allowed individuals to be both senders and receivers of information (Kietzmann et al 2011). Student journalists can use social media platforms such as Twitter to "live tweet" an event, giving readers the opportunity to learn what is happening as news unfolds. They can also use this platform and others to share stories, promote content and

augment coverage. Simultaneously, they can read content from others who are also sharing information on that topic, learn more about what has happened and engage with an interested set of audience members.

However, the question remains whether a disconnect exists between how student journalists are using social media as senders and how they are using it as receivers. It is also worthwhile to examine to what degree individuals value social media and how it is used. By applying a Uses and Gratifications framework to these questions, this study will examine how student journalists use these outlets and what gratifications they are seeking and obtaining through their sending and receiving of information.

This study is important both theoretically and practically. First, it will explore the tenets of uses and gratification, namely the concept of what is it that people “do” with media, through two key facets within the confines of a single junction point. In other words, it will examine whether a social media user approaches content via the same uses and gratifications in terms of sending material and receiving material. This will help extend the theoretical framework associated with this approach to media use and further its usefulness.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, this study will provide advisers with key insight into how the student journalists are using this media as senders and receivers. This will help advisers to see what draws their students to social media as receivers and then assess to what degree those gratifications are being applied in the sending phases. Thus, advisers can see what students “get” out of social media when they take in content and whether they keep that in mind when they provide other people with social media content. In short, are the students writing for their audience, or are they writing for themselves? This is important because not only can this help pinpoint ways for advisers to advocate for specific uses of social media, but it can also help advisers see if their students are creating social media content that is beneficial and gratifying to readers.

Literature Review

Social Media

The definitions of social media are vast and often difficult to operationalize, but several key aspects of social media are shared among these definitions.

Scholars have noted that the primary aspects of social media that differentiate them from other media formats include interactivity, many-to-many dissemination and a heavy presence of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). Within this definition resides the concept of collaboration and sharing, which allows for an individual to be at once a producer and a consumer of the same products.

Social media allow individuals to create a user-centric home for content that interests them, akin to what Negroponte (1995) outlined with his “Daily Me” concept. However, the media also allow for individuals to share content, modify it to suit their needs and participate in a large discussion regarding the content (Kietzmann et al. 2011).

Rosenauer and Filak (2013) noted that social media is best defined in terms of reach and how the material can be shared from many people to many other people, not necessarily based on one set of tools or one particular platform. The authors state that social media approaches can include blogs, microblogging (Twitter), rich site summary (RSS feeds),

social networking sites (Facebook, LinkedIn) and reaction tools (comment functions on websites). The key to fully understanding social media, they argue, is to not confuse the platform with the content.

College news outlets and their advisers have been working to better integrate social media into their approach to news. Wotanis (2013) noted that with a heavy concentration of student users on Facebook, many student newspapers have established a presence on the site as well. She notes that aside from drawing attention from the Facebook audience, using the social media platform allows for the news process to be more immediate, more efficient and more transparent. This is true for both the external audience and the members of the staff. For example, Reimold (2012) noted that members of The Daily Evergreen at Washington State University had combined the traditional news fare of a police ride along with Twitter to create a real-time “tweetalong” experience for readers. Reimold noted that this innovation was a way to improve social media as well as strengthen the relationship between the media and the police.

Brooks (2011) noted that Facebook is an excellent tool to create both camaraderie within the newsroom and to allow for people to migrate to a specific place for information. Being attuned to a social media platform like this can allow for a better sense of what is happening throughout the campus and thus allow the newsroom to find stories that can amplify these topics. McGinley (2011) noted that student media can gain a great deal of value from social media in both the creation and dissemination of information. She stated that student media can use a platform like Facebook to contact sources and generate story ideas at the front of the news process. In addition, the student journalists can then promote the stories and poll students on important topics.

Neville (2011) noted that social media sites like Facebook are appealing because they are often free, have a widespread usage and, in the eyes of students, are fun. In addition, the platform allows for the integration of contacts, visuals and blogging tools for the newsroom. Although students are often distracted while on the site, Neville’s list of positives allows student media outlets to find ways to reach a wider and more engaged audience.

The question for advisers, however, is how to specifically reach the audience members in an effective way via these platforms and how to make social media more than just a novelty. Adapting in this new environment is often difficult for advisers and their newsrooms, as a clear path does not exist for many (DiPalma & Gouge 2013). In Reimold’s discussion with the editor of The Daily Evergreen, the concept of the police “tweetalong” appeared to be both organic and random. Although successful, being able to more specifically target beneficial social media opportunities is necessary for advisers, which is where a broader theory base can be helpful.

Research regarding social media has often looked at specific need satisfactions from a practical standpoint. For example, Briones et al. (2011) found that the American Red Cross engaged in a series of digital media initiatives to engage potential volunteers, alert the media to important events and share information with the community. The authors noted that the wide variety of social media tools, which included blogs, Twitter and Facebook, allowed the Red Cross to create a two-way dialogue that led to faster and better interactions with a variety of publics.

Laire, Casteleyn and Mottart (2012) found that students who used social media tools as

part of a second-language learning course reported feeling more involved with the material. Additionally, the authors noted that the students felt as though they were better educated overall due to their use of social media.

Dabner (2012) studied the impact social media use had in regard to a massive earthquake in her native New Zealand. This case study demonstrated that through the use of a central-junction-point website as well as the use of email, the university's emergency management team was able to provide an immediate one-way blast of communication. However, it was the engaging of the community and the sharing of information among the members of the community via a dedicated Facebook page and via Twitter that allowed a more complete set of information to emerge throughout the three-month crisis. The author's study of the University of Canterbury's web-based response to crisis revealed that social media and social networking communities can be invaluable when a surveillance need is dominant for a social group.

Additional examinations of social media have also addressed various underlying needs individuals are attempting to gratify in a wide array of situations. Scholars have studied how social media has been used to help students adjust to college life (DeAndrea et al. 2012), improve social connections between political candidates and potential voters (Hong & Nadler 2012) and address image-repair tactics (Moody 2011) to name a few applications. In each instance, the authors demonstrated that not only is the audience active within this two-way communication paradigm, but also that individuals are using these media for specific purposes.

Uses and Gratifications

Uses and gratifications theory proposes that human actions are taken in order to satisfy social and psychological needs. The underlying theoretical assumptions of this approach harken to the functionalist perspective and help assess to what degree do people use media to gratify specific, tangible needs.

Ruggerio (2000) noted that these needs include "self-actualization, cognitive needs, (such as curiosity), aesthetic needs, and expressive needs." As need patterns shift, so too will the individuals' gratification desires and approaches. As specific needs return, individuals will return to those actions that yielded the highest level of gratification (Palmgreen, Wenner and Rosengren 1985).

Early research in the area of uses and gratifications proposed the notion that certain forms of media attract and hold audiences because those media satisfy individuals' underlying psychological needs. Much of the research in the 1940s and 1950s examined the usage habits of radio listeners, newspaper readers and other media consumers in an attempt to ascertain who uses which media and why they do so. Despite heavy criticism of the theory as being too individualized and relying too heavily on self-report, the theory continued to build on several key premises. First and foremost, authors were able to establish that the audience members were active participants in their own media usage. In addition, users were able to find specific media that satisfied their needs and were able to deduce which media to select when those needs returned (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch 1974). Finally, researchers established that patterns could be discerned in terms of what people did with media as opposed to what media did to people (Windahl 1981).

The UAG approach has been used to study television (Rubin 1983; Nabi et al 2003), magazines (Payne et al. 1998), telephones (O'Keefe & Sulanowski 1995), instant messaging (Leung, 2001) and the Internet (Charney & Greenberg 2002).

In each instance, a number of specific gratifications have emerged as well as a solid rationale for media use to satisfy them. For example, Frisby (2004) found in a study of reality-based television viewers that social comparison emerged as a key need for viewers. In many instances, study participants noted they felt better when they were able to compare themselves favorably to the reality-show participants. Abelman, Atkin and Rand (1997) found that viewers of traditional television programs were driven by companionship, escapism and entertainment needs. Additional motivations included time-passing and habitual actions.

In terms of Internet usage, researchers found entertainment, information and diversion to be among the top needs satisfied through usage (Papacharissi 2002, Charney & Greenberg 2001). Additional needs included interpersonal utility (Papacharissi & Rubin 2000), habit (Diddi & LaRose 2006), social interaction and convenience (Ko et al. 2005).

Ruggerio (2000) noted that the growth of interactivity supports and strengthens the underlying assumptions of uses and gratification, as it assesses media effects from a receiver perspective as opposed to a sender perspective. Furthermore, Ruggerio argues that burgeoning media choices and the ability to provide user-generated content via postings and reactions should lead to further applications of the theory.

The study of social media in this regard is relatively thin, but research into various aspects of social networks and social media has revealed patterns in gratification-seeking behavior akin to other media formats. Baek et al. (2011) studied novel motivations for linking and link-sharing behavior on Facebook. The authors examined 217 Facebook users to assess what they shared and why they shared it. The authors revealed that, as is indicated in the term "social media," participants sought information they found interesting with the intent of sharing it with their "friends" on Facebook. This was akin to other studies that saw interpersonal connections as being key to satisfying knowledge and socialization needs (Lin & Lu 2011).

Hicks et al. (2012) studied participants who used the website Yelp.com from a uses and gratifications perspective as well. The social information site allows users to provide ratings and information about services, businesses and other similar organizations, thus providing a wide array of user-generated content on a broad variety of topics. The authors found that although informational-seeking motives were primary among users, other gratifications including entertainment, interpersonal utility and passing time were also significant predictors of heavy usage.

Perhaps most germane to this study, research into social media has been a mixed bag in regard to uses and gratifications. For example, Steinfeld, Ellison and Lampe (2008) argued that social media improves social connectivity among individuals and spurs the overall sense of socialization. A survey of more than 400 college students revealed that social network sites, such as Facebook, augmented social development and improved the students' sense of social relationships. The authors found that social media were able to facilitate social interactions and help improve the students' overall sense of social capital.

That said, not every study on social media has met with similar results. Wang, Tchernev

and Solloway (2012) studied the use of social media among college students via a longitudinal examination. The participants reported that four key types of needs (emotional, cognitive, social and habitual) drove them to use social media, but not all needs were gratified through use. The authors found that social needs were dominant in terms of social media usage, but that in many cases, the use of this media did not lead to gratification of those needs. However, the researchers did note that ungratified social and habitual needs stimulate additional use of social media. To that end, the expectation of gratification drives the overall usage of social media more so than actual gratification itself.

Other research in this regard has revealed that the social media does not satisfy expected needs, but does lead to the gratification of others. Lai and Turban (2008) noted that although social media was expected to lead to friendships and other similar gratifications, the authors failed to find evidence of this. Rather, social media use correlated with increased work productivity.

Wang and his colleagues note that this lack of consistency across the studies is likely due in part to individual measurements of gratification as well as the relative newness of the media format under examination. That said, the authors did give a passing nod to the possibility that the interactive nature of social media and the fluidity of the content associated with it could also lead to some of these incongruities.

One key study that does provide an important touchstone for this research, however, is Hanson and Haridakis's (2008) look at uses and gratifications as the theory applies to YouTube usage. This research revealed that individuals seek out entertaining items in order to satisfy certain needs while seeking out information-based material to satisfy others. Although that aspect of the work was not particularly revealing, the authors also found that the participants were motivated by certain needs while consuming the media and by other needs while deciding to share or repurpose the content. The authors noted that these differences were likely driven by "the need to express one's self and to have a voice in the marketplace of information" (p. 9).

Based on these theoretical and practical underpinnings, we proposed the following three research questions:

RQ1: Which types of gratifications will participants most attempt to satisfy via the sending and receiving of social media?

RQ2: Which types of gratifications will predict the participants' view regarding the overall importance of social media?

RQ3: Do significant differences exist in how much value participants place on the gratifications based on if they are sending or receiving information?

Methodology

Participants were gathered from student newsrooms throughout the country via an email message provided through the College Media Association. Members of CMA were encouraged to pass a link to a SurveyMonkey survey to student journalists within the newsrooms they advised.

They were asked to respond to several demographic items before being asked to respond to an item as to whether they used social media, defined for this study as being Twitter and/or Facebook. Those participants who responded that they did not use these forms of social

media were sent to the final page of the survey where they were thanked for their participation and thus eliminated from taking part in the rest of the survey.

Participants who said they did take part in social media were asked to respond to several items regarding their level of participation as well as the importance they felt social media had for them and society at large (e.g. "Social media gets people information in a quick and easy way"). The items were drawn from previous research into social media and Internet studies and linguistically adapted for use in this piece. ($\alpha = .87$).

The survey then asked participants to respond to a series of 18 items that assessed six specific gratifications. The items were drawn from previous work (Papacharissi & Rubin 2000; Sun, Rubin & Haridakis 2008) and each set was linguistically adapted to fit the study here in terms of gratifications sought through the sending or receiving of social media. Participants used a 1-7 scale that spanned from strongly disagree to strongly agree in order to rate these statements regarding the reasons they use social media. Participants were asked to rate these items twice: once in regard to how they used the media as a receiver and the second time as to their behavior as a sender.

Entertainment ("It is amusing or fun"), pass time ("It relieves boredom"), knowledge ("It lets me gain knowledge about important topics"), surveillance ("It keeps me up to date on whatever is happening now") social ("It connects me to people with similar interests") and self-discovery ("It helps me discover new things about myself") were each measured with three items that were used to comprise each variable. All 12 variables (six sending needs and six receiving needs) were examined for inter-item reliability and met an acceptable alpha level (all Cronbach's alphas $> .7$). Each set of items was then combined and averaged to create variable scores.

Results

Research Question 1 asked which types of gratifications will participants most attempt to satisfy via the sending and receiving of social media?

An analysis of the mean scores of all 12 variables revealed differences in terms of which needs were satisfied in which fashion.

In regard to receiving information via social media, participants rated the surveillance need the highest, followed by knowledge and entertainment. Passing time, socializing and discovery rated the lowest. When it came to sending information via social media, participants rated knowledge and entertainment the highest, with a sharp drop off in mean scores after those two. Surveillance, socializing, passing time and self-discovery followed in descending order of importance. (See Table 1 for mean scores).

Research Question 2 asked which types of gratifications will predict the participants' view regarding the overall importance of social media.? To examine this question, we conducted two regressions, one for each set of gratification variables, with the social media value variable serving as the DV.

Prior to running the regressions, a correlation matrix was used to examine any potential covariates that needed to be accounted for within the regressions. Gender and year in school positively correlated with several variables and were thus retained for examination within the regressions.

The receiving social media regression was significant (full model adj. R-square = .45, $p < .001$), with several of the variables showing predictive power. Surveillance (beta = .29, $p < .001$) was the strongest predictor among the six variables with self-discovery (beta = .18, $p < .01$), socialization (beta = .17, $p < .05$) and knowledge (beta = .17, $p < .05$) also serving as predictive variables. Entertainment and pass time ($p > .5$) were not significant predictors in this regression.

In regard to sending social media, the regression was once again predictive (full model adj. R-square = .40, $p < .001$). In this case, surveillance (beta = .27, $p < .001$) and knowledge (beta = .25, $p < .001$) were equally strong predictors, with self-discovery (beta = .11, $p = .1$) showing marginal predictive power. None of the remaining variables were significant predictors ($p > .3$).

Research Question 3 asked if significant differences exist in how much value participants place on the gratifications based on if they are sending or receiving information?

To examine this issue, we conducted a series of matched-pairs t-tests in which each sending gratification was paired with its receiving gratification. In five of the six cases, significant differences existed, with only knowledge ($t = -.745$, $p > .4$) failing to reach significance.

In the cases of entertainment ($t = 2.37$, $p < .05$), passing time ($t = 5.71$, $p < .001$) surveillance ($t = 7.08$, $p < .001$) and socialization ($t = 2.05$, $p < .05$), participants noted a higher agreement level in terms of receiving for gratification instead of sending. In the case of self-discovery ($t = -5.42$, $p < .001$), participants rated the sending gratification higher than the receiving gratification, indicating that sending information via social media was more valuable in gratifying this need than was receiving.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to ascertain to what degree social media was being valued, what motivated student newspaper journalists to use it and to what degree those motivations differed based on whether the individuals were consuming or sharing the material. What follows can be of great benefit to advisers who are hoping to help students as they integrate social media into their work routines.

From a practical standpoint, the participants here valued social media. As student journalists, they clearly saw a benefit to being able to receive information in a quick fashion wherever they were. They also saw the benefit this had to their field of journalism and understood it had the ability to inform and engage the public. As social media continues to gain a larger and larger share of the media pie, individuals who want to be informed and who wish to inform others should embrace it. This study demonstrates that these digital natives are on the right path in that regard.

Additionally, the study revealed key disconnects between what the student journalists receive and what they provide in regard to social media. Participants saw social media as an exceptionally valuable tool for remaining up-to-date on current events and being aware of their surroundings. However, they didn't see as much value in terms of sharing that type of "breaking news" with others. As student journalists, the concept of using these platforms to help put out news as it is happening should be second nature.

In another odd twist, individuals rated self-discovery as the least-likely reason they

would consume social media, but rated it much higher as a reason to share information with others. This smacks of the “self-as-authority” phenomenon often associated with the third-person effect (Davison 1983), in that the participants felt it was valuable that they help others discover things about themselves, while viewing their own lives as “just fine.”

The value of this work for advisers is multifold. First, it is clear that advisers have active and engaged digital natives with an interest in social media. That said, these students seem to lack a clear sense of how best to use it as a tool to further their journalistic endeavors. As was the case with multimedia content, the students enjoyed consuming the content, but were less likely to use it to enhance others’ online experiences. Advisers can relay this data to their students to help increase the congruency between the types of social media content they receive and the types of social media content they send. In this way, the students can use social media more effectively when they attempt to satisfy the needs of their audience members.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, advisers can help student home in on the types of material that will be most gratifying for their readers. The participants in this study tended to see surveillance, knowledge and socialization as the key needs that are satisfied by social media (either sending, receiving or both). In addition, entertainment and pass time needs were found to be insignificant predictors. To that end, advisers can help students understand what types of content and what kinds of approaches to social media will best fulfill the most predictive (and avoid the least predictive) needs.

For example, surveillance needs were most predictive in both regressions. Therefore, advisers can help establish policies and procedures to alert audience members as to important things happening on campus (“President to resign; cites lack of faculty support. More to follow”) or provide quick answers to puzzling questions (“Firefighters at Scott Hall say no fire; building steam duct erupted” Or “Chancellor says school will happen. Despite 18in of snow, classes still on”). In addition, the adviser can offer suggestions for types of stories to promote or expand upon via social media. Pieces that augment knowledge regarding school policies and procedures (“Students to see fewer options, higher prices in fall meal plans”), things that offer a broader sense of socialization (“50 things every UWO grad should do before leaving campus”) and those that fulfill surveillance needs. Conversely, stories that provide nothing but entertainment (“Read our review of ‘Looper’ this week!”) or that simply pass time can be avoided. Understanding what the audience wants and likes via social media can help the advisers work with students in order to establish a good set of best practices for using this platform.

This study has several limitations. The issue of self-report bias is always key to a uses and gratifications study. In this instance, the individuals might view their consumption of social media as “gaining knowledge” on a topic like a favorite television show by conversing with other fans. A more objective observer could see their actions as being merely socialization, thus shifting the gratification patterns found here. Additional work in this area that includes more specificity in terms of precisely what people consume and why they consume it could be beneficial in addressing this issue. Also, a more broad sample of specific needs could be helpful in further pinpointing what students want in terms of specific forms of social media. For example, what types of things do students expect on Facebook versus Twitter? What specific levels of surveillance are helpful and which levels are repeti-

tive or intrusive? These issues can be examined in future research.

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About the Author



Vincent Filak is an award-winning teacher, scholar and college media adviser. He currently works as an associate professor of journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, where he also serves as the adviser to the Advance-Titan, UW O's student newspaper. He has produced two textbooks on writing and editing in the digital age, titled "Convergent Journalism: An Introduction" and "The Journalist's Handbook to Online Editing." His research has been published in Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, Journalism and Mass Communication Educator, Newspaper Research Journal, the Atlantic Journal of Communication, Visual Communication Quarterly, Educational Psychology and the British Journal of Social Psychology. In 2006, he was named the Ball State University College of Communication, Information and Media's Distinguished Researcher, marking the first time that award had gone to a junior faculty member. The following year, he was named an Honor Roll recipient by College Media Advisers, Inc., an award given to distinguished advisers with fewer than five years experience as an adviser. Filak holds a bachelor's in journalism and communication arts from UW Madison, a master's in journalism from UW Madison and a Ph.D. in journalism from the University of Missouri.

Campus media advisers credentials:

Is there a doctor in the newsroom?

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Abstract

This study looks at campus media programs nationwide, focusing on the roles of campus media advisers and skills instructors and their credentials and relationships with award-winning program. Data show a strong majority of advisers leading award-winning programs have 15+ years working in professional media. Additionally, non-terminal degree holders teach 67 percent of skills classes related to campus media participation. But, the literature indicates university administrations often sacrifice professional media experience for doctorates in advertising for new hires. As survey responses and prior research indicate, increasing numbers of advisers compose their own job descriptions; data collected in this new line of research has potential to alter administrative definitions and classifications of adviser and skills instructor positions.

Introduction

Journalism and mass communication programs continuously face pressure from their administrations to hire candidates with Ph.D.s for positions that emphasize advising college media or teaching media production skills. Hiring Ph.D.s with significant professional media experience in addition to teaching and research experience is preferred, but requiring professional experience is not always a priority in hiring (Downes and Jirari 2002). A focus on academic credentials may not be the most appropriate guide for students' education. In addition, as this study shows, teaching assignments for skills-based courses tend to favor those with intensive professional experience.

While campus media advisers are the primary focus of this study, the authors realize advisers are not the only faculty or staff on a college campus who contribute to students' education. Therefore, this study also considers those department members associated with teaching courses who would contribute to student skills needed to be successful in media.

How does the primary focus on academic credentials and secondary focus on professional experience during the hiring process affect student media outlets and the skills courses that provide the hands-on application of practices in the field? This study considers the hiring practices for campus media advisers and skills-based course instructors to see who actually provides students the practical knowledge needed to be successful with a review of the literature examining position announcements. The study examines campus media

advisers through surveying several national campus media organizations and attempts to capture a snapshot of advisers, their colleagues who teach skills classes, their institutions and their role as team leaders for student media. The research also analyzes student media competitions and uses the results to create a database of programs according to media awards earned. Examination of a sample of these schools offers a picture of personnel who guide programs that are the most competitive at the national level.

Recent surveys indicate advisers hold a variety of titles, ranging from media manager to director of broadcasting to newspaper adviser, and more. This study's results, consistent with prior literature (Kopenhaver 2009) indicate their educational and professional background covers a broad spectrum, ranging from relevant professional experience in a newsroom to book publishing, to less relevant experience, such as school library employment or IT management.

A question arises as to required credentials of adviser and/or skills instructor. What best serves students: a candidate with significant professional experience and a bachelor's/master's degree or a candidate with a terminal degree and little or no experience in the field, but a track record of published research and scholarship? The literature examining position announcements suggests this dichotomy: terminal degree OR professional media experience.

But, the literature and data proving either opinion is scarce. Optimally, candidates are at the top of their field in both areas. While this paper will not try to definitively answer this question, it does look at the current state of credentials for advisers and skills instructors who lead the most successful programs, providing insight into what that answer may be. To that end, this paper builds on the work of College Media Advisers, Journalism Association of Community Colleges, California College Media Association and other college media groups that routinely survey their membership to track changes in advising roles and responsibilities, working conditions, media operations, campus demographics, and more. To date, no study has linked the relationship between adviser and skills course instructor credentials and award-winning programs. The authors believe a review of award winners over time would indicate consistency in excellence, as judged against the students' peers. Correlating these results with adviser/skills instructor information would offer valuable insight as to adviser credentials, structure and other factors that contribute to student success in campus media.

As the world of college media evolves, it is essential to advance new lines of research into how college media does what it does, and an essential first step must be to examine the leadership. It is important to use these results to assess the relationship between leadership credentials and successful student media programs. The study also seeks to provide chairs and search committees evidence of any relationships so these qualifications may be included in job searches and in the search pool.

Literature Review

Several studies look at hiring trends in journalism and mass communications during the past 30 years. In 1993, Defleur's content analysis of 541 position announcements also included a look at government data and survey of administrators across the United States. He created a comprehensive overview of hiring trends that Merskin and Huberlie used as

a foundation in their 1995 examination of position advertisements in journalism and mass communication.

Both of these studies provided guidance for Downes and Jirari in their 2002 study of hiring trends in communications disciplines. They found that 60 percent of ads examined “required” a Ph.D. and another 22 percent “preferred it.” Just 37 percent of the ads required or preferred “professional experience.”

In her 2009 study of hiring trends in journalism and mass communication, Du found that even for highly technical programs such as new media, only 32.6 percent required professional experience and another 13 percent listed it as “desirable.” Du also found 45.7 percent required a Ph.D.; an additional 12 percent preferred it and another 12 percent considered ABDs. Almost 70 percent of position announcements in journalism and mass communication were seeking Ph.D.s.

The most recent comprehensive study of advising appears to come from College Media Advisers (Kopehaver 2009). Sample size is 277, or 30.2 percent of that group’s membership in fall 2008. Nearly half (47.6 percent) of advisers are not in tenure-track positions and of the remainder in tenure-track, only 38.9 percent are being granted tenure. A majority of advisers hold professional media experience (91 percent, with half of study respondents reporting nine or more years) and more than half have earned master’s degrees, with 25 percent holding doctorates.

The study also found that advisers reported a tremendous variety of job titles with publications/media director being the most common at 28.3 percent, followed by publications/media adviser (26.4 percent, a decrease of 4 percent since 2005), general managers (15.8 percent), media supervisors/coordinators (8.7 percent) and editorial advisers (5.9 percent).

With more advisers watching their student media come under the aegis of Student Affairs departments as opposed to remaining independent or under the umbrella of an academic department, more advisers are writing their own job descriptions and working under 12-month contracts compared to the last survey published in 2005 (Kopenhaver and Spielberger 2005).

The above numbers represent results from just one group. What this survey of College Media Advisers membership reveals is diversity in media adviser positions and student media structures on college campuses. One reason for this diversity may be that, while a considerable part of the workload and appointment, academic administrations offer a variable approach toward structure as well as evaluation of media advising positions (Kopenhaver and Spielberger 2005). Perhaps, as Ilkka and Tolstedt (2000) suggest, the structural identity leaves media advising less valued:

Perhaps the reason for the ‘lower status’ of advising as academic work is in part due to the lack of any clearly documented location and/or value for advising within the evaluative criteria used to assess faculty for merit, retention, tenure, and promotion (p. 4).

The variance in advising structure confirms the value of national organizations that unite advisers and offer resources to assist in keeping skills and knowledge current with conferences, workshops, events and contests for their student staffs. Such organizations also can provide tremendous support when advisers or their student media have to battle uncooperative administrations – ones that seeks to censor, censure, or silence the adviser or student

journalists (Austin 2011).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Although the literature and recent content analysis of hiring announcements indicate a Ph.D. is “required” and professional experience “preferred,” the make-up of current faculties and adviser ranks is unclear. Therefore, the following research question is presented:

RQ1: Who makes up a majority of campus media advisers: those with master’s degrees or less but with relevant professional experience, or Ph.D.s with or without professional experience?

Given Kopenhaver’s finding that 25 percent of advisers held Ph.D.s, the following hypothesis is presented:

H1: Advisers will be more likely to have been hired with a master’s degree and then have earned terminal degrees during their academic careers.

Following the lead of Kopenhaver, and Ilkka and Tolstedt, the academic home of student media programs should be determined. This is represented as:

RQ2: Are award-winning programs more likely to be housed within academic departments or located in nonacademic departments?

The following hypothesis is presented based on the authors’ years of experience in a variety of academic settings:

H2: Award-winning programs are more likely to be housed within academic departments.

Again following in Kopenhaver’s footsteps and expanding the work to include a link between award-winning programs and credentials of advisers and skills course instructors, the following is presented:

RQ3: Are award-winning student media programs more likely to be advised by instructors with bachelor’s/master’s degrees or by Ph.D.s or other terminal degree holders with or without professional experience?

RQ4: Are skills courses in award-winning programs (determined by contests administered through national media organizations) more likely to be taught by instructors with bachelor’s/master’s degrees or by Ph.D.s or other terminal degree holders with or without professional experience?

Finally, based on Kopenhaver’s earlier work as well as literature indicating a dichotomy in master’s/doctorate level credentials in the mass communication instructor pool, with a clear dividing line marking those with relevant professional experience and those without, and the authors’ experience as advisers and skills instructors, the following are hypothesized:

H3: Award-winning programs are more likely to be advised by bachelor’s/master’s degree holders than by Ph.D.s or Ed.D.s.

H4: Media skills classes are more likely to be taught by bachelor’s/master’s degree holders than by Ph.D.s or Ed.D.s.

Methods

This research comprises three distinct phases:

- 1) A national survey of student media advisers used to profile the current population

- 2) An analysis of five years of student media competitions to determine the most successful college media programs
- 3) A comparative analysis of the top programs as determined by phase two, looking at location of student media and adviser and skills instructor credentials.

For this research study, “advanced degree” is defined as Ph.D., Ed.D., terminal degree, master’s degrees and JD. “Professional experience” is defined as relevant work within a recognized media institution outside of internship positions.

Survey

To answer RQ1 and RQ2, the first phase included a 12-question survey administered to five campus media membership groups. The groups were chosen to include all types of student media as well as all types of institutions: College Media Advisers (now College Media Association), Society for Collegiate Journalists, National Broadcasting Society Alpha Epsilon Rho, College Broadcasters Inc. and Broadcast Education Association.

The survey was administered spring 2011 to four of the groups through the listserv available to advisers. The listserv subscribers received a series of three emails with a link to an online survey created on SurveyMonkey. The series of messages averaged a time span of just over two weeks and occurred just before each group’s national conference. The fifth group, Society for Collegiate Journalists, was surveyed, but outside this sequence.

As the survey sample was universal, the reliability of the survey instrument did not require testing beyond a small sample to verify clarity in wording. The 12 survey questions were designed to elicit information on the advisers’ education and professional background, demographic information and size and type of institution. After a visual inspection of the data, frequencies were run on all questions as well as crosstabs on specific questions to determine trends, relationships and significance levels.

Competitions

To answer RQ3, the second phase of the research identified successful programs using national student media competition results as the determining factor. To this end, the authors gathered contest results from College Broadcasters Inc, Associated Collegiate Press, National Broadcasting Society, Broadcast Education Association, and College Media Advisers – either from the national offices or through the groups’ contest pages on their websites. The Society of Collegiate Journalists’ national awards are not a sponsored media production competition – the campus chapters appear to present those honors – and thus, analysis of that group’s awards was not included. The Best of Collegiate Design, sponsored by College Media Advisers, also was excluded from the analysis, as five years of data were not available. While most of the organizations provided comprehensive results that included students’ names as well as school affiliation, one student media group listed results by organization only (e.g., WCUB-TV or The Southwestern Sun) requiring extensive research to identify the relevant information.

For this research study, five years of competition results from the five media organizations’ competitions (one per organization) were compiled, culling those awards given for non-broadcast media categories such as screenplays, best chapter awards, non-broadcast production and other categories not necessarily affiliated with any student media group.

For each media organization competition, number of awards won and number of first place awards over a five-year period were determined for every college or university with winning projects. The top award winners were then calculated, defined as at least five awards over five years. This definition would indicate a pattern of consistent excellence beyond a time period in which a few star students could dominate a particular competition or category. The calculation yielded a dataset of 98 programs winning at least five awards over five years.

Results for the five organizations' competitions were then combined, along with an indication as to the number of different competitions in which a college or university had won awards. For example, Marshall University garnered 149 awards while entering productions over a five-year period in three different media organization competitions (BEA, CBI and NBS). Inclusion of the number of competitions somewhat negates the duplication one single project may present: winning awards in three different organizations' competitions in the same year. The authors, when determining ranking of the top schools, used the number of organizations whose competitions garnered awards as a deciding factor in a numerical tie for number of awards, placing the school with fewer competitions entered above those with more.

Results from the five competitions were then collated into one list showing the grand total of awards achieved over the past five years, as well as the number of organizations' competitions entered [Table 1].

The tabulation generated a natural dividing point at 21 institutions for which data was gathered [Table 1]. This sample subset offered a significant snapshot of the most successful student media programs as determined by student media competitions of national membership organizations.

Comparative Analysis

Phase three of the research involved analyzing faculty and advisers for the top 21 schools. The different media organizations' membership directories contained far less information about their members, the media they advise and their home institutions than anticipated; therefore, to answer RQ4, the authors set out to gather needed information from each of the 21 programs, which proved extraordinarily challenging.

Data gathered for this phase of analysis include the number of faculty and their specific degrees, the hiring policy for tenure-track positions and whether a non-Ph.D. could attain tenure, along with adviser and education credentials of those likely to teach skills-intensive courses. Many institutions employ more than one adviser for their campus media; therefore status and credentials for each adviser were included in the analysis. For those faculty who failed to identify teaching interests in biographical profiles, the authors examined successive semesters during the study period to determine assignments for skills-intensive courses.

Biographical information was gathered through institution information, phone and Web-based directories and online press releases announcing contest awards, new hires, events, meetings and other notices. As a last resort, the authors consulted class pages, Facebook and LinkedIn profiles.

Much additional information was gathered through phone interviews with program and

Table 1: Top Award Winners: College Media

# OF TOTAL AWARDS			
#	School	Grand Total for all 5	# of organizations
1	Marshall University	149	3
2	University of North Carolina	137	4
3	Arizona State University	58	2
4	West Texas A & M University	56	2
5	University of Miami	52	2
6	Ithaca College	52	3
7	University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh	48	3
8	Monmouth University	43	2
9	University of Minnesota	43	2
10	Indiana University	37	2
11	Brigham Young University – Provo	37	3
12	University of Florida	35	1
13	Colorado State University	34	3
14	Columbia College – Chicago	31	3
15	University of Oklahoma	30	5
16	Michigan State University	29	2
17	Rider University	28	1
18	Western Illinois University	28	1
19	Central Michigan University	28	4
20	Savannah College of Art and Design	27	3
21	Weber State University	24	1
22	Rowan University	23	3
23	Texas State University – San Marcos	21	3
24	University of South Dakota	21	3
25	University of Texas – Austin	21	3
26	Appalachian State University	19	2
27	Elon University	19	2
28	Emerson College	19	2
29	University of Oregon	19	3
30	Illinois State University	18	4
31	University of Illinois	17	2

department support staff, particularly as some course listings posted names not included in department listings or in university directories and not all institutions publish information for instructors whose appointment is less than full-time. These instructors could be graduate assistants, lecturers, online instructors or adjuncts. In some cases, a query, “why is X an instructor and not an adjunct?” led to the answer: “oh, that must be a mistake,” suggests that not all information gathered electronically is 100 percent accurate or up-to-date. Additionally, professionals in residence, we found, tended not to offer academic credentials on bio pages, emphasizing instead professional credentials. Thus, phone interviews became essential to data collection. All the information was tabulated and a percentage calculated for each institution [Table 2].

Terracina-Hartman & Nulph: Campus media adviser credentials

Table 2: Adviser and Skills Instructor Credentials

#	School	Ph.D./ JD Skills Class	MFA Skills Class	MA/MS/ MBA Skills Class	BA/BS/ Spec. Skills Class	Total Skills Class profs	Percent Ph.D. of Total	Percent Masters and others	Advisor Ph.D.	Advisor MA/MS /MFA/ BA/BS	Location
1	Marshall University	4	1	6	1	12	33.3%	66.7%	2	1	Dept.
2	North Carolina State University	12	1	12	2	27	44.4%	55.6%	0	2	Ind. Student Media
3	West Texas A & M University	6	1	9	6	22	27.3%	72.7%	0	2	Dept.
4	University of Miami	4	0	13	0	17	23.5%	76.5%	2	3	Dept.
5	Ithaca College	5	1	10	1	17	29.4%	70.6%	2	4	Dept.
6	University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh	1	1	5	2	9	11.1%	88.9%	0	3	Dept.
7	Monmouth University	3	2	7	1	13	23.1%	76.9%		3	Dept.
8	University of Minnesota	3	2	3	2	10	30.0%	70.0%	2	4	Dept. Stud. Affairs
9	Indiana University	4	1	10	3	18	22.2%	77.8%		1	Ind.
10	Brigham Young University – Provo	6	0	11	0	17	35.3%	64.7%		2	Dept. Ind./Dept.
11	University of Florida	4	1	2	2	9	44.4%	55.6%		1	Ind./Dept.
12	Colorado State University	3	0	6	1	10	30.0%	70.0%		1	Ind./Dept.
13	Columbia College – Chicago	5		3	4	12	41.7%	58.3%		4	Dept. Student Media
14	University of Oklahoma	2	1	4	3	10	20.0%	80.0%		3	Ind./Dept.
15	Michigan State University	6	0	7	6	19	31.6%	68.4%		2	Dept.
16	Rider University	6	2	4	3	15	40.0%	60.0%		2	Dept.
17	Western Illinois University	11	1	1	0	13	84.6%	15.4%	1	2	Dept.
18	Central Michigan University	6	1	5	1	13	46.2%	53.8%		2	Dept.
19	Savannah College of Art and Design	4	3	7	0	14	28.6%	71.4%		3	Market
20	Weber State University	3	8	8	4	23	13.0%	87.0%		4	Dept.
21		2	0	2	1	5	40.0%	60.0%	1	2	
Total		100	27	135	43	305	32.8%	67.2%	10	51	

Results

The survey yielded a response rate of N = 297 for the five groups solicited for the online survey [Table 3] :

Organization	# Active Members	#Response	Response Percentage	Messages Bounced
BEA	172	68	40%	0
CBI	159	31	20%	5
CMA	616	117	19%	0
NBS/AERho	109	33	32%	5
SCJ	140	43	35%	17
Totals	1196	292	29%	27
ACP	5	5		
N=		297		

For Associated Collegiate Press, ACP, a collector was opened, which included the link sent to several advisers, petitioning access to the membership listserv. N = 5, with those responses likely coming from those petitioned. Total survey population is 297, or 29 percent.

Judging by results of one question that asked respondents to indicate membership in the various groups, overlap is possible. Also, comments from some potential respondents questioned whether they should actually complete the survey, as their title does not include “adviser,” such as Director of Student Media or General Manager. It is likely others with the same question merely chose not to respond. It also must be noted that some advisers hold two roles simultaneously in their hiring contract, either by working overload, being paid through a stipend or working directly under a student media corporation; thus, they may have checked “full-time” and “part-time” under employment status, which sees N surpassing 297 for some responses.

In terms of educational credentials – now and at time of hire – as well as years of professional media experience: as indicated below, the survey results revealed significant movement toward terminal degrees from time of hire to present [Table 4]. Less than 1 percent of respondents reported “ABD” status at time of hire, so this was collapsed into “master of arts degree.”

Table 4: Educational Credentials

Education Credentials: When Hired vs Present Day			
Degree Held	When Hired	Present Day	Percent Change
Bachelors	66	37	-44%
MA	125	94	-25%
MS	42	42	0%
MFA	3	9	200%
MBA	6	7	17%
Ed.D.	2	10	400%
Ph.D.	48	86	79%

Breaking it down by degree, most notable is the increase in number of advisers who hold a doctorate, a jump of 79 percent or Ed.D., an increase of 400 percent, and drastic decrease in the advisers who hold a only a bachelor’s degree.

Advisers with professional media experience reported a substantial number of years experience with 79 noting more than 15 years and another 86 with 10 – 15 years [Table 5].

Advisers also reported great longevity in their positions with 108 reporting more than 15 years, 48 with 10.5 – 15 years and another 55 with 6.5 – 10 academic years spent serving in advising positions.

Table 5: Years of Experience

Years of Professional Experience					
Years	0 – 3	3 – 6	6 – 10	10 – 15	15 +
# of Advisors	31	42	53	86	79
Academic Years in Advising Positions					
Years	0 – 3	3.5 – 6	6.5 – 10	10.5 – 15	15+
# of Advisors	42	40	55	48	108

The longevity of advisers mirrors age range: the highest percentage is 50+ at 58 percent, with 32 percent over 55, followed by 45 — 50 and 30 — 35 at 3 percent each. One respondent was reported at 27 years old. This data seem to indicate adviser ranks are filled with older, experienced academics who have a significant number of years advising as well as years of experience. Since gaining experience usually involves a career outside of academia, these data and survey results indicate a significant number of advisers worked in media careers prior to joining academia.

A comparative analysis of the top programs examined how student media affiliate to their campus institution. Of these top 21, 13 say campus media are part of curriculum, two are located within the Student Affairs or Marketing departments, five are a private corporation and / or completely independent of the college or university and one is nonprofit. Thus, H2 appears to be supported. While some institutions group their campus media into a “student media corporation,” a trend is visible as to how the different entities are treated, located and funded. A student newspaper, for example, is more easily independent as the key equipment needs (e.g., a printing press, delivery) can be contracted out. Conversely, campus radio, because of needs for equipment, a license, transmitter, tower, etc., likely has some partner, either through the university or through the department with funding from student fees (a one-time grant or ongoing). Student television is least likely to be completely independent of a university, primarily because of its need for studio space and equipment, and is most likely, according to results, to receive funding from student fees.

But with 13 of the top 21 programs housed within an academic department, a trend of excellence must be acknowledged that suggests a correlation with a location in Journalism & Mass Communication curriculum [Table 2].

Data analysis of academic rank for advisers and professors who teach skills courses showed that of the 21 schools researched, 100 held a Ph.D., 27 an MFA, 135 an MA/MS/or MBA degree and 43 a BA/BS degree or were classified as a specialist with indeterminate academic credentials. Ph.D.s teach 32.8 percent of skills courses in successful programs, while non-terminal-degreed professors teach 67.2 percent (it is noted that some universities and colleges do recognize the MFA and MBA as terminal degrees). Of advisers for whom academic credentials could be determined, 10 hold Ph.D.s while 51 hold non-terminal degrees. Thus, these results appear to support H3 and H4. Approximately 200 of 293 (68 percent) respondents indicated their institutions are four-year with master’s and / or master’s with doctoral programs.

Data Analysis

Survey results appear to answer RQ1. To further confirm results for RQ1 support H1, chi square tests of independence were run. Significant results were found for current higher education credentials ($\chi^2(1) = 22 \times .80$, $p < .05$) as compared to credentials at time of hire, supporting H1.

On the question of where student media are housed (within Journalism / Mass Communication departments, independent, within Student Affairs, nonprofit or other) data analysis results of top 21 award winners answered RQ2. To further confirm support of H2, which states award-winning programs are more likely to be housed within academic departments, a phone survey was conducted, confirming that 13 of the top 21 programs (or 62 percent)

are located within the relevant curriculum / departments of the university institution. Likewise, on the question of RQ3, the results could be seen to lend support for H3 and H4. H3 states: Award-winning programs are more likely to be advised by bachelor's/master's degree holders than by Ph.D.s or Ed.D.s., while H4 proposes: Media skills classes are more likely to be taught by bachelor's/master's degree holders than by Ph.D.s or Ed.D.s. The data analysis of award-winning programs identified the top 21 programs according to participation in contests conducted by organizations within the study parameters. To further confirm, crosstabs and chi-square tests of independence were conducted. A significant interaction was found ($\chi^2(1) = 11.229, p < .05$).

To further examine the results, a comparison of present level of education and length of time in advising position was conducted. The following results are reported by degree as significant for frequency of co-occurrence: master's degree and 10.5 to 15 and 15+ academic years ($N = 156$ advisers, 143 at the master's degree level). A crosstabs comparison of age and degree at present day offered significant results. A chi-square was conducted with the following results confirmed as significant for the above-mentioned two lengths of time in position categories:

- Bachelor's degree $\chi^2(1) = 23.07, p < .05$
- Master of Arts $\chi^2(1) = 17.228, p < .05$
- Master of Science $\chi^2(1) = 13.177, p < .05$
- MFA $\chi^2(1) = 8.690, p < .05$
- Ed.D. $\chi^2(1) = 22.439, p < .05$
- Ph.D. $\chi^2(1) = 11.219, p < .05$

Discussion

The findings of this three-part research study may be but a snapshot of advisers and skills instructors who lead and educate campus media groups and the complexity of the Mass Communications/Journalism/Student Life departments and / or the campuses associated with them. But what these results do is confirm a distinct majority of institutions depend on instructors with bachelor's/master's level with professional media experience for advisory roles and teaching the majority of skills courses—results that support the importance of requiring professional experience and not just the terminal degree as part of the hiring criteria.

Kopenhaver's 2005 and 2008 surveys of College Media Advisers indicated longevity in the membership; this study's survey results are similar. The value of this research study then becomes clear when looking at the decline of advisers who are in tenure-track positions and who are attaining tenure as well as with the predominant age group of advisers responding to this survey (50+).

As the Du and Downes and Jihari studies on hiring trends have indicated and as the longevity of current advisers shows, the trend towards hiring Ph.D.s with little or no regard to professional experience is not adding significantly to the adviser ranks; thus, the nature of advising positions might see significant structural changes within the next decade. If adviser positions continue the trend of locating in administrative departments, then the dichotomy now indicated in the literature and in the survey results may persist: position announcements will emphasize academic credentials; advisers will earn a terminal degree

post-hire; and the faculty with relevant professional experience and master's degrees will dominate the teaching assignments for skills-intensive classes. Viewing results of the top award-winning programs, the value of this study's findings for administrators is clear: while academic credentials are important, consideration of professional experience may be just as important for positions that involve working with campus media or instructing skills courses.

The results of this study could guide administrators in choosing advisers and structuring campus media groups, as well as streamlining media practices. It also could help advisers achieve stability in their positions as more and more are composing their own job descriptions (Kopenhaver 2009).

A few study design choices must be noted. A survey instrument directed to advisers may not sufficiently capture the complexity of each individual campus media group's structure. Judging by comments submitted from some participants, some lack the title of "Adviser," being labeled instead as "engineer" or "general manager," yet these people are the staff who work with student journalists daily. On paper, "adviser" can be a figurehead who holds the doctorate and is an administrator managing budgets and curriculum, but does not engage the students regularly in their media production. Yet, as this person is adviser of record on all advising organizations and on the media group's staffbox, this person received a survey invitation. Therefore, the picture of the education component of doctoral holders could skew the results.

The list of five national student media organizations used for this research is not deemed an exhaustive list. Organizations were chosen to provide a thorough mix of large and small institutions and in some cases, the study was designed based upon data availability during the study time period. But, as this study is the first to link adviser credentials and student media performance, it is a launch point with which to begin this new line of research.

As information for certain schools may not be exact, the authors employed the most exhaustive data collection methods available to present as complete a picture as possible. But there is a marked absence in standard organization for student media at the campus level. For the most complete picture the best option would be to survey the departments, beginning at the national conferences, but perhaps also on site to gather information from all involved, as it is indeed possible that not one single person possesses all information necessary to develop a complete picture of each department's structure.

As campus media organizations tend to be insular with products and productions the only visibility, the personnel and adviser involved in production tend to stay low profile unless attracting the ire of the administration or bookkeeper. National membership groups tend to offer campus media advisers and their students an opportunity for professionalism, scholarship, an enhanced skill set (Kopenhaver 2009), as well as resources and support when they are under fire (Tolstedt 1994).

Further studies

The results of this research study revealed data patterns relevant to advisers, practitioners, scholars and administrators. The survey instrument asked the Ph.D. and Ed.D. respondents to list the subjects of their degrees; a supplemental survey would ask how and why they chose to pursue the degree and their areas of study. Having listened to a debate

at a recent CMA conference about how yet another state system was forcing all faculty to earn the doctorate or lose their positions, the authors feel it would be an interesting line of analysis to see the results and how/if the students benefited from that degree completion. The authors also would like to catalog the range and types of professional media experience of the advisers and hope to continue pursuing this line of research with a longitudinal approach not only to track the changes in adviser ranks, but also in the structure of adviser positions and campus media. Tracking changes in campus media may help institutions anticipate and manage the hiring for and structure of campus media adviser positions.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Research Assistant Shasta Kurtz for assistance gathering the contest results data. Also, thanks to Dr. Jerrold Harris, research director at Bloomsburg University, for guidance in study design. We must acknowledge contributions of Jolene Coombs formerly of El Camino College, Eric Freedman and Manuel Chavez of Michigan State University, for assistance in designing and administering the survey; Vince Filak, UW-Osh Kosh for his encouragement to actually take on this task; Sally Renaud, Eastern Illinois University, and Dave Swartzlander, Doane College, for their assistance in designing Part II of this study; and of course, Lillian Lodge Kopenhagen for her prior research and continued commitment to this subject.

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For 30 years, Dr. Nulph has worked as a freelance photographer, writer/ producer/ director and radio DJ; however, being an educator/adviser is his first love. In his 25-year career as an media production instructor and student media adviser, he has worked with the amazing students at Valdosta State in Georgia with the VSC Journal; Missouri Western State University with Griffon Update; at Clarion University of Pennsylvania with WCUC-FM and WCUB-TV; and at Lewis University with WFLY-TV News and The Lewis Dispatch. Currently, Nulph teaches digital media and photography and advises convergent media students at Missouri Western State University.

Just Hit Reply:

How student journalists use email in the newsroom

Sara Baker Netzley
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Abstract

This article examines the way in which student journalists use email on the job. College students working at campus newspapers across the country participated in an online survey asking them how often they use email to conduct certain newsgathering tasks, including using email to conduct interviews with sources. It also asked about their perceptions of the quality of such interviews and their use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter. The findings could have implications for how these students will conduct themselves in professional settings upon graduation and how journalism educators should approach this topic in the classroom.

Introduction

New technology has fundamentally changed newsrooms, as typewriters have given way to computer and fax machines have given way to email. But the changes do not stop there; this new technology has also altered the way reporters do their jobs. They now rely on cell phones, the Internet, email and, increasingly, social media to talk to audience members, brainstorm story ideas, find sources and conduct interviews. In light of these changes, American Journalism Review writer Charlotte Huff (1997, 13) cautions that “online journalism doesn’t alter professional ethics, but it can create new situations.” In a new landscape of digital communications, it is not unreasonable for the public to expect reporters to adhere to the professional norms that governed their newsgathering and reporting activities in the time before the Internet was a newsroom staple.

It is an understatement to say that young adults are comfortable with new technology. They grew up surrounded by it, and their lives often are wholly immersed in it. This article examines the way in which student journalists use email on the job at their campus newspapers. In particular, it examines how often the students use email to conduct interviews with sources and how they perceive the quality of such interviews. How they use these new tools in the newsroom while on campus could have implications for how they use them in professional newsrooms upon graduation.

Literature Review

Journalists have been communicating with the public via email for almost two decades. In 1999, Online Journalism Review suggested that newspapers should begin providing email addresses for their reporters to encourage feedback from readers (South 1999). A 2002 study from George Washington University found that while the 271 surveyed po-

litical journalists believed that reading and responding to the email they received was a “time-consuming chore,” they nevertheless believed it allowed them better interaction with readers, which led to more story ideas and quotes (May, Graf and Thompson 2002).

A 2006 study found that 69 percent of reporters and editors believed newspapers increase their credibility when they include journalist email addresses at the bottom of stories and columns. Doing so opens lines of communication with readers, which can lead to story tips, new sources and follow-up information. Although some reporters and editors were leery about the increased time reporters spend in answering reader email, most celebrated the fact that newsroom employees and their readers were communicating again after a period of growing separation between the two groups (Hendrickson 2006). This separation, writes Jack Fuller in *News Values*, came from a sense of “insufferable self-righteousness” that reporters feel, which leads them to distance themselves from ordinary society (Fuller 1996, 200). Hendrickson (2006) points to the increased use of email as a tool to minimize this separation.

The specific ways in which reporters use email in interviews has also been of interest to media observers and researchers. *American Journalism Review* has long advocated for responsible and transparent use of email interviews, acknowledging as early as 1997 that in-person or phone interviews get better results, but email interviews are convenient when sources, for example, frequently travel or are located in a different time zone. However, the article cautioned that it is difficult to confirm the identity of the person actually writing the emails. In addition, email interviews eliminate the opportunity to capture the revealing details that face-to-face interviews allow reporters to gather, and it is too easy to misread the tone of printed words only. This can make it difficult, for example, to tell the difference between “absolute passionate outrage and just being pissed off” (Huff 1997).

This is a topic AJR has returned to again and again. AJR writer Kim Hart warned in 2005 that, while convenient, email interviews do not always lead to the best journalism. The author identified several points in favor of email interviews: sources can respond when it is convenient for them, accuracy in quoting is almost guaranteed and geographic and language barriers can be minimized. However, in-person interviews are better for spontaneity and capturing tone, personality, body language and setting, and even telephone interviews allow reporters to experience verbal inflection, pauses and so forth. In addition, email interviews are too easy and can be no different than quoting from a press release because sources are able to create overly scripted responses or work to spin information or cast it in a favorable light. And with no guarantee that the reporter is corresponding with the person he or she believes, opportunities for hoaxes and deception abound. Hart’s article offered suggestions for improving the use of email interviews, such as indicating in the article when quotes came from email and limiting email to setting up face-to-face or telephone interviews. Hart also suggested that reporters actually speak to the source to verify that he or she was the one who sent the email (Hart 2005/2006).

In 2007, AJR again acknowledged the usefulness of email interviews but encouraged reporters to identify in the finished story when an interview had been conducted over email. One reason cited was so readers can understand why a response might feel too scripted or polished. This article pointed to the shrinking size of newsroom staff members and the temptation to avoid “shoe leather” reporting in favor of the ease of hitting reply as factors

leading to the rise of email interviews. Some reporters followed this advice. The first recorded incident in the LexisNexis database of a journalist indicating that an interview was conducted over email was in a 1996 article in the Scotsman. Scottish freelance journalist Eamonn O'Neill had exchanged emails with a source in Washington, D.C., and didn't want to mislead his readers into thinking he was actually in Washington (Falquet 2007).

Bruce Garrison's 2004 survey of 201 journalists found that although not all journalists were using email interviews, those who did generally were pleased with the outcomes. He found that 6.5 percent of all the interviews the respondents performed were conducted by email, and 25 percent of those who conducted email interviews said they did so for no more than one in 10 interviews. However, 72.3 percent of those who conducted email interviews believed their interviews were successful, while 16.1 percent said the interviews were very successful; 11.6 percent believed the interviews were unsuccessful or very unsuccessful (Garrison 2004). A study in 2007 found that the number of reporters who reported conducting interviews over email had jumped to 36 percent, while 78 percent reported using email to set up interviews. This same 2007 study found that reporters used email for other tasks, as well: 73 percent for reader story ideas; 70 percent for information from other reporters; 68 percent for press release story ideas; and 62 percent for source background information (Wanta, Reinardy and Moore 2007).

Some media companies have responded to this trend by adopting newsroom policies governing the use of email interviews, although the strength of their wording differs. The Associated Press' Statement of News Values and Principles instructs that "if we quote someone from a written document – a report, email or news release – we should say so" (The Associated Press 2006). The New York Times' Guidelines on Integrity do not advocate identifying email interviews in every situation, instead stating: "In those cases when it makes a difference whether we directly witnessed a scene, we should distinguish in print between personal interviews and telephone or email interviews, as well as written statements" (The New York Times n.d.). The Radio Television Digital News Association's Code of Ethics do not address the issue at all (RTDNA n.d.). And AJR reported that in 2013, several college newspapers had banned the use of email interviews, including the Daily Princetonian, the Stanford Daily, and the University of South Florida's paper, the Oracle. The Oracle told its reporters that this move would keep "strategically coordinated voices of public relations staff or prescreened email answers" out of the paper's stories (Lisher 2013).

How younger reporters feel about new tools of communication has also been a focus for researchers. College students are always connected; a Ball State University study found that in 2010, 99.8 percent of students had a mobile phone, and 49 percent of those phones were smartphones. Of those students with smartphones, 90 percent used them to get online (Ransford 2011).

Studies also show that young people consistently turn to the Internet for news over any other type of media. The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press reported that in 2010, 65 percent of 18- to-29-year-olds said the Internet was their main source of national and international news; this was an increase from the 34 percent who cited it as their main source in 2007 (The Pew Research Center 2011). Writing in Quill Magazine, Bonnie Bressers predicted that today's tech-savvy journalism students, already accustomed to using the

Internet for all types of communication, will increase the pace of email interviews as they enter the workplace (Bressers 2005). Supporting this prediction, the 2008 Middleberg/ SNCR Survey of Media in the Wired World reported that journalists between the ages of 18 and 29 were newsroom leaders in embracing social media and citizen journalism. For example, 100 percent of the surveyed journalists between 18 and 29 believe new media and technology are enhancing journalism, while 40 percent of their colleagues between the ages of 50 and 64 felt the same way. Likewise, 87 percent of 18- to 29-year-old journalists believed that new media and communication tools enhance their relationship with their audience, compared to 42 percent of their 50- to 64 year-old colleagues (McClure and Middleberg 2009).

Some journalism educators have started to embrace email interviews and other forms of new communication. Educators and college media advisers have seen increased reliance on email as the primary form of communication for their students (Bressers 2005). Ken Metzler, emeritus professor at the University of Oregon and author of the textbook “Creative Interviewing,” at first balked at the concept of email interviews. But by 1996, he had added a chapter to his textbook on the proper use of email in an interview setting. Many journalism textbooks — including *News Reporting and Writing*, *Inside Reporting and Reporting for the Mass Media*, to name a few — now include instructions about conducting email interviews, often suggesting that these types of interviews have their benefits but that they should not replace in-person interviews (Bender, Davenport, Drager and Fedler 2008, Harrower 2009, The Missouri Group 2007).

Indeed, as AJR reported in 2013, some observers believe that banning email interviews from newsrooms not only ignores the reality of today’s digital society, but it can cause reporters to miss key pieces of information because they are not using all of the tools that are available to them. Sandy Banisky, who teaches urban affairs reporting at the University of Maryland, understands that her students may use emailed responses in their stories, but she requires that they first exhaust more traditional avenues, including knocking on doors and calling sources. “I’d like to see evidence of a different effort before you use email,” she tells them (quoted in Lisheron 2013).

Finally, the rise of Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites has captured the attention of the media and researchers alike. The 2009 Middleberg/ SNCR Survey of Media in the Wired World found large increases in the number of reporters using social media since its study the previous year; 70 percent of the 341 journalists who responded to the survey reported using social networking sites, which was a 28 percent increase from the previous year. In addition, 48 percent reported using Twitter or other microblogging sites, which was a 25 percent increase from the previous year (McClure and Middleberg 2009).

Given the rise of social media usage in newsrooms, the Poynter Institute’s Kelly McBride published an article with social networking guidelines that newsrooms could adopt, including suggestions for using social networks as a reporting tool, to promote journalists’ work and to balance the personal and the professional use of the platform. When using social networks as a reporting tool, one of McBride’s recommendations is for journalists to be transparent with audiences about how they contacted sources and how they gathered the information in a story (McBride 2009). This advice echoes the ethical recommendations from the Associated Press (2006) and, to a lesser degree, the New York Times (n.d.).

Research Questions

Past research has shown that young people are more likely to use and approve of new technologies such as email and social networking (Bressers 2005, McClure and Middleberg 2009, Ransford 2011). At the same time, media critics are concerned about the use of email interviews in news reporting, both in terms of the quality of the interview itself and in the public transparency about how the interview was conducted (Huff 1997, Fuller 1996). And educators have begun teaching student journalists about the benefits and drawbacks of email interviews (Bender, Davenport, Drager and Fedler 2008, Harrower 2009, The Missouri Group 2007).

RQ1: How often do student reporters use email for newsgathering tasks such as setting up interviews, conducting interviews, asking sources follow-up questions after interviews, communicating with readers about story ideas and using emailed press releases?

RQ2: Were students more or less likely to use email for newsgathering tasks if they were journalism majors?

RQ3: Were students more or less likely to be satisfied with the results of email interviews if they were journalism majors?

RQ4: Were students more or less likely to indicate that an interview was conducted over email if they were journalism majors?

RQ5: Would a student's desire to work in the news media business upon graduation have any relationship with the way he or she used email for newsgathering tasks?

RQ6: Would a student's social media usage have any relationship with the way he or she used email for newsgathering tasks?

Method

This study used a national online survey of students working as reporters, editors and photographers for campus newspapers during April 2009, July 2009, November 2009 and April 2010. The survey asked participants to respond to questions about how often they used email to perform certain newsgathering tasks, as well how they felt about the use of email for certain tasks. A five-point Likert scale measured their responses, with one representing "never," two representing "rarely," three representing "sometimes," four representing "often" and five representing "always." It also gathered basic demographic information, along with information about their career goals and their use of social media.

The sample was chosen by compiling a list of all the college and university student newspapers in the country using NewsDirectory.com and NewsLink.org. First, systematic random sampling was used to select 107 newspapers, or about 25 percent of the list of 433 student publications. A skip interval was established, as was a randomly selected starting point to choose the newspapers to be included. Next, email addresses were collected for the editors-in-chief, section editors and/or the faculty advisers of each selected newspaper. In some cases, no contact information for any newspaper employees could be found. In all, 104 invitation emails were sent. In the second wave of data collection, a stratified sample was collected by dividing the country into the five regions employed by the U.S. Census Bureau: South, Midwest, Mountain, Pacific and Northeast (U.S. Census Bureau n.d.). One state from each of those regions was randomly selected, which resulted

in Alabama, Illinois, Idaho, Oregon and New Hampshire being used for the study. As many email addresses as possible were collected for all staff members from the 71 total student publications in these states. When full staff lists were unavailable, or when student email addresses were not publically listed, email addresses were re-collected for the editors-in-chief, section editors and/or the faculty advisers. At this stage, 575 invitation emails were sent, for a total of 679 emails.

In all cases, the invitation email contained a link to the survey, and participants received a reminder email two weeks later, as this has been found to increase response rate (Kittle-son 1997, Solomon 2001). When only the editors-in-chief, section editors or faculty advisers were contacted, they were asked to forward the survey invitation to all reporters, editors and photographers on the newspaper staff. Of the sent messages, 15 were undeliverable, which accounts for 2.2 percent of the total. This left 664 recipients, of which 176 filled out the survey. This equaled an initial response rate of 26.5 percent, although this does not account for the snowball sampling that relied on advisers and editors. Studies have found that email survey response rates are generally lower than response rates achieved through mail surveys (Cook, Heath and Thompson 2000, Granello and Wheaton 2004), and Mass Media Research reports that acceptable Internet survey response rates can range from 5 percent to 80 percent (Wimmer and Dominick 2011). This study's response rate is higher than the 8.5 percent response rate for Wanta, Reinardy, and Moore's email survey (Garrison 2004, Wanta, Reinardy and Moore 2007) and the 12.7 percent Internet response rate reported by Don Dillman et al (2009). In the end, 38 responses were eliminated because participants did not complete at least half of the survey. This left 138 usable surveys. The total number of students who answered each question varies slightly. So, while a total of 138 students were included in this analysis, between one and five students did not answer a number of these individual questions. No one student skipped more than two questions.

Results

RQ1: How often do student reporters use email for newsgathering tasks such as setting up interviews, conducting interviews, asking sources follow-up questions after interviews, communicating with readers about story ideas and using emailed press releases?

Student newspaper employees reported frequently using email to set up interviews with sources. Of 138 students, 8 percent said they always did and 49 percent said they often did, while 23 percent said sometimes, 14 percent said rarely and 6 percent said never. However, fewer students said they actually conducted those interviews over email. Of the 137 students who responded, 19 percent said they never did, 47 percent said rarely, 25 percent said sometimes, and 8 percent said often. None of the students indicated they always conducted interviews via email. See Table 1 for more details.

Table 1: Student Journalist Email Use

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Set up interviews	11 (8%)	68 (49%)	32 (23%)	19 (14%)	8 (6%)
Conduct interviews	0 (0%)	13 (8%)	34 (25%)	64 (47%)	26 (19%)
Reader story ideas	4 (3%)	18 (13%)	33 (24%)	52 (38%)	30 (22%)
Press release ideas	15 (11%)	27 (20%)	46 (33%)	47 (34%)	3 (2%)
Follow-up questions	1 (1%)	23 (17%)	55 (40%)	36 (26%)	22 (16%)

The students reported using email for other reasons, as well. In terms of exchanging emails with readers regarding story ideas, of 137 who responded, 22 percent said they never did, 38 percent said they rarely did, 24 percent said they sometimes did, 13 percent said they often did and 3 percent said they always did. More than half of the student reporters also used emailed press releases for story ideas. Of 138 students, 11 percent always did, 20 percent often did, 33 percent sometimes did, 34 percent rarely did and 2 percent never did. Fewer students emailed sources follow-up questions to answer after an interview; of the 137 who answered, 1 percent said they always did, 17 percent often did, 40 percent sometimes did, 26 percent rarely did and 16 percent never did. See Table 1 for more details.

RQ2: Were students more or less likely to use email for newsgathering tasks if they were journalism majors?

Of all the tasks studied, the only one with a statistically significant difference between journalism majors (defined as students majoring in print journalism, broadcast journalism, news/editorial, photojournalism and mass communication) and non-journalism majors (defined as defined as students in all other majors, including public relations, advertising, political science, business and so forth) was in the use of emailed press releases. Journalism students were more likely to use emailed press releases for story ideas than their non-major counterparts, with a mean of 3.08 for journalism majors compared to a mean of 2.57 for non-journalism majors ($t = 2.024, p = .05$).

RQ3: Were students more or less likely to be satisfied with the results of email interviews if they were journalism majors?

Journalism majors were more likely to be dissatisfied with interviews conducted over email than non-journalism majors. Journalism majors had a mean satisfaction of 2.51, while non-journalism majors had a mean satisfaction of 3.18 ($t = -2.536, p = .015$).

Looking at all students in the sample, a quarter said they were often or always satisfied that the email interview they conducted had done an adequate job in gathering the information necessary to write the article. Of 133 students, 16 percent were never satisfied, 28 percent were rarely satisfied, 26 percent were sometimes satisfied, 23 percent were often satisfied, and 4 percent were always satisfied. Most students also believed they could have gotten more information from a face-to-face or telephone interview. Of 135 students, 38 percent always felt that way, 26 percent often did, 17 percent sometimes did, 7 percent rarely did, and 9 percent never did. See Table 2 for more details.

Table 2: Student Journalists and Email Interviews

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Satisfied with interview	9 (4%)	31 (23%)	35 (26%)	37 (28%)	21 (16%)
Phone/in-person better	52 (38%)	36 (26%)	24 (17%)	10 (7%)	13 (9%)
Indicate done via email	38 (28%)	12 (9%)	18 (13%)	23 (17%)	45 (33%)

RQ4: Were students more or less likely to indicate that an interview was conducted over email if they were journalism majors?

A little more than one quarter of all student reporters said they always indicated in their articles that an interview was conducted over email. Of 136 students, 28 percent always did, 9 percent often did, 13 percent sometimes did, 17 percent rarely did, and 33 percent

never did. See Table 2 for more details. However, there was no statistically significant difference between journalism majors and non-journalism majors. On average, non-journalism majors indicated that interviews were conducted over email more often than journalism majors, with a mean of 3.25 to 2.61 ($t = -1.767$, $p = .084$).

RQ5: Would a student's desire to work in the news media business upon graduation have any relationship with the way he or she used email for newsgathering tasks?

There was a difference between those who planned to work in the news media – either print, broadcast or online – and in non-news jobs. Those planning on careers in the news media were less likely to indicate in the article that the information had come from an email interview than their counterparts who did not plan to seek news jobs after graduation by a mean of 2.58 to 3.36 ($t = -2.070$, $p = .044$).

RQ6: Would a student's social media usage have any relationship with the way he or she used email for newsgathering tasks?

Those who used Twitter for professional or personal reasons were more likely to communicate with readers about story ideas than those who did not use Twitter by a mean of 2.58 to 2.19 ($t = -2.172$, $p = .032$). They also were more likely to use emailed press releases by a mean of 3.20 to 2.76 ($t = -2.595$, $p = .010$), and they were more likely to ask sources follow-up questions via email after the interview by a mean of 2.79 to 2.43 ($t = -2.208$, $p = .029$). However, the Twitter users were less likely to be satisfied that the email interviews had done an adequate job of gathering the information they needed to write the story by a mean of 2.48 to 2.86 ($t = 2.007$, $p = .047$). Furthermore, student reporters who said they had used Facebook to set up interviews or conduct interviews with sources were more likely to conduct interviews via email than those who had not done so by a mean of 2.41 to 2.07 ($t = 2.405$, $p = .018$) and to discuss story ideas with readers by a mean of 2.56 to 2.21 ($t = 1.978$, $p = .050$).

Results

One in three student journalists in this study – 33 percent – sometimes or often conducted interviews via email. This is an increase from Garrison's 2004 findings that 6.5 percent of the reporters surveyed conducted interviews by email, and it is more in line with Wanta, Reinardy, and Moore's 2007 study showing that 36 percent of reporters used email interviews. Still, this is a relatively low percentage of students conducting email interviews, and perhaps the reason for this is the attitudes the students had about email interviews. Only 27 percent of students said they were often or always satisfied that the email interview they conducted had done an adequate job in gathering the information necessary to write the article, and 64 percent believed they could have gotten more information from a face-to-face interview or telephone interview.

Furthermore, journalism majors were more likely to be dissatisfied with interviews conducted over email than non-journalism majors. This could indicate that journalism educators are doing a good job in teaching students about the strengths and weaknesses of different interviewing techniques and warning journalism students about the limitations of email interviews (Bressers 2005). As educators recognize that emailed interviews are becoming more widespread, particularly among students who grew up surrounded by elec-

tronic communication, perhaps they are spending more time teaching the do's and don'ts to their students, which in turn makes the students more aware of the pitfalls of conducting interviews over email.

Students in this study used email for a number of reasons beyond interviews. The most common use of email was to set up interviews with sources; 57 percent of student journalists always or often did this. Far fewer reporters regularly performed other tasks via email: 31 percent always or often used emailed press releases for story ideas, 18 percent always or often emailed sources follow-up questions to answer after an interview, and 16 percent always or often exchanged emails with readers regarding story ideas. The small percentage for the latter item is a bit puzzling in light of findings that show that almost seven in 10 reporters believe a newspaper's credibility is enhanced when journalists provide their email addresses at the end of stories to increase communication with audience members (Bender, Davenport, Drager and Fedler 2008, Harrower 2009, Hendrickson 2006, The Missouri Group 2007). It seems that fewer student journalists than professional journalists see the same utility in maintaining contact with their readers and thereby enhancing newspaper credibility.

One area where journalism educators could focus their teaching efforts is in their instructions on transparency about how interviews with sources are conducted. About one-quarter of student reporters said they indicated in their articles when an interview was conducted over email, while one-third said they never do. More troubling, non-journalism major reported including this information with more frequency than journalism majors. Similarly, those planning on careers in the news media were less likely to indicate in the article that the information had come from an email interview than their counterparts who did not plan to seek news jobs after graduation. Inasmuch as journalism majors were more likely to be dissatisfied with email interviews, perhaps they were more reluctant to admit to their readers that this is where the information came from because they were aware of the concerns about such interviews. In light of this finding, while educators are telling students that email interviews are less desirable than telephone or in-person interviews, they should also emphasize the importance of transparency about the method of the interview. Both are equally important lessons to impart.

The finding that students majoring in journalism were more likely to use emailed press releases for story ideas than their non-journalism major counterparts might be explained by a better understanding of the interplay between journalism and public relations. Perhaps journalism classes are doing a better job of explaining the role public relations professionals play in providing information for the media to use, so journalism majors are more willing to read and consider using such information in their stories.

The use of social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook helped predict the frequency with which students would communicate with sources and readers. Students who used Twitter professionally or personally and who used Facebook to set up interviews were more likely to talk about story ideas with readers, ask sources follow-up questions over email and use emailed press releases. In addition, student reporters who had used Facebook to set up or conduct interviews with sources were more likely to conduct interviews via email compared to those who hadn't used Facebook in this way. This finding is not overly surprising; students who use one form of digital communication likely will be comfortable

using others. However, like journalism majors, the social network users were less likely to be satisfied that the email interviews had done an adequate job of gathering the information they needed to write the story. Perhaps these findings are a sign that convenience is trumping common sense about what type of interview will give them the best results. In this case, the warning in Falquet's article that new technology could lead to lazy reporters may be coming to pass (Falquet 2007).

One possible avenue for future research is to turn the focus to source perception of email interviews. In AJR, Huff quoted then-Wired managing editor Peter Leyden as saying that some sources prefer emailed interviews because it allows them to spend time crafting thoughtful responses. In addition, then-ProfNet President Dan Forbush told Huff that some sources feel more in control of the information when they have written proof of their quotes (Huff 1997). Lisher, too, points to greater control of the message as a reason sources might before the email interview (Lisher 2013). It might be useful to survey news sources to see if their perceptions of email interviews are positive or negative — and why.

Conclusion

This study offers an idea of what the future of journalistic communication might look like. As more reporters embrace Twitter and other forms of social networking, perhaps the two-way communication with readers and sources will increase. On the other hand, email interviews might increase, as well. Journalism educators must do their best to instill in their students a desire to conduct interviews in the best manner possible — which often, but not always, rules out email. Likewise, they must teach students the importance of transparency about their interview methods in order to gain and keep the trust of their readers, for maintaining reader trust was an essential component of journalism long before the Internet came to newsrooms, and it will continue to be crucial as journalists evolve to embrace new communication techniques brought on by digital advances.

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College student media advisers fare well despite uncertain times

Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver
Florida International University

Editor's Note: This is the first in a two-part series on college media advising. This first article discusses the role of the adviser, salary/compensation packages and job characteristics.

Introduction

As the song says, "The times they are a-changin'"(1964). And that is true of the college and university student media scene as well.

The three decades since this survey was first conducted have witnessed tremendous changes in the way student media advisers do their jobs and in the way the media themselves deliver the message. The biggest change, of course, is in the media themselves which these individuals advise.

In order to trace those changes, over the past three decades the College Media Association has regularly surveyed its membership to provide longitudinal data on the role, responsibilities, working conditions, compensation and status of college and university student media advisers in the U.S. These surveys request data about the media operations they advise as well. This is the eighth survey in that series; the first was in 1984, followed by replications roughly every four years up to this one in 2014.

Advisers today are dealing with issues and advising models that could not even be imagined 30 years ago when the surveys began. "Collectively, advisers, educators and student journalists are witnessing or participating in the biggest shift in college media since campus newspapers appeared in modern form in the mid-to-late 1800s. Their move from print to digital mirrors what is occurring in the larger media industry..."(Reimold, 2014).

Yet one of the leaders of that industry, Caroline Little, president and CEO of the Newspaper Association of America, warns that media "are tasked with balancing and integrating strategies across each platform and generation to effectively reach every audience. Indeed, one of the biggest mistakes leaders in any industry could make today is eschewing one platform for another, trendier medium without considering how they complement each other" (Little, 2014). This all leaves advisers today with many challenges.

One adviser in response to the survey stated that the "largest growth area in hits is mobile and will be where the future lies." Another noted he advises a "yearbook magazine, an online magazine, an online TV station and an online radio station." Still another described her job as a visiting professor of journalism, adviser to the newspaper and magazine, and

staff writer and media liaison for the university's marketing department.

A number of respondents described themselves as part time or adjuncts. One said she was a part-time adviser for the newspaper, website and video production arm of the paper and taught a one-unit journalism course each semester. Another said she retired after 30 years in the newspaper business and advises part time along with freelance writing.

Today a profile of advisers reveals that a greater number bring professional media experience to their positions with college and university student media, and an increasing percentage have longevity in both the number of years they have been advisers and in the length of time they have been in their current positions than was reported in the last survey in 2009.

In addition, in 2014, an increasing number of advisers are tenured or are in positions that lead to tenure, although slightly fewer are full time with no direct classroom assignment. However, for those who are full-time advisers, salaries on all levels have substantially increased in the last four years. Slightly fewer media are independent in 2014 than in 2009, with fewer operations reporting to student affairs, and more being responsible to academic affairs. And, on a positive note, significantly more advisers are crafting their own job descriptions rather than having this task done by an administrator who might lack the knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of the advising profession.

Methodology

In spring 2014, surveys were sent via Qualtrics to 841 active members of the College Media Association at that time. A total of 379 were returned, for a response rate of 45 percent. Respondents represented all 50 states and the District of Columbia, with Illinois having the largest percentage of returns (7 percent), followed by Texas (6 percent), Pennsylvania, California, New York and Georgia (5 percent each).

The 69 questions on the survey were designed to provide information on a broad range of topics, including the role and responsibilities of advisers, their levels of education,

their tenure status, salary and other compensation models, reporting responsibilities, titles and rank. The first 31 questions related to advising and are the basis for this article. The subsequent 48 sought information on the newspapers, both print and online, yearbooks, magazines and radio and television operations advised by those responding, including financial, organizational and demographic data, in order to provide a profile of the nation's college and university student media. In addition, there was an open-ended question at the end soliciting further comments that advisers would like to share.

Frequencies were run on all questions, as were cross tabulations on selected questions to ascertain trends and specific demographic information on respondents and the media they advise.

Profile of Respondents

The largest group of respondents (37 percent) advise newspapers and online. This is a significant difference from just four years ago when the largest group, 49 percent, advised only newspapers, showing the rapid growth of online operations. The next largest group (20 percent) advise all media. That is followed by 17 percent who advise newspaper only;

6 percent who advise radio; 4 percent who advise newspaper and yearbook; 4 percent, newspaper, yearbook and magazine; 3 percent, radio and TV; 3 percent, yearbook; 3 percent, magazine; and 2 percent each, TV and online only. The broad range of combinations of media advised illustrates just how diverse advising models and student media operations are across the country and how rapidly they are changing. In fact, in the open-ended section, 10 advisers offered other models, including one who advises a yearbook magazine, an online magazine, and online radio and TV; another has eight specialty magazines and two radio stations; and still another, an online newspaper and radio and TV.

Of those who advise newspapers, nearly three fourths (71 percent) advise all areas; 15 percent supervise editorial and production; 10 percent, editorial only; 2 percent, business / advertising and production, and 2 percent, business/advertising.

The length of professional experience of advisers has also increased substantially. Nearly all (93 percent) have had some professional media experience, up from 91 percent in 2009. More than half (57 percent) have nine or more years experience, up significantly from 44 percent in 2009, and 29 percent report 18 or more years working in the media before becoming advisers, an increase from 17 percent in 2009; 17 percent have 23 or more years professional experience, again an increase from 8 percent in 2009. Only 17 percent reported 1-3 years experience, down from 26 percent on the last survey.

Fewer (23 percent) advisers have been in their positions four or fewer years, down from 32 percent in 2009. Of those, 6 percent are in their first year of advising, comparable to 2009. Nearly half (43 percent) have been advising for 15 or more years, an increase from 28 percent in 2009. Of those, 21 percent have advised for 20 or more years, an increase from 18 percent on the last survey.

As far as their current jobs are concerned, more advisers (33 percent) have been in their positions for 5-9 years than any other length of time; in 2009 that was true for those advising 2-4 years. The number of advisers with 15 or more years in their current position (23 percent) has remained constant from 2009; 14 percent are in their current jobs 20 or more years, up from 11 percent. Only 9 percent were in their first year, a slight decrease.

More than half the respondents (51 percent) work at four-year public colleges and universities; more than one-third (34 percent) are at four-year private schools, followed by 15 percent at two-year public colleges. There were no respondents from two-year private institutions.

As far as enrollments are concerned, more advisers (40 percent) represent institutions with 7,500 or fewer students than any other size; another 25 percent work at colleges and universities with 7,501 to 15,000 students, 10 percent at those with 15,001 to 20,000, 7 percent at those with 20,001 to 25,000, and 17 percent at schools with enrollments exceeding 25,000.

The Adviser's Position

More advisers (37 percent) hold the title of publications/media adviser than any other, an increase from 26 percent in 2009. The next most common designation is publications/media director (24 percent), a decrease from 28 percent in 2009; 10 percent are general managers, a decrease from 16 percent in 2009, and 11 percent are editorial advisers.

Others with smaller percentages include assistant director of student media/publications

(4 percent), media supervisors/coordinators, 3 percent, and ad/production managers (1 percent). Other titles reported by one or two individuals include such diversity as follows: assistant director of marketing and media, director of career services, student life coordinator, assistant director of student activities, director of the student union, and faculty managing editor.

More than half (59 percent) of the advisers have master's degrees, an increase from 51 percent in 2009, and 23 percent have their doctoral degrees, an increase from 21 percent on the last survey. Several noted that they hold the MFA degree. Nearly half (42 percent) the advisers have both faculty rank and staff title, an increase from 30 percent in 2009. Of those with faculty status, more are instructors (28 percent) than any other rank, an increase from 25 percent in 2009 when assistant professors were the majority with 29 percent. Assistant professors follow with 24 percent, down from 2009, followed by associate professors with 19 percent, a decrease from 21 percent in 2009, and professors, with 17 percent, an increase from 15 percent in 2009. Lecturers stand at 11 percent.

When rank is broken down by type of institution, there are more instructors at four-year public colleges (33 percent), comparable to 2009, and more assistant professors at four-year private institutions (30 percent), a decrease from 44 percent, than other ranks. Assistant professors follow at four-year public colleges with 21 percent, then lecturers with 17 percent and professors with 15 percent. At four-year private institutions, 26 percent are associate professors; 18 percent are professors and another 18 percent are instructors, while 6 percent are lecturers. Professors dominate at two-year public schools (33 percent), followed by instructors with 31 percent, assistant professors with 18 percent, associate professors with 16 percent and lecturers with 2 percent.

Tenure

Being successful in attaining a tenured position continues to be a challenge for college media advisers, although the situation has improved significantly in 2014. More than one third (38 percent) of respondents indicate that their advising position does not lead to tenure, a significant decrease from 48 percent in 2009. Of those positions that do lead to tenure, 44 percent of the advisers are tenured, an increase from the 39 percent in 2009 who reported having tenure.

Nearly half (43 percent) the advisers at four-year public colleges and universities are in positions that do not lead to tenure; this is a substantial decrease from 59 percent in 2009. At four-year private schools, 36 percent are in positions not leading to tenure, a decrease from 38 percent in 2009. Two-year public institutions have the smallest percentage of advisers in positions not leading to tenure (23 percent).

Of those advisers in positions that lead to tenure, 77 percent of respondents at two-year public institutions are tenured, the highest of any type of college, and an increase from 68 percent in 2009. Nearly one third (31 percent) of those at four-year public colleges are tenured, a slight increase from 28 percent in 2009. At four-year private schools, 46 percent are tenured, an increase from 37 percent in 2009.

More station managers (67 percent) are in positions not leading to tenure than any other job title (75 percent). They are followed closely by general managers and business managers (50 percent), publications/media directors (49 percent), publications/media advisers

(48 percent), and editorial advisers (46 percent).

More than one third (31 percent) of the publications/media advisers who are in positions leading to tenure are tenured, a significant decrease from 52 percent in 2009, as are 42 percent of general managers (an increase from 17 percent in 2009), 16 percent of publications/media directors (a decrease from 25 percent in 2009) and 27 percent of the editorial advisers (an increase from none in 2009).

Assignments

Nearly one third of advisers (32 percent) are on 12-month contracts, a decrease from 46 percent in 2009; 28 percent have nine-month contracts, also a decrease from 31 percent in 2009. Another 12 percent are on 10-month contracts, an increase from 9 percent, and 19 percent state they have no contract, an increase from 11 percent. Nearly all (95 percent) are on the semester system. Most have a nine-month teaching load of 12 semester hours (29 percent); 15 semester hours is the next most common load (16 percent), followed by 18 semester hours (12 percent), 24 semester hours (9 percent), 21 semester hours and 12 quarter hours (5 percent each), and 16 and 24 quarter hours and 30 semester hours (4 percent each).

Nearly three-fourths of the advisers (73 percent) are faculty and are assigned to a department, a significant increase from 59 percent in 2009; two thirds (66 percent) are found in journalism/communications, while 14 percent are English faculty. English/communication accounts for 2 percent, arts/humanities for 1 percent, and not assigned to a department, 8 percent. Of those who do not have faculty rank but do teach, 23 percent instruct journalism/communications classes, while 6 percent teach English, comparable to the last survey.

Of those advisers who are regular faculty, nearly two thirds (63 percent) at four-year public colleges, less than 70 percent in 2009, and more than two-thirds (67 percent) at four-year private schools (comparable to 2009) are assigned to journalism/communications units; 11 percent at the former and 14 percent at the latter report to English. Nearly half (46 percent) of those at two-year public colleges, an increase from 39 percent in 2009, are assigned to journalism/communications, and another one fourth (24 percent) teach English, a sharp decrease from 36 percent in 2009.

Nearly one third (32 percent) of advisers are full time and have no direct classroom assignment, a decrease from 41 percent in 2009. This model is more common at four-year public colleges, where nearly half (43 percent) the advisers do not teach, a decrease from 54 percent in 2009; 22 percent of advisers at four-year private schools and 15 percent of those at two-year public institutions also fall into this category, both percentages less than 2009.

Of those who are not full-time advisers, 42 percent spend 25 percent or less of their work assignment in advising, a decrease from 46 percent in 2009; 21 percent spend half their time advising, and 13 percent spend 75 percent. At four-year public colleges, slightly more than one third (34 percent) said they advise full time, down from 43 percent in 2009; only 16 percent of those at four-year private institutions, the same as 2009, and 8 percent of advisers at two-year public schools, up slightly from 7 percent, are full-time advisers.

Of those who are not full-time advisers, nearly two thirds (63 percent) at four-year private colleges and universities spend 25 percent or less of their work assignment advising; so do 54 percent of those at two-year public schools, and 49 percent of those at four-year

public colleges.

One fourth of advisers report spending more than 40 hours a week doing student media work, while 39 percent spend 20 hours or less; the former is a decrease from 33 percent in 2009 and the latter is comparable. One fifth spend 21 to 30 hours and 17 percent spend 31 to 40 hours advising.

With regard to reporting responsibility, one fourth (26 percent) of advisers report to a department/division chair, a slight increase from 24 percent in 2009. Those reporting to a student affairs dean/vice president decreased to 17 percent from 18 percent in 2009, and those reporting to an academic affairs dean/vice president increased to 20 percent from 12 percent. Respondents reporting to a student activities/student life director decreased to 15 percent from 17 percent in 2009, while those reporting to a student media/publications board or chair decreased to 4 percent from 12 percent in the previous survey. The percentage of advisers reporting to a publications/media director or general manager increased 1 percentage point from 2009 to 6 percent. Other areas to which advisers are responsible include a corporate board of directors, public relations dean/vice president and president, all 1 percent. Another small group, 2 percent, said they were not sure to whom they reported or they reported to no one.

With regard to full-time media advisers, more than half (58 percent) report to student affairs personnel; 24 percent report to a student activities/student life director, while more than one third (34 percent) report to a student affairs dean/vice president. The former is a decrease from 31 percent in 2009 and the latter an increase from 22 percent in 2009. Only 8 percent of full-time advisers are responsible to a publications/media board or its chair, a decrease from 13 percent in 2009. Responsibility to a department chair increased to 8 percent from 7 percent. Other areas of reporting include publications/media director (12 percent), an increase from 7 percent in 2009, and academic dean or vice president (12 percent), up from 4 percent.

At four-year public colleges more advisers are directly responsible to a department chair (27 percent) than any other area, an increase from 21 percent in 2009. That is followed by student affairs/student life director and student affairs dean/vp (18 percent each), both decreases from 20 and 21 percent in 2009. Publications/media board or chair supervises 10 percent of advisers, a decrease from 11 percent in 2009; academic dean/vp, 8 percent; and publications/media director or general manager (6 percent each), comparable to 2009.

At four-year private institutions, the academic dean or vice president supervises most advisers (31 percent), up from 15 percent in 2009. Other areas include department chairs (24 percent), down from 28 percent in 2009; student affairs dean/vice president (15 percent), up from 17 percent; publications/media board (6 percent), a decrease from 16 percent; and student activities/student life director (9 percent), comparable to 2009.

Most advisers at two-year public schools report to the academic dean/vice president (27 percent), an increase from 23 percent in 2009, followed by the department chair (22 percent), a decrease from 30 percent, the student activities/student life director and student affairs dean/vice president (both 18 percent), the former down from 24 percent and the latter up from 8 percent in 2009 (See Table 1).

Table 1: Reporting Responsibility for Student Media Advisers (in percentages)

Table 1: Reporting Responsibility for Student Media Advisers (in %)			
Area	4-year public	4-year private	2-year public
PR dean/vp	0	1	1
Student affairs/life dir.	18	9	18
Pub/media director	6	2	5
President	0	3	0
Dept. chair	27	24	22
Student gov't	0	0	2
Academic dean/vp	8	31	27
Student aff. dean/vp	18	15	18
Media board or chair	10	6	6

Note: Percentages do not total 100 since some listed “other” smaller areas.

Most student media operations are assigned to either student affairs (39 percent), a decrease from 45 percent in 2009, or to communications/journalism (35 percent), up from 33 percent in 2009.

Advisers listing their media operations as independent account for 10 percent, down from 12 percent in 2009. Other areas of assignment are minimal: student government (6 percent), a slight increase from 4 percent in 2009; humanities/arts and sciences, 3 percent; and the president and academic affairs, both 2 percent.

Student media are assigned to departments of communications/journalism more frequently than any other unit at four-year private colleges (39 percent), a decrease from 44 percent in 2009, followed by student affairs (30 percent). At four-year public colleges, more media operations are responsible to student affairs (47 percent), down from 56 percent in 2009, followed by journalism/communication with 30 percent, up from 25 percent in 2009. At two-year public colleges, most report to communications/journalism (37 percent), comparable to 2009, followed by student affairs (30 percent), down significantly from 45 percent in 2009.

Independent media comprise 12 percent of operations at four-year public colleges, comparable to 2009, 10 percent of those at four-year private schools, a decrease from 18 percent, and 7 percent of those at two-year public institutions, an increase from none. A small percentage of media operations (5 percent) at both four-year public and four-year private colleges and 7 percent of those at two-year public schools report to student government (See Table 2).

Table 2: Reporting Responsibility for Student Media Advisers (in percentages)

Table 2: Areas of Assignment for Student Media (in %)			
Area	4-year public	4-year private	2-year public
Comm/journ	30	39	37
Student affairs	47	30	30
Independent	12	10	7
President	0	4	4
Public relations	0	2	2
Student gov't	2.5	4.4	6.5
Academic aff/provost	2	2	3
Humanities/liberal arts/English	2	2	4
Media board	1	1	0

Note: Percentages do not total 100 since some listed “other” smaller areas.

With regard to the issue of who is publisher of the student media operation, respondents most frequently listed the publications/media board (21 percent); other areas included the newspaper editor (18 percent), the president (7.7 percent), the adviser (9 percent), board of trustees/regents (8 percent), journalism/communications (7 percent), student affairs dean/vice president/director (5 percent), and the university, editorial/management board and president, (3 percent each). Independence was listed by 15 percent of respondents. Three percent said they did not have a publisher or one was not defined.

At four-year public colleges, the publications/media board is most frequently listed as publisher (28 percent), while the newspaper editor is mentioned most frequently at two-year public schools (23 percent). At four-year private colleges, the trustees/regents/university is most frequently listed as publisher (19 percent). See Table 3.

More than half the advisers (59 percent) supervise full-time, three-fourths-time or half-time employees, a decrease from 71 percent in 2009; 54 percent of those supervise 1 to 2; 21 percent, 3 to 5; 15 percent, 6 to 11; 10 percent, 12 or more; and 6 percent, 21 or more. All are fewer than the last survey.

Job Descriptions

One of the most vital documents that an adviser can have to ensure and protect his or her rights as an adviser, and to protect the students' rights to a press free from censorship, is a written job description. In 2014, 57 percent of advisers have written job descriptions, a decrease from 62 percent in 2009 and 60 percent in 2005.

Publications/media directors have the highest percentage of job descriptions (88 percent), followed by general managers and editorial advisers (75 percent each), and publications/media advisers (64 percent).

With regard to areas advised, most of those advising newspaper and yearbook (88 percent), an increase from 73 percent in 2009, have written job descriptions. They are followed by nearly three fourths (73 percent) of those advising all media, a slight decrease from 81 percent in 2009, 65 percent of those advising newspaper, yearbook and magazine, 62 percent of those working with newspaper and online, 54 percent of those advising radio, half of those advising online only, 40 percent of those advising radio and TV, 37 percent of those working with newspapers, 36 percent of those advising yearbook only, one third of TV advisers, and 18 percent of magazine advisers. A majority (87 percent) of the full-time advisers have written job descriptions, a substantial increase from 54 percent in 2009.

More than three fourths of advisers (77 percent) reporting to student affairs deans/vice presidents have written job descriptions, as do 75 percent of those responsible to student activities/student life directors, 72 percent of those reporting to publications/media directors, 53 percent responsible to academic deans/vice presidents, half of those reporting to the president, 46 percent of those responsible to publications/media boards or their chair, 35 percent of those reporting to department chairs, and the one adviser responsible to a public relations dean.

Nearly two thirds (64 percent) of advisers at four-year public colleges have written job descriptions, a decrease from 68 percent in 2009. At two-year public schools, 58 percent have descriptions, an increase from 56 percent in 2009. At four-year private colleges, advisers having written job descriptions decreased to 47 percent from 54 percent in 2009.

In most instances, advisers themselves are responsible for writing their own job descriptions (33 percent), a significant increase from 23 percent in 2009. This is followed by student affairs directors/deans/vice presidents (16 percent), a decrease from 20 percent in 2009; publications/media boards or chairs (12 percent), a decrease from 15 percent; department chairs (13 percent), a decrease from 14 percent; academic deans/vice presidents (11 percent), an increase from 8 percent; media/publications director/ general manager, 4 percent; newspaper editor/editorial board, 2 percent; and president, student government, board of directors, media/publications board chair, and self with student affairs officer or chair, all 1 percent each.

At four-year public colleges and universities, most advisers write their own job descriptions (24 percent), an increase from 22 percent in 2009, and a change from the last survey when most (30 percent) were written by student affairs deans/vice presidents (17 percent in 2009). Publications/media boards follow with 18 percent, a slight increase from 16 in 2009, and department chairs write 13 percent, comparable to 2009.

Nearly half (41 percent) the advisers at four-year private institutions write their own job descriptions, a significant increase from 21 percent in 2009; academic deans/vice presidents follow with 16 percent, then department chairs with 12 percent, and student affairs with 11 percent.

At two-year public colleges, 45 percent of advisers write their own job descriptions, an increase from 36 percent in 2009; 10 percent are written by academic affairs deans/vice presidents, a contrast to 14 percent in 2009, and 10 percent are completed by department chairs, a substantial decrease from 29 percent in the last survey.

Nearly one third (30 percent) of publications/media advisers write their own job descriptions, comparable to 2009. In 18 percent of the cases, descriptions are written by student affairs, a sharp decrease from 39 percent in 2009, and by department chairs/academic deans/vice presidents in 23 percent of the cases, an increase from 17 percent in 2009. Publications/media boards/board chairs write descriptions for 14 percent of these individuals, an increase from 8 percent. The role of student affairs in writing job descriptions for media advisers has decreased significantly, while academic affairs has increased.

Nearly half (46 percent) the publications/media directors write their own job descriptions, a substantial increase from 18 percent in 2009. Student affairs author one fourth of these descriptions, a significant decrease from 42 percent in 2009; 6 percent are completed by publications/media boards/board chairs, a decrease from 18 percent in 2009, while 13 percent are written by department chairs/academic deans/vice presidents, an increase from 9 percent in 2009. These figures show a significant increase in publications/media directors writing their own job descriptions with a significant decrease in student affairs involvement.

In the case of general managers, 14 percent write their own job descriptions, a substantial decrease from 35 percent in 2009; department chairs/academic deans/vice presidents, and student affairs, each write 23 percent of job descriptions, an increase for the former from 13 percent.

Only 17 percent of editorial advisers write their own job descriptions, while 29 percent are authored by department chairs/academic deans/vice presidents, a decrease from half in 2009; one fourth are written by publications/media boards or their chairs, comparable to

2009.

The fact that one third of advisers write their own job descriptions, an increase from 23 percent in 2009, is a positive trend. College Media Association has two long-standing codes for its members: a Code of Ethical Standards for Advisers and a Code of Professional Standards for Advisers, both of which define the job of the adviser as a professional journalist, a professional educator and a professional manager, and speak specifically to both the rights and responsibilities of the advising position. Advisers must protect their rights and define their professional responsibilities to administrators, colleagues, staff and students. Advisers should take the initiative to craft these documents themselves to ensure that the responsibilities listed in the position description are those that are appropriate to the job.

Table 3: Who is Publisher? (in percentages)

Table 3: Who is Publisher? (in %)			
Area	4-year public	4-year private	2-year public
Pub/media board	28	14	11
Independent	18	10	16
Journ/comm	6	8	6
Newspaper editor	22	11	23
Student affairs dean/VP/director	2	10	7
Editorial/manag board	4	3	4
Trustees/univ./regents	4	19	7
President	2	6	0
Adviser	6	11	13

Note: Percentages do not total 100 since some listed “other” smaller areas.

Compensation

Advisers receive a broad variety of compensation packages. Of those who are not full-time advisers, 58 percent have a reduced load, while advising counts as one or more courses, comparable to 2009. However, 23 percent receive no released time or extra compensation for advising, an increase from 20 percent in 2009.

Another model includes advisers who carry a regular teaching load and are paid extra for advising (14 percent, comparable to 2009). Others have a reduced teaching load, where advising counts as one or more courses, and are paid extra (6 percent), comparable to 2009.

More than three fourths (76 percent) are not paid directly for their advising responsibilities, but their duties are part of their teaching or administrative assignment; this percentage is comparable to 2009. At four-year private colleges, 76 percent follow this model, up slightly from 73 percent in 2009; at four-year public schools, 80 percent fall into this category, comparable to 2009. At two-year public institutions, the percentage increased to 76 from 50 percent in 2009.

Broken down by student media operations, those not paid directly for advising include 100 percent of yearbook, online only, and newspaper and yearbook advisers, followed by advisers to radio (94 percent), newspaper, yearbook and magazine (82 percent), all media (80 percent), newspaper and online (78 percent), magazine (64 percent), newspapers (61 percent), radio and TV (60 percent), and television (50 percent).

Of the one-fourth who receive partial remuneration for advising, nearly three fourths (71 percent) are paid \$5,000 or less, a significant increase from 51 percent in 2009, while 11

percent receive \$5,001 to \$10,000, and 19 percent are paid more than \$10,000, the latter a decrease from 26 percent in the last survey.

By media operations, of those receiving partial remuneration, 9 percent of advisers to all media receive more than \$5,000, as do 8 percent of newspaper and online advisers. All the rest receive less. This is significantly less than in 2009. At four-year public colleges, nearly 15 percent of advisers receiving partial compensation are paid more than \$5,000, a significant decrease from 71 percent in 2009; at four-year private schools, 8 percent are so paid, a decrease from 25 percent in the last survey. At two-year public institutions the percentage decreased to 6 percent from 46 percent in 2009.

Salaries of full-time advisers vary widely and exceed 2009 at all levels. Only 9 percent are paid \$35,000 or less; that is progress over 2009 when 15 percent earned that amount. A majority (84 percent) are compensated at a level of more than \$40,000, a significant increase over 68 percent in 2009, while two thirds earn more than \$50,000, another significant increase from 34 percent in 2009. In fact, 40 percent earn more than \$60,000; 23 percent are paid more than \$70,000, and 13 percent earn more than \$80,000. All substantially exceed 2009 levels.

By media advised, more than three-fourths (73 percent) of those working with newspapers receive more than \$40,000; 59 percent receive more than \$50,000; 45 percent more than \$60,000; and 14 percent more than \$80,000. Of those working with newspapers and yearbooks, 79 percent are paid more than \$40,000; 36 percent more than \$50,000; 21 percent more than \$60,000; and 14 percent more than \$80,000. Of those advising all media, most (88 percent) earn more than \$40,000; 68 percent more than \$50,000; 36 percent more than \$60,000; and 14 percent more than \$80,000. More than two-thirds (78 percent) of radio station advisers earn more than \$40,000; 56 percent, more than \$60,000; and 11 percent more than \$80,000. Of the newspaper and online advisers, 84 percent earn more than \$40,000; 68 percent more than \$50,000; 36 percent more than \$60,000; and 14 percent more than \$80,000 (See Table 4).

Table 4: Compensation for Full-Time Advisers by Media Advised (in percentages)

Table 4: Compensation for Full-Time Advisers by Media Advised (in %)						
Salary Range	Newspaper only	Radio only	Newsp. & online	Newsp. & yearbook	Newsp. yrbk & mag.	All Media
\$20,000 or less	14	0	2	0	0	2
\$20,001-\$25,000	0	0	2	0	0	0
\$25,001-\$30,000	9	0	0	7	0	2
\$30,001-\$35,000	0	0	5	7	0	3
\$35,001-\$40,000	5	22	8	7	9	5
\$40,001-\$45,000	5	0	2	21	0	10
\$45,001-\$50,000	9	11	8	21	46	10
\$50,001-\$55,000	14	11	20	14	9	22
\$55,001-\$60,000	0	0	6	0	0	10
\$60,001-\$65,000	14	0	20	0	0	8
\$65,001-\$70,000	54	11	5	0	18	7
\$70,001-\$75,000	9	22	8	7	18	5
\$75,001-\$80,000	5	11	2	0	0	2
\$80,001 or more	13	11	14	14	9	14

All categories of full-time advisers have made significant salary gains since 2009. More than three fourths (81 percent) of the full-time advisers in four-year public colleges

earn more than \$45,000, an increase from 58 percent in 2009, while 43 percent are paid more than \$60,000, and 16 percent, more than \$80,000. At four-year private institutions, figures are lower; 75 percent receive more than \$45,000, an increase from 37 percent in 2009, while 26 percent are paid more than \$60,000, and 8 percent more than \$80,000. See Table 3.

At two-year public colleges, 69 percent earn more than \$45,000, an increase from 17 percent in 2009; 58 percent receive more than \$60,000, and 12 percent earn more than \$80,000 (See Table 5).

Table 5: Compensation for Full-Time Advisers (in percentages)

Salary Range	4-year public	4-year private	2-year public
\$20,000 or less	2	0	12
\$20,001-\$25,000	0	0	4
\$25,001-\$30,000	4	0	0
\$30,001-\$35,000	2	6	4
\$35,001-\$40,000	7	9	8
\$40,001-\$45,000	5	9	4
\$45,001-\$50,000	10	19	8
\$50,001-\$55,000	17	26	4
\$55,001-\$60,000	10	4	0
\$60,001-\$65,000	13	2	22
\$65,001-\$70,000	5	2	14
\$70,001-\$75,000	6	13	8
\$75,001-\$80,000	3	2	0
\$80,001 or more	16	8	12

Most (95 percent) of the full-time advisers with the title of publications/media director earn more than \$40,000, while 79 percent make more than \$50,000; 28 percent exceed \$65,000 and 18 percent earn more than \$80,000. All are increases over 2009 levels except for those earning more than \$65,000. Of those with the title of publications/media adviser, 75 percent earn more than \$40,000, double that of 2009; 56 percent exceed \$50,000, a substantial increase from 9 percent in 2009, and 17 percent make more than \$65,000. One person earns more than \$80,000. Of the general managers responding, 88 percent earn more than \$50,000, up from 57 percent in 2009; 59 percent earn more than \$65,000, an increase from 36 percent in 2009, and 29 percent earn in excess of \$80,000.

More than half (59 percent) the advisers who are compensated for working with student media have no formal provision for how frequently they are granted salary increases; this is a substantial increase from 40 percent in 2009. Only 17 percent have annual salary reviews, down from 36 percent in 2009; 14 percent receive automatic annual increases, down from 17 percent in 2009.

Academic affairs deans/vice presidents or chairs most frequently determine advisers' raises (40 percent), an increase from 37 percent in 2009. Student affairs deans/vice presidents or directors grant raises in nearly one third (32 percent) of the cases, down from 37 percent in 2009. Publications/media boards or their chairs perform this function in 3 percent, a significant decrease from 13 percent in 2009. Contracts determine increases for 5 percent of advisers; 4 percent receive raises from the president, and 1 percent each have raises determined by student government, the general manager, and the board of directors of the corporation.

Conclusions

Both the times and the student media world are indeed changing. Technology has brought about a revolution in the last three decades in what student media look like, how information is disseminated and how and when the audience accesses the message.

So too has the role of the college and university media adviser evolved and changed. Advising has become a career path, one in which longevity is a hallmark. Three decades ago nearly half the student media advisers had spent three or more years in their positions. Today half have spent 10 or more years in their jobs and one fourth, 20 or more years.

Salaries, also, have matured. In 2014, more than double the number of full-time advisers make salaries exceeding \$60,000 than four years ago. On the other hand, however, those who advise on a part-time basis and receive partial remuneration for that job have not seen much improvement in salaries. In fact, the number of those who receive no released time or extra compensation for advising has increased slightly.

A lingering challenge is that the number of advisers who have no formal provisions for salary increases has increased to 50 percent from 40 percent in the last survey. In addition, fewer have annual salary reviews (17 percent) than four years ago (36 percent).

A critical issue for advisers is having written job descriptions spelling out the rights and responsibilities of their positions and protecting them as they work to uphold the free press rights of their students in their work on campus media. In 2014, 57 percent of respondents indicated that they had job descriptions in writing, a decrease from 62 percent four years ago. On a positive note, however, is the fact that one third wrote their own descriptions, a significant increase from the 23 percent who did so in 2009.

An indicator of the career status of student media advising is the fact that nearly two thirds (62 percent) of respondents indicated that their job is tenured or leads to tenure, a substantial increase over 52 percent in 2009. And of those, nearly half (44 percent) are tenured, also an increase from 39 percent in the last survey.

The evolution of the student media advising profession over the last three decades has encountered significant challenges and opportunities. But it has always embraced the ideals of a free and vigorous student press and welcomed the opportunity to strengthen the avenues of communication with the audience the student media serve. Advisers have made a great deal of progress in the professionalism of their careers. This survey indicates some areas to which attention needs to be paid, but also provides a breadth of information to assist advisers in doing so.

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What's in the Pages?

A current look at college newspaper content from various collegiate environments

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Abstract

This study examines whether the content of college newspapers differs depending on the presence of a communication program, the presence of a journalism program or the size of the school as determined by data reported in The College Blue Book. This content analysis extends earlier work with a reification of variables to describe the content of 71 college newspapers by examining elements such as use of advertising, online presence, social media information, type of news stories and use of wire content and infographics. Newspapers with a communication program at the corresponding institution were significantly more likely to report hard news stories on the front page than were newspapers without a communication program at that school. Additionally, newspapers with a communication program were significantly more likely to include wire content in the publication than were publications with no communication program. No differences were detected in content of the publication based on presence of a journalism program or size of the school. Advertisements and websites are mainstays of the college newspaper, with a full 92 percent of the publications including ads and 78 percent indicating a newspaper website. However, elements such as social media presence, infographics, original illustrations and use of wire services varied widely. Weekly publications and tabloid style were most common, and the mode length was 12 pages. Data were coded by two independent coders, and a Cohen's kappa of .80 or higher was found for all variables, determining acceptable intercoder reliability rates.

Introduction

In a world where status updates, Vines and selfies are pervasive, some may consider it ironic that the traditional college newspaper continues to thrive and remain relevant on campuses nationwide (Keller 2008). According to a 2011 survey of college students and their reading habits, three-fifths of participants prefer the print version of their newspaper over the online edition (Jackson 2012). Yet, like the rest of the news industry, the roughly 1,600 U.S. college newspapers are continuing to seek new ways to stave off financial hard-

ship and balance between traditional print and digital media (Vogt 2014). New strategies include adopting a “digital first” mindset, experimenting with paywall options and seeking innovative revenue sources from student fees to fundraisers and sponsorships (Vogt 2014).

While the documented decline of the traditional daily newspaper is well established, evidence of how the college newspaper is faring during this downturn is mixed. Readership studies suggest that generally, college students find daily print newspapers irrelevant; however their campus newspaper appears to be an exception (Collins & Armstrong 2009b; Keller 2008). Data support the notion that readership of a college newspaper does not translate directly with research on college students and newspaper readership in general (Collins & Armstrong 2008). Some possible reasons for this phenomenon are the direct relevance of a college newspaper (Lin 2000), the free price tag and the notion that a college campus is one of the few remaining places with high pedestrian traffic and large amounts of leisure time (Jackson 2012). Research also suggests that college students find their own newspaper just as credible or more credible than a local newspaper (Armstrong & Collins 2009a; Armstrong & Collins 2009b), and that college students indicate a loyalty to and connection with their campus newspaper unlike other newspapers (Collins 2003). Some scholars have noted the irony “that the readers most coveted by newspaper executives are only reading news on campus” (Armstrong & Collins 2009b, 101).

Additionally, a comprehensive understanding of how college newspapers are faring in a turbulent time for the news industry is difficult, in part because there are little hard data on the student newspaper field, compared to the widely studied commercial industry (Vogt 2014). In fact, there is sparse empirical research to understand the landscape of journalism in higher education in general. Newton (2014) suggests there are few useful studies and reports to accurately understand the quality and state of journalism education, and current data comparing college journalism programs are “about as useful as a pile of mismatched socks.”

The opaque nature of journalism education, coupled with the notion that a student newspaper is arguably a microcosm of the greater collegiate learning environment, presents a unique opportunity to examine the differences in college newspaper content among the wide array of journalism schools.

This research is an extension study predicated on earlier research that surveyed college newspaper editors at liberal arts institutions (Payne 2012). Among the key findings of the earlier work was that 100 percent of college newspaper editors at liberal arts schools reported including advertising in the newspapers. Advertisements were seen as the financial lifeblood of the publication. However, the presence of a regularly maintained website was a less well-established element of the college newspaper landscape; only about one in three editors reported having regular online information available for readers. Additionally, newsroom staff came from diverse disciplinary backgrounds with majors ranging from biology to international studies; more than half of respondents didn't have a journalism program at their school at all.

In contrast stand the larger schools, with greater curricular journalism offerings, such as those with accreditation by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) – only 108 of the nearly 500 journalism and communication programs in the nation are accredited. Another resource indexing larger journalism pro-

grams is *The Journalist's Road to Success: A Career Guide*, available online from the Dow Jones News Fund. To be included in the Guide, the institution must offer a minimum of 10 courses in news-editorial journalism and include classes on core courses like media law and ethics and reporting and editing (Becker, Vlad & Simpson 2013).

The current study seeks to examine whether or how college newspaper content differs given these very different learning environments. It explores whether the content of college newspapers differs depending on the presence of a communication program or a journalism program at the institution or on the size of the school.

Literature Review

University enrollments are rising, and the trend is expected to continue in higher education through 2021, and the more general field of communication education is also growing consistently (Becker, Vlad & Simpson 2013). However, the enrollment numbers in journalism and mass communication programs are contracting for the second year in a row, bucking a pattern of growth for the past 20 years (Becker, Vlad & Simpson 2013). "The evidence is that the decline in enrollments reflects a lack of growth in the historical core of journalism and mass communication programs" (306). Educators and administrators are searching for ways to reverse the journalism enrollment trend by implementing new curricular strategies "such as using social media, using video and still photos on the web, using video in reporting, and editing and writing for the web" (307).

And while journalism and mass communication programs are struggling to keep up with the times, college newspapers are also experimenting with innovations in content and structure. Sonya Huber-Humes (2007), adviser for a large-circulation student newspaper, describes the trend for journalism programs to roll out new curricula in an effort to "navigate the maze of media change." For example, *The Red & Black*, the newspaper for the University of Georgia, underwent a massive design renovation in 2011 that embraced technological change happening around them and to the environment (Morales 2012). Jacob Rooksby, in a study on journalism's uncertain future, explains why it's feasible to switch gears to an online space. "While student journalists are unlikely to have printing presses in their dorm rooms, many know the latest in computer programming and technology and apply those skills, free, to their journalistic endeavors" (Rooksby 2011).

However, not all journalism programs have the resources of the nationally recognized *Red & Black*. Brockman, Bergland and Hon (2011) explain that the newsroom skill and experience levels may vary widely. For some "small weekly commercial newspapers, just putting out a print product is a challenge, and they are lucky if they are also able to just dump their content online. But, on the other end of the spectrum, some college newsrooms are full of enthusiastic and technologically savvy students who are not constrained by print-centric readers, editors and publishers and 'we've always done it this way' attitudes. These publications are able to go beyond even what many of their most enterprising commercial newspaper peers are doing online" (Brockman, Bergland, & Hon 2011).

Despite the influx of technology, collegiate newspapers won't be going anywhere anytime soon. In a 2013 study by Collins, Rabby and Brown, over half of students surveyed indicated they would not be willing to pay \$1 to use a newspaper on an iPad or tablet, confirming the notion that students still like free things. Some colleges have flirted with the

idea of using paywalls to cover costs and gain extra revenue. Oklahoma State University's Daily O'Collegian, for example, was the first collegiate newspaper to charge for access to online content (Rice 2011). However, as pointed out by Jeff Jarvis, a blogger and professor of new media at the City University of New York, most college newspapers wouldn't dare charge for their content, even to those not belonging to the community (Rice 2011). "Most college newspapers...accrue little cost because their labor is voluntary and the printed paper, if there is one, is generally paid for through student dues" (Rice 2011). Another indication of the health of the college newspaper as preferred news medium was found by Collins and Armstrong (2008). Researchers found that despite having a free, campus-focused edition of the larger metro daily, students still preferred to read their school newspaper (Collins & Armstrong 2008, p. 82).

This paper provides a comparison of the content of college newspapers with the size and curricular structure of the corresponding institutions. As the newspaper industry reels from a time of massive fluctuation and journalism programs in higher education are struggling to find their way and maintain healthy enrollments, an examination of content of college newspapers will help provide data to contribute to a better understanding of the state of the field in general.

This content analysis extends the earlier work of Payne (2012) with a reification of variables to describe the content of college newspapers and compare that content with schools of various sizes and curricular offerings. Specifically, it examines the following variables:

1. Frequency and length of publication
2. Advertising presence
3. Website information
4. Social media information
5. Type of news stories and news story topics
6. Use of wire content, infographics, QR codes, original illustrations, crime logs, cross words, classifieds

Additionally, this research will address the following research questions:

RQ1: Do college newspapers differ in content, depending on the presence or absence of a communication program at that institution?

RQ2: Do college newspapers differ in content, depending on the presence or absence of a journalism program at that institution?

RQ3: Do college newspapers differ in content, depending on the size of the institution?

Method

To answer the above research questions, a content analysis was conducted of student-run collegiate newspapers in the United States.

Sample

A convenience sample was drawn from the newspapers available at the 2012 annual ACP/CMA College Media Convention. A total of 371 schools were represented at the conference. From the 141 newspapers that were selected, 68 were filtered out and discarded as either duplicate issues, multiple issues from the same school, or special edition issues (such as a freshmen orientation issue). Additionally, newspapers that were not printed between September 1, 2012 and November 1, 2012 were filtered out and discarded. This yielded

a remaining sample of 71 newspapers, representing 19 percent of schools attending the convention.

Despite the fact that this sample is a non-probability, convenience sample, few opportunities exist to gather a large number of hard-copy newspapers, published during a similar timeframe from a wide geographical span, representing many different types of institutions. This sample is not scientifically representative of the population, thus limiting generalizations. However, Wimmer and Dominick note of the convenience sample method that “proponents of the available sample claim that if a phenomenon, characteristic or trait does in fact exist, it should exist in any sample (Wimmer & Dominick 2014, 95).

Before each newspaper was coded, descriptive information was gathered from the College Blue Book, 36th Edition. This descriptive information included geographic location, size of school, type of institution (two-year college, four-year college or university), and presence of a communication or journalism program. College size was then coded as either small (enrollment fewer than 5,000), medium (enrollment 5,000-15,000) or large (enrollment more than 15,000) based on the classification system used by collegedata.com.

Variables Coded

Coders indicated the following information on each code sheet: newspaper frequency, newspaper length, presence of advertising, type of news for the lead story, topic of lead story, website information, social media information, infographics and newspaper QR codes. Also included in the codebook was the following descriptive information: front page index, head shots, illustrations, events calendars, crime logs, crossword puzzles, classified ads and use of wire content. Hard news stories were operationally defined as those with high levels of newsworthiness, time sensitive stories, stories written in a formal tone and those stories with a factual intent, without appeal to a human interest element.

Coders and Coding Procedure

Data were coded by two independent coders, and a three-step process was used to train the coders: they reviewed and discussed the coding categories, previewed a sample of college newspapers and practiced the coding scheme. The two coders worked independently and coded small sets of newspapers over a three-week period. Intercoder reliabilities were calculated for the two coders, and Cohen’s kappa of .80 or higher was found for all variables, determining acceptable levels of agreement. Cohen’s kappa accounts for chance agreement and is recognized as appropriate for content analysis in mass communication using nominal level variables (Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Bracken 2002, 592). All data were entered and analyzed using SPSS Statistics 21 software package.

Results

About the Sample

The following data were gathered from the College Blue Book information about the schools affiliated with the college newspapers in the sample. Of the 71 newspapers coded, 28 percent were affiliated with a small college or university, 46 percent were medium and 24 percent were large.

One-third (33 percent) of the colleges or universities examined were private institutions, while the majority (63 percent) were public schools. The majority of the schools from the sample were identified by the College Blue Book as universities (73 percent); with 24

Table 1

Size of School				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Small	19	26.8	28.4
	Medium	31	43.7	46.3
	Large	16	22.5	98.5
	Other	1	1.4	100.0
	Total	67	94.4	100.0
Missing	System	4	5.6	
Total		71	100.0	

percent classified as two-year colleges and only 3 percent as four-year colleges. Institutions were closely split between those schools that did have a communication program (48 percent) and those that did not (52 percent). However, fewer schools identified having a journalism program (43 percent), compared with those that did not (57 percent).

Newspaper Length and Frequency

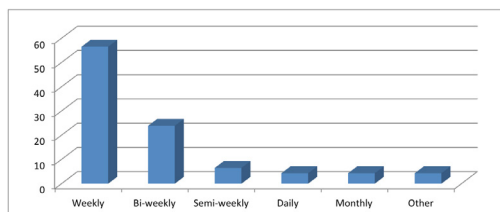
The mode for the length of the newspapers examined was 12 pages, and newspapers ranged in length from 6-32 pages.

Table 2

Total number of pages for newspaper				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
6	5	7.0	7.0	7.0
8	15	21.1	21.1	28.2
10	2	2.8	2.8	31.0
12	22	31.0	31.0	62.0
Valid 16	15	21.1	21.1	83.1
20	7	9.9	9.9	93.0
24	3	4.2	4.2	97.2
32	2	2.8	2.8	100.0
Total	71	100.0	100.0	

Data on the frequency of publication were available on some of the publications' mastheads, but were not identified for all of the newspapers. In the 65 percent of newspapers that did make this information available, the majority of newspapers (57 percent) indicated weekly publication, followed by 24 percent that published every other week. Other publication frequencies were semi-weekly (7 percent), monthly (4 percent) and daily (4 percent).

Figure 1: Frequency of publication by percent

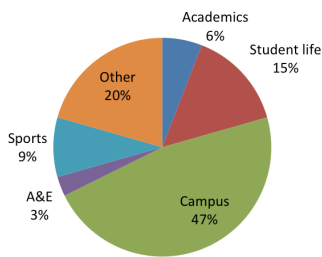


About the Lead Story

The majority of lead stories were classified as soft news stories (78 percent); only 22 percent of the lead stories were hard news. The topics of the lead stories varied, with campus news (47 percent) as most common type of story. Other lead stories were about student life (15 percent), sports (9 percent) and academics (6 percent). Only 3 percent of the lead stories were classified as arts and entertainment, and a full 20 percent did not fit with the coding categories and were classified as “other.”

Coders also indicated whether the lead story was tied to a larger, national issue, or a campus issue, or both. Just more than a quarter of the lead stories (26 percent) were related to a greater, national news issue, yet a full 87 percent of the lead stories were tied to a campus issue.

Figure 2: Topic of the lead story



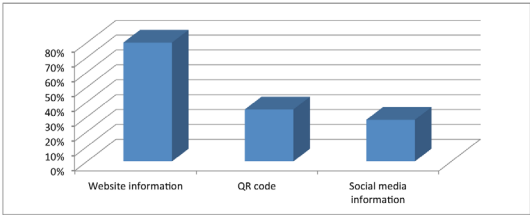
Use of Advertising

The majority of newspapers coded did contain some advertising (92 percent), but of those that included advertisements, only 6 percent included one on the front page of the publication. Almost all of the publications (99 percent) featured color on the front page.

Indications of Convergence and Use of Technology

A full 78 percent of the newspapers included a website with an online version of the newspaper – of those, 66 percent included the information on the front page and 39 percent included it on the publication masthead with staff names and other publication data. However, these websites were not verified, and these data do not ensure the website is either functional or regularly updated. Only 28 percent of the newspapers coded included social media information, with Twitter (27 percent) as the most common type, followed by Facebook (25 percent); 7 percent provided some other type of social media information. While the majority of newspapers did not issue a newspaper QR code, 40 percent did provide one, which would direct the reader to electronic information about the newspaper. These codes were not verified to determine what type of newspaper information was provided.

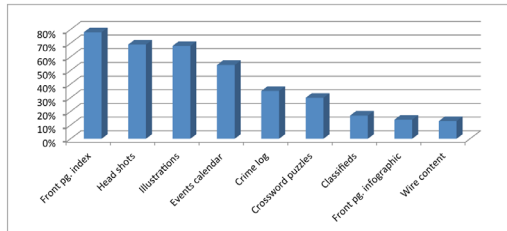
Figure 3: Indications of convergence and use of technology



Other Descriptive Information

More than three-fourths of the publications (78 percent) included an index with preview information about the newspaper's inside content. Another common characteristic of the newspapers was inclusion of head shot photographs (69 percent), which typically appeared in the opinions section. A full 68 percent of the newspapers included illustrations, a majority of which (92 percent) were original illustrations. About half (53 percent) included an events calendar with campus community information. Crime logs were identified in 35 percent of the newspapers. Crossword puzzles were present in about a third (30 percent) of the publications, and classified ads (17 percent), front page infographics (14 percent) and use of wire content (13 percent) were less common features of the newspapers.

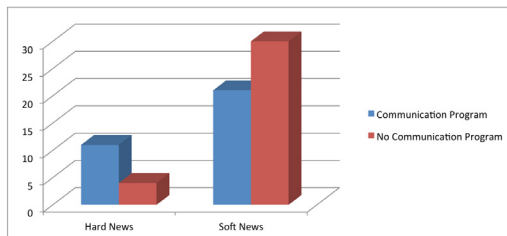
Figure 4: Descriptive information



Research Questions

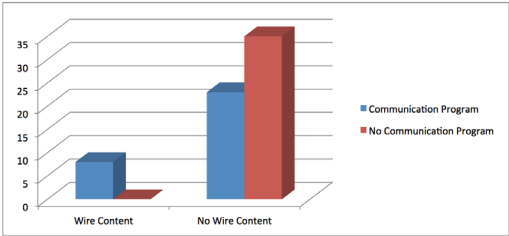
Chi-square tests were conducted to address the three research questions. Two significant differences were found in content depending on the presence or absence of a communication program. First, newspapers with a communication program at the school were significantly more likely to report hard news stories as the lead story on the front page than were newspapers without a communication program at the school, $\chi^2(1, N = 71) = 4.80$, $p = .028$.

Figure 5: Difference in type of news, depending on presence of a communication program



Also, newspapers with a communication program at the school were significantly more likely to include wire content in the publication than were publications with no communication program.

Figure 6: Difference in use of wire content, depending on presence of a communication program



No significant differences were found in content depending on the presence or absence of a journalism program at the school. There were also no significant differences detected in the content based on the size of the school.

Discussion

The descriptive data from this study reveal that advertisements and websites are mainstays of the college newspaper, with a full 92 percent of the publications including ads and 78 percent indicating a newspaper website. However, elements such as social media presence, infographics, original illustrations and use of wire services varied widely. Just as educators and administrators are implementing different curricular strategies such as using social media and new concepts in design and content, so too are their college newspaper counterparts. Weekly publications and tabloid style were most common, and the mode length was 12 pages.

Additionally, 87 percent of the lead stories were directly tied to a campus issue, and campus news was the most common type of primary story, reinforcing the literature that suggests that the presence of localism (campus news) and relevance is part of what makes college readers loyal to their newspapers (Lin 2000). Compared to decades ago, when format and content of a newspaper was more uniform, structured and formulaic, mixed use of tools like QR codes, social media and infographics suggest that college newspapers, much like journalism programs themselves, are searching for the right formula to attract and satisfy readers in a new age of news consumption.

While soft news stories were still more common than hard news stories, results of RQ1 suggest that detecting hard news stories and putting them in appropriate journalistic and stylistic format is a tool that communication students have in their skill set. And students who come from an environment of communication coursework are more likely to employ these skills in the newsroom than those without. Whether these tools are a direct result of communication or journalism courses cannot be determined from this method.

However, if the college newsroom is a microcosm of the greater learning environment, it may be that students with communication coursework are more inclined or better able to identify and craft hard news stories for their college newspaper. Likewise, an awareness of the option to utilize wire services is more likely among students who have learned in a mass communication course, for example, about what they are and how they are used by newspapers. Students who have not been exposed to these concepts may be less likely to

exhibit evidence of hard news stories or wire services in the newspaper, because it's not a "tool" in their "toolbox." Upon initial consideration, it may seem that this premise is self evident, yet this study takes an important first step in providing empirical evidence of the relationship between mass communication curricula in higher education and college newspaper content in an area with an established dearth of scholarly research. These data provide a template from which future research can more closely examine how communication coursework is being reflected in the publications students produce. It is equally noteworthy that no significant differences in content were found based on whether the institution offered a journalism program. Future research should address this paradox, by examining additional variables that might be found in newspapers with a journalism program in order to more clearly identify how the newspapers reflect the greater educational environment.

Student journalists from large ACEJMC programs like the University of Missouri, which bestowed 949 degrees in journalism and mass communication in 2011-2012, undoubtedly reflect their curricular experiences. Additional research might analyze how the students' curricular lenses impact various aspects of newspaper stories by examining use of open records or "sunshine laws," use of primary or secondary data, or types of sources cited in the stories. Among other questions that could be explored are: Do liberal arts students incorporate into the newspaper more diverse disciplinary material like art, international studies and religion? How are student journalists with a communication background incorporating other classroom concepts such as social media to reach and keep readers?

While there were no differences found in content based on the size of the corresponding school, other variables might be examined such as whether the publication is independent or funded by student fees, whether a practicum for course credit is tied to the newspaper, the size of the newspaper staff or the role of the adviser. Using these questions as a springboard, future researchers are urged to explore some of these areas related to the findings.

While these data are only an initial examination of the relationship between college curricula and student newspapers, this study provides an indication that the nexus between the two variables may yield some useful empirical evidence in a relatively understudied area. Although the results of this study cannot be generalized because of the non-probability sample used, these data do offer a glimpse at a unique subset of college media, given the difficulty of obtaining a large number of hard copy college newspapers. The argument can be made that the college newspaper offers the opportunity for its students to use college coursework and emphasis in a journalistic capacity, which is a starting point for a conversation about the state of college newspapers in a rapidly transforming environment.

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Guiding principles in an age of instantaneous publication

College students, media advisers agree with professionals regarding publication of graphic spot news images

Bradley Wilson

Midwestern State University

Introduction

Professional photojournalists have been discussing what types of photos they should take and publish since the dawn of the profession. College media advisers and college photojournalists join that discussion more frequently as technology evolves. When dealing with basic photojournalistic ethics, the research and the abundance of prior literature provide a foundation for a discussion about what types of spot news photographs media outlets should publish in an era when all individuals armed with a digital camera can call themselves photojournalists on the scene of a spot news event.

Background

During the last half of the 19th century, photography was becoming an integral part of society. Photographers carrying bulky cameras documented buildings, still objects and, for those people who could sit still for the long exposures, formal portraits. By the time of the Civil War, photographers such as Matthew Brady carried their cameras to the action to show battlefields, camps, towns and people touched by the war. When a selection of Antietam photos went on exhibit in Brady's gallery in New York in 1862, *The New York Times* wrote: "Mr. Brady has done something to bring home to us the terrible reality and earnestness of war. If he has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards ... he has done something very like it" ("Brady's Photographs" 1862). As historian Naomi Rosenblum (1984) said of photography at the time, "The photograph was regarded as an exemplary record because it was thought to provide an objective — that is, unaltered — view of solid fact and achievement" (155).

In the decades that followed, photojournalism continued to evolve. The portable and easy-to-conceal Leica camera, invented in 1914 and marketed in 1925, changed the approach of visual reporters. No longer official observers beholden to those in power, photo-

journalists could be the eyes of the public — prying, amused or watchdog eyes (Hoy 2005, 167). Despite the lack of obvious symbolism, Nick Ut's image, "Napalm Girl," became an icon of the war while it posed ethical challenges for the publishers of The New York Times, which chose to run the photo, including full frontal nudity of a minor, on the front page. Photojournalists continued to document the realities of spot news in armed conflicts such as the Vietnam War, as Eddie Adams did with his famous image of the execution of a Viet Cong suspect by a Vietnamese general in Saigon, and conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Discussion of the ethical dilemmas photojournalists sometimes find themselves in also goes beyond the battlefield, sometimes hitting too close to home for viewers who do not necessarily want to see such graphic, spot news images at their breakfast table no matter how untarnished and real they may be. In early 1987, an era before cell phones and instantaneous Web access, an era when editors generally operated under a philosophy of "If it bleeds, it leads," the state treasurer of Pennsylvania, R. Budd Dwyer, shot himself to death in front of a dozen reporters and camera crews during a news conference. Researchers studying the situation concluded, "Any ethical dilemmas faced by journalists during decision making were put aside for later consideration. The material was edited quickly and according to similar patterns, or conventions, ..." (Parson 1988). The day after the event, the story became the media coverage after headlines in newspapers nationwide read "Cameras Record Deadly Farewell" ("Cameras Record" 1987), "Pennsylvania Treasurer Horrifies Reporters, Aides" ("Pennsylvania Treasurer" 1987), "Disgraced Pa. Pol Blows Brains Out at News Conference" ("Disgraced" 1987) and "Suicide a Dilemma for Media" ("Suicide" 1987).

In an Associated Press Managing Editors' survey of 85 newspapers, 18 percent of morning papers ran a photo of Dwyer with the gun in his mouth, of the shooting or the aftermath. Others ran a photo of Dwyer holding the gun or no photo. Marty Petty of The Hartford Courant concluded, "Some common considerations many editors had in selecting which photos to include: the impact of the Dwyer photos on readers with suicidal tendencies...; as the distance from the event increased, the significance of the story decreased; and the public nature of the event heightened its newsworthiness" (Petty 1987, 3-4).

In the same report, David Boardman of the Seattle Times concluded, "Every day, every edition, we face challenging judgments. Not all are as tough as a suicide photo, but we know that each is important to some segment of our audience. We know that many of the calls we make in a few minutes on deadline can have a lifelong effect for someone, particularly a subject of a story. We consider it an awesome responsibility" (Boardman 1987, 9).

That responsibility continued for editors in the days following the Sept. 11 attacks, when they continued to show restraint in displaying graphic images. In those attacks, about 3,000 people died in New York City, Washington, D.C. and Shanksville, Penn. Of those 3,000, the first official casualty of the Sept. 11 attacks was Mychal Judge, chaplain of the Fire Department of New York. Shannon Stapleton's photo of firefighters carrying his body out of the rubble became one of the symbols of the attacks. However, it is hardly as graphic as other images taken that day. For photographer Richard Drew, an Associated Press photographer in New York City, his images — much more disturbing to viewers worldwide — allowed him to humanize the attacks. As he stood on West Street with EMS crews and police officers, he began noticing people coming out of the building, falling or jumping. One

image in particular, an image that the New York Times published on page 7 in the Sept. 12 edition, of a man falling head first before the buildings fell, caused the biggest stir. “He was trapped in the fire,” Drew said, “and decided to jump and take his own life rather than being burned” (Howe 2001). In response, readers explained this was not the kind of picture they wanted to see over their morning corn flakes, as David House reported in a Sept. 13, 2001, column in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram (House 2001).

A study of the images used after the attacks revealed that the debate regarding publishing the images centered around three fundamental issues: reader response, victims’ privacy and the ability of the photographs to communicate the story of the day. “Although many editors found the images disturbing, the overwhelming reason for publishing them was that they added to the visual storytelling about what happened during and after the terrorist attacks. Many editors believed readers needed to be exposed to the disturbing images in order to fully comprehend the story of the day” (Kratzer 2003).

In the decade since, as technology evolved, photojournalists continued to face similar dilemmas, particularly when it came to publishing first or being certainly accurate (CNN 2008; Osterreicher 2012). Further, they continued to face increasing demands on their time at work with editors demanding smaller staffs that do more (Associated Press 2013).

Research Questions

With these cases, and many more, as a foundation, two research questions evolved from the historical imperatives of what photojournalists should or should not publish in an era when anyone armed with an iPhone can be a photojournalist and produce images that can be published from the field with little or no intervention by editors.

RQ1: GENERAL ETHICS: What are the ethical standards both in terms of what can and should be published and how when covering spot news?

RQ2: ETHICAL CODES: Is there agreement on the wording within a code of ethics? Do the professional photojournalists and college photojournalists have a code of ethics regarding use and manipulation of graphic, spot news images?

Methodology

This research used a 36-question survey partially built upon existing studies of professional photojournalists focusing on their ethical standards in spot news situations and digital manipulation of hard news images. The link to the SurveyMonkey survey was distributed on multiple email distribution lists and on social media outlets such as Twitter and Facebook. Both the Radio Television News Directors Association and the National Press Photographers Association promoted the survey.

Respondents were shown widely published images from the Boston Marathon to determine whether a standard for the publication of graphic, spot news images exists.

In total, 829 people, including 283 professionals, 51 college photojournalists and 57 college media advisers/instructors, responded. Of them, 63 percent were male, and more than 40 percent of all respondents had more than 20 years experience. Nearly 40 percent described themselves as primarily working for newspapers, and more than 25 percent described themselves as primarily working for online media. Magazine photojournalists rep-

resented nearly 20 percent of the sample.

Findings

As do all good, spot news leads, the lead on the Page 1 story by Mark Arsenault of The Boston Globe described the situation on April 15, 2013. “Two bomb blasts, 12 seconds apart, rocked the finish line of the 117th running of the Boston Marathon Monday, killing at least three people, including an 8-year-old Dorchester boy, wounding more than 130, and leaving sidewalks of Boylston Street covered in blood.” The tally of injured would later be upgraded to more than 250, and the coverage by The Boston Globe won that paper a Pulitzer Prize a year later. Discussion of the images published in papers and on websites around the world, similar to those published from previous terrorist attacks, school shootings, war zones or suicides, fostered discussion of whether publications should have published the images from the finish line, how they should have been published and what level of digital manipulation, from cropping to blurring of faces, was acceptable in this spot news situation.

For the image of Jeff Bauman, whose legs were blown off in the blast, the college students/instructors in the survey agreed with the professionals, with 84 percent responding that it was acceptable to run the image unaltered. In comments reminiscent of those by viewers who viewed Brady’s Civil War images, a professional photographer responding said, “It’s as it happened. Reality is always best.” Another said, “Americans need to see everything when it comes to a major news event. Softening the blow only serves to dehumanize them to tragedy and reinforces the shallow news consumption that has been fostered here.”

Still, 16 percent of college students disagreed that publication of the unaltered image was acceptable, further promoting the discussion of ethical standards. One college student who disagreed with publication of the images said, “Although the image depicts the truth, it is too graphic and perhaps unnecessary in telling the story. The same story can be told without emphasizing the gore.” And one professional photographer said, “Viewers should not have to also suffer PTSD because a photographer was in the right place to capture some poor bastard being carted away without his extremities.”

Some media outlets, such as The Philadelphia Inquirer, chose to mitigate the graphic nature of the photo of Jeff Bauman, later the subject of a Pulitzer Prize-winning photo essay in feature photography by Josh Haner, by cropping it. Of the 522 newspapers archived from April 16, 2013, by the Newseum, 29 used this image on the front page, 13 using it as the dominant image. Every one of these papers published the cropped version of the image.

College students/advisers (89 percent) and professionals (86 percent) agreed that cropping was an acceptable treatment of the image. Comments such as “A crop like this is entirely within the bounds of editorial discretion and entirely understandable for a broad-circulation daily newspaper” — from a college media adviser/instructor — prevailed. Most acknowledged that while cropping the graphic portions of the image might shelter viewers from the graphic content, it was within the established norms for any news photo but not without discussion. “Sure it’s acceptable but cowardly,” said one respondent, also a college media adviser/instructor. Another college media adviser/instructor viewed cropping the image as a form of censorship. “Their decision was acceptable, but still a clear case of

censoring the news.” Later in the survey, almost 5 percent of college students and advisers and almost 3 percent of professional photojournalists stated cropping (“removing content by trimming off the edges of the photograph”) was never acceptable to news photographs.

The Huffington Post and other media outlets published the second image, another graphic, spot news image by John Tlumacki of the Boston Globe of a woman lying in a pool of blood with injuries to her legs, a dazed woman sitting nearby. The professionals and college students/instructors responding to the survey agreed that publishing this image with no manipulation was acceptable — largely for the same reasons and in similar percentages, 91 percent of college students/advisers. “The image is a powerful reflection of a major event. No alteration is needed nor acceptable,” said one respondent. Another said, “It is what happened. A NEWS event. Really awful images happen in war/terrorist bombings/natural destructive events like tsunamis and tornados. Showing the truth should always be the guide to be followed.” Versions of the image were published in news media outlets such as Arizona Daily Star, Los Angeles Times, The Miami Herald, The Kansas City Star and Hagerstown (Md.) Herald-Mail.

Regardless of how they stated an image should be published, few cited any links to a specific code of ethics to give them guidance. Only 41 percent of professionals stated they had a company ethics policy and many of those referenced the NPPA Code of Ethics as providing guiding principles. Of the college students and advisers, only 18 percent stated they had any similar policy and many of them also referenced the NPPA Code of Ethics.

Discussion

In general, the results of the survey show that there is merit in continuing the discussion of photojournalistic standards and ethics, particularly in an age of instantaneous publication when street photographers armed with an iPhone may be faced with the same ethical dilemmas about whether to publish an image, dilemmas previously reserved for experienced editors in the security of a newsroom hours after an event. Continuing education, planning and discussion of when it is acceptable to take photos or to publish photos is warranted for anyone armed with a camera — everyone in the newsroom. And a written set of guidelines for photojournalists, possibly with individual case studies from that publication’s history, would also serve the 80 percent of student media operations that do not have such written guidelines.

In terms of general ethical standards regarding the publication of graphic, spot news images, the vast majority of college photojournalists and professionals agreed that it is acceptable to document reality without “softening the blow,” something that can be written into a student media outlet’s own code. And the college students and professionals agreed that the highest standards should be applied to spot news images such as those taken during events such as the shootings at Virginia Tech, Oikos University or Northern Illinois, or fires in residence halls, apartments or Greek houses. Still, everything from how to publish, when to publish and what level of cropping is acceptable for spot news images should be addressed and included in a thorough code of ethics even though professionals and college students/advisers tend to agree in principle.

As to whether any given single image should or should not be published, no single code of ethics or policy can dictate what is right, or wrong. As Brink (1988) noted, “You can’t

set ethical guidelines. Ethics, like morals and standards, are personal. Everybody has his or her own. Fine. Except for one small catch: Journalists serve the public. If we aren't perceived as credible, we can't be of much service. Ethics are more than a personal matter in photojournalism because what we do affects a large number of people."

Just as firefighters spend time pre-planning how they will react to a building fire, photojournalists and their editors should plan how they will react at spot news events so that readers will obtain a complete and accurate portrayal of the event that is, based on their community standards, realistic yet tasteful. As the next generation of cameras and current tools such as Eye-Fi allow for nearly instantaneous publication of photographs from high-end digital cameras, the editor as a gatekeeper may no longer be a part of the process determining what is realistic and tasteful. Photojournalists, who continue to be passionate about their need to document the realities, and sometimes the horrors, of the human condition, need to be made aware of the community standards — standards that differ from publication to publication, city to city, campus to campus — through discussion of specific cases and the expectations placed upon them, and then held accountable to those standards. As Vincent LaForet said, "What really differentiates us from other photographers and media is our credibility. We have a history of getting it right, accurately.... Our credibility is all that we have" (Irby 2003). When split seconds matter, as technology evolves and the decision making moves into the hands of street photographers and not sheltered editors, credibility and conscience have to remain at the fore of the process.

The guidelines may be as simple as reminding staff members of their obligations to report the truth and to maintain the credibility of their news publication. Quoting a 1994 article by David Johns in *News Photographer*, the magazine of the National Press Photographers Association, Brink (1988) said, "'The photojournalist cannot escape responsibility for unethical shots. He is the first gatekeeper. The photographer makes the initial decision.' And since our work is often done in a split second with no time to think, our ethical standards have to be considered before they are tested."

Limitations and Areas for Future Research

One of the limitations of this research began with the survey, a series of questions that focused on one spot news event, the 2013 Boston Marathon. It is always difficult to generalize findings based on discussion of a single event. Questions in the online survey regarding ethical statements of principle attempted to get at larger issues to provide college media advisers with a specific set of questions — tested in the context of a specific event — they could discuss with their staff members, who could compare their ideas with those of a larger pool of college photojournalists and professional photojournalists. Because the survey was online, it required access to the website and the specific URL which was distributed across various social media outlets and via email to people who were active in college media or interest in such projects, potentially introducing a selection bias.

As with any study using correlation, it is difficult to interpret causation. However, considering the differences between college photojournalists and media advisers and between college photojournalists and professional photojournalists, one area for potential future research is longitudinal. Where and how do college photojournalists learn their ethical

principles? Findings may examine the validity of teaching ethics formally in the classroom or the formation of ethical principles before students reach college. Additional research might examine whether those students whose ethical principles do not match the accepted norms of the professional simply enter other careers. Or ethical principles may be evolving along with the technology. What might have been deemed unacceptable 30 years ago may now be acceptable practice under certain circumstances.

When testing those ethical principles, subsequent work might test the guiding principles at the heart of the NPPA Code of Ethics, statements such as, “Be accurate and comprehensive in the representation of subjects.” And “Editing should maintain the integrity of the photographic images’ content and context.” Concepts like fairness and accuracy may prove to be better, more measurable, benchmarks than objectivity and truth when examining any modern code of ethics.

Finally, as mentioned in some of the discussions regarding these images, publication may depend on media type. For example, publication of a graphic spot news image may be appropriate attached to a Tweet and may be appropriate in a large, daily metropolitan news publication but may be entirely inappropriate for a community-based publication that covers the same area.

Table 1: Difference between professionals and college photographers regarding publications of spot news images

Question	t	p
Online, huffingtonpost.com ran the image with no alteration. Was this acceptable?	0.63	0.52
The <i>Philadelphia Inquirer</i> was one of the news publications that chose to crop the image as it was used on page 1 of the April 16 print edition. Was this acceptable?	0.74	0.46
In addition, theatlantic.com later added a disclaimer: “[Warning, very graphic]...(Note: An earlier version of this gallery featured this photo with the graphic warning but without the image blurred. We have since decided to blur the subject’s face out of his respect for privacy).” Should the website have added this disclaimer?	0.76	0.45
Online, huffingtonpost.com ran this image with no alteration. Was this acceptable?	0.45	0.65

Positive effect size values indicate that the professional photojournalists and editors indicated “Yes” more often than the college photographers.

Appendix

The entire survey is still open and accessible at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/photoethics>.



Online, huffingtonpost.com ran the image with no alteration. Was this acceptable? (Photo by Charles Krupa, Associated Press)

College students | 84 percent said yes

College advisers | 84 percent said yes

Professionals | 87 percent said yes



The Philadelphia Inquirer was one of the news publications that chose to crop the image as it was used on page 1 of the April 16 print edition. Was this acceptable?

College students | 86 percent said yes

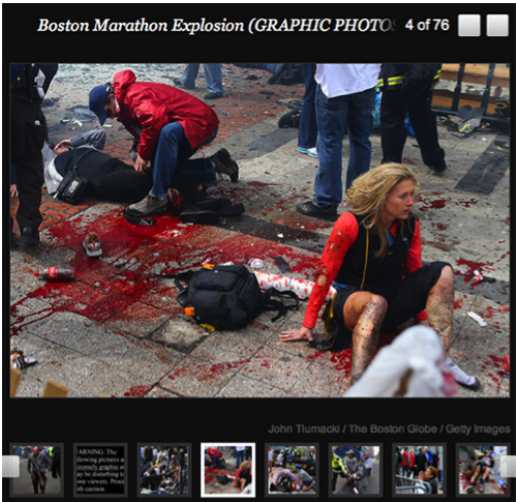
College advisers | 89 percent said yes

Professionals | 86 percent said yes



In addition, theatlantic.com later added a disclaimer: “[Warning, very graphic]...(Note: An earlier version of this gallery featured this photo with the graphic warning but without the image blurred. We have since decided to blur the subject’s face out of his respect for privacy).” Should the website have added this disclaimer?

- College students | 84 percent said yes
- College advisers | 65 percent said yes
- Professionals | 69 percent said yes



Online, huffingtonpost.com ran this image with no alteration. Was this acceptable? (Photo by John Tlumacki, The Boston Globe)

- College students | 88 percent said yes
- College advisers | 93 percent said yes
- Professionals | 92 percent said yes

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A vital educational resource?

A co-orientation analysis of the perceptions of college radio in a Midwestern state

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Abstract

This paper explores student-run college radio stations and the educational value the format upholds at colleges and/or universities in an Upper Midwest state. In addition, the paper also uses the co-orientation theory and model to explore perceptions of college radio by university personnel in a Midwestern state. The method is in-depth interviews with 21 participants who are administrators, faculty advisers of a college radio station, current or past college radio student members and chairs of journalism departments. Several themes emerged throughout the course of this study. There is a range of awareness among university administrators about the campus radio station. Participants also underscored the importance of college radio serving an educational purpose in the academic curriculum of the university. The college radio format itself is also currently going through an evolutionary/transition phase of incorporating the campus and community in media coverage. In conclusion, the future of college radio depends on the format's ability to effectively broadcast campus and community news and events, as well as the integration of college radio into the educational setting and mission of the university.

Introduction

Student training and community service are important roles for a college radio station. Practical experience and education in the radio and mass communication field will give students real-world experience and knowledge in journalism industries, show them how broadcasting organizations operate and demonstrate the rules and theories to study and follow (Starmer 1952). Practical experience and technical training in real-life broadcast media situations are key factors to the success of college radio. This is part of an "educational and cultural mission" (Baker 2010, 109) that serves two purposes. One is to provide experience, freedom and practical knowledge for students to gain expertise in the radio field, and the other purpose is to serve the university and community with an alternative brand of programming. Lack of communication of a college station's educational value can result

in misconceptions about its role among audience members and university administrators. Administration may feel that the college radio station offers no tangible benefits to the university, when in actuality, the station is offering education and journalistic value to its students. Because of this academic integration, college radio can provide a learning basis for students, such as education on rules and regulations exhibited in the professional radio industry (Maskow 2000).

College radio stations need to explore their relationships with the university and community. Not understanding how a station communicates within its university and community can be catastrophic. Colleges and universities are looking for revenue-saving and revenue-building practices. There are instances when college radio stations face conflicts within its own campus because of funding or administrative support. Some college radio stations are fortunate enough to have strong ties with the campus and the community, while others have succumbed to the universities' demands for additional revenue. The promotions and marketing college radio utilizes now could determine its future.

Across the United States, college radio stations are being sold to other off-campus formats; because of this, students are losing practical experience and broadcasting freedom in the college radio field (Troop 2011). The study of the past, present and future of college radio is not a new field of research; scholars have been studying the reach and effects of college radio in the media industry for decades. That said, each study of college radio takes a different approach. One aspect of college radio that needs to be further studied is how useful and effective the college radio station is, in terms of listener/community involvement, station management and university administration perception.

The goal of this project is to understand perceptions of college radio within the university structure. Researching college radio perceptions from this perspective can help gain insight into how college radio stations interact with their university. If the college radio station has positive interaction within this market, such as meeting university administration goals of providing educational and practical experience to its students, it can cement its place as an effective entity in today's media industry.

Literature Review

While previous research has emphasized the overall educational and training mission of college radio stations, the medium is facing a devaluation from university administration. Because of tight economic pressures, some universities are weighing the academic value of the stations against their possible commercial value.

There are several instances of universities selling college radio station licenses to other forms of programming, such as public radio and religious broadcasting. The University of San Francisco transferred its college radio station, KUSF, to the University of Southern California, which changed it to a classical music format. According to the USF president, the station did not provide a strong benefit to the students, in contrast to its award-winning alternative programming in the early 1970s (Cote 2011). KTRU at Rice University in Houston, Texas, was sold for \$9.5 million; the Rice president declared the station and its equipment were a "vastly underutilized resource" (Vorwald 2010) with no benefits to the university. Georgia State University entered an agreement with Georgia Public Broadcast-

ing (GPB) to lease WRAS, the student-run college radio station, to GPB starting in June 2014 (Ho 2014).

Co-orientation Theory

One means of researching and understanding perceptions of college radio from a university level is co-orientation theory. Co-orientation theory “provides a framework for identifying the relationships between groups in a communications process,” (Bronn and Bronn 2000, 4) thus facilitating effective communication. In other words, all groups must be on the same page, regarding their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions toward a particular subject. True co-orientation happens when two parties are in a state of shared meaning and at a consensus on a particular topic or issue (Botan and Penchalapadu 2008).

Co-orientation Model

While co-orientation has been researched and applied for several decades, two sources are pivotal in understanding co-orientation theory: Newcomb (1953) and McLeod and Chaffee (1973). Newcomb devised the “A-B-X” system of co-orientation theory, which describes communication between two parties. “A” refers to a party transmitting information to another party (“B”) about an issue, “X” (Newcomb 1953). In this research, “A” would represent one party transmitting information about college radio (“X”) to another party (“B”).

According to McLeod and Chaffee, three variables in co-orientation indicate understanding between parties: mutuality, congruency and accuracy. Mutuality refers to how similar the parties’ feelings on a subject are. Regarding a journalism department chair and university administration, a high level of mutuality would indicate that the journalism department chair and university administration have the same perceptions and opinions about college radio.

Accuracy is how well each party correctly deduces the perceptions of the other party (McLeod and Chaffee 1973). How accurate was the journalism department chair in gauging the perceptions of university administration about college radio (and vice-versa)? McLeod and Chaffee’s model looks at group communication and perceptions, not just individuals (Steeves 1984, 185). This perspective is crucial to understanding college radio and its relationships within university and administrative personnel. For instance, the journalism department chair is not representing herself; she is representing the journalism department, where the college radio station is based. Conversely, a university administrator is presenting the issue from the university’s standpoint.

Congruency compares one group’s perception of an item and their perception of another group’s cognitions of an item. For example, does the journalism department chair believe university administration has similar perceptions and opinions about college radio as s/he does? Congruency can also be labeled as understanding, as it measures how well a party perceives the opinions and perceptions of another party (Avery et al. 2010).

Co-orientation and College Radio

Co-orientation was used within a college radio study previously to study perceptions among staff and students about KSDB-FM, the college radio station at Kansas State University (Walton 2000). In the study, congruency focused on how KSDB staff perceived KSU students’ perceptions about the purpose of college radio, while accuracy focused on

similarity of college radio perceptions between students and KSDB staff. In particular, the study noted that studying university administration and faculty at a university would provide depth into analyzing college radio and its perceptions at universities (Walton 2000).

Based upon the co-orientation theory and model, the following research questions were posited:

RQ1: How mutual are the perceptions of various stakeholders regarding the college radio station?

RQ2: How accurate are the perceptions of various stakeholders regarding the college radio station?

RQ3: How congruent are the perceptions of various stakeholders regarding the college radio station?

RQ4: Are there any preconceived opinions and/or judgments about the college radio station that influenced the stakeholders' congruency, mutualism, and accuracy with the other parties?

Methods

This co-orientation study of perceptions of college radio was based on in-depth interviews with participants on a one-to-one basis as a means of obtaining information. In this study, the researcher recorded the interviews and transcribed them to gather information for use in this study.

Participants

Participants included people who had connections to the college radio stations at colleges and universities in a Midwestern state. Four distinct groups were interviewed: university administrators, chairs of journalism (or communications-related) departments, college radio faculty advisers and college radio student members (either current or former). Participants were interviewed via phone or in a face-to-face setting.

Institutions Surveyed

Table 1: Colleges and universities included in the study

College/University	Description
U1	Student-run college radio station managed by journalism department.
U2	Student-run college radio station managed through student affairs, even though journalism department present on campus.
U3	Online-only station with student-run and faculty programming. No journalism/communications department on campus. Station lost over-the-air signal and was obtaining a construction permit to build a tower and resume over-the-air broadcasting.
U4	Student-run college radio station managed by journalism department. Station also allowed community members to partake with the college radio station.
U5	Student-run college radio station managed by journalism department.
U6	College radio station used to be student-run. Station was leased to an off-campus public radio network a few years ago.
U7	Student-run online-only college radio station. There is a digital arts program, but no journalism major on campus.

Individuals at colleges/universities which have or previously had a college radio station were approached for interviews. Table 1 shows how the institutions were cataloged in the findings and discussion sections:

Findings

The findings in this research offer some limited answers to the research questions. Thirty-eight people were asked to participate in the study. Of those, 21 persons at seven colleges/universities agreed to participate. Table 2 shows the categories of participants and how many participated and Table 3 indicates the interview structure within each university studied:

Table 2: Participation surveyed in the research

Category	Number of Participants
University Administration	7
College Radio Faculty Advisers	3
Chairs of Journalism Departments	2
College Radio Student Members	9
TOTAL	21

Table 3: Interview structure at universities studied

University	Administration	Faculty Adviser	Journalism Dept. Chair	Student Member(s)
U1	Interviewed	Interviewed	Interviewed	Interviewed (2)
U2	Interviewed	Interviewed	No response	Interviewed (2)
U3	Interviewed	No response	No department	Interviewed
U4	No response	No response	Interviewed	Interviewed
U5	Interviewed	No response	No response	Interviewed
U6	Interviewed (2)	No adviser	No response	Interviewed
U7	Interviewed	Interviewed	No response	Interviewed

Table 4: Summary of Findings at universities studied

University	Mutuality	Accuracy	Congruency
U1	Mixed; level depended on party discussed.	Mostly accurate; some inaccuracies with perceptions of administrative opinions.	Strong congruency with administrative perceptions of other parties.
U2	Fragmented perceptions of the station's current status.	Mixed; level depended on issue discussed.	Mixed among students and journalism department.
U3	High; perceptions of over-the-air importance for station success.	Low; inaccurate perceptions of adviser involvement.	Not referenced.
U4	Mixed; perceptions focused on station promotion, but from different viewpoints.	Not referenced.	Not referenced.
U5	Not referenced.	Accurate perceptions regarding value of station. Inaccurate in station improvement perceptions.	Not referenced.
U6	High; similar opinions of college radio structure and reasoning for leasing station.	Not referenced.	Not referenced.
U7	Low; differences in perception among faculty adviser and administration.	Low; inaccurate responses from faculty adviser and university administration.	Not referenced.

Table 4 describes the overall level of co-orientation achieved, with in-depth analysis regarding the specific research questions in the subsequent subsections:

RQ1: Mutuality of the Perceptions of College Radio From Stakeholders Surveyed

Mutuality refers to the similarity of perceptions about an issue among the stakeholders. One instance occurred at U6, which leased its former college radio station to a public radio network. All participants interviewed at U6 indicated their reasons and/or understanding of the leasing of the college radio station to a third-party. There was also an agreement among administrators that the college radio station was not serving a worthwhile purpose, and that there was no student involvement to warrant keeping the station. U3 also had strong mutuality, in regards to the importance of resuming over-the-air broadcasting; the administrator viewed the station as a club—and not a media outlet—because of its lack of

an over-the-air signal, while the student engineer agreed that without a tower, the station could not adequately progress and thrive to the city.

Other institutions were mixed regarding mutuality. At U1, respondents had similar perceptions about the importance of the college radio station's educational value, and agreed there were areas for station improvement. However, perceptions were different regarding administrative perspectives. In contrast to the adviser's perceptions of administration, the department chair noted administration held the college radio station to a high educational regard and understood it needed to be run by students with limited administrative oversight. Regarding student radio members, one of the members believed the college radio station had a good relationship with members of the administration, noting their willingness to be interviewed for the weekly campus radio news show; another member agreed with this interaction, but added that the university administration had no further role with the station. Mutuality levels were also mixed at U4; while the journalism department chair and student member both agreed the station's promotion to the campus was of vital importance, the methods of doing so were different. The department chair believed that the location of the station in the student union helped build promotion, while the student touted station programming and technology.

Low mutuality was observed at U2 and U7. At U2, there was dissimilarity in perceptions among the administration, the adviser, and students regarding the status of the college radio station. An administrator believed the station in its current state did not fulfill its ideal role of maximizing student involvement and helping students gain proficient skills in the radio industry. This was in contrast to the adviser and student radio member perceptions; while they agreed with administration that the station needed to transition to a campus and community focus, the adviser and students stated that they were in the process of doing so, in addition to furthering education on FCC licensing and procedures, and evolving the station into a close representation of the professional radio industry. In contrast, U7 administrators and the student station leader saw the station in a favorable light, while the faculty adviser was more critical, arguing that the station had a minimal educational value because its online-only status made it exempt from FCC regulations. The adviser also criticized the lack of student involvement and the lack of preparation for careers in journalism because the university offered no journalism/media major.

RQ2: Accuracy of the Perceptions of College Radio

Accuracy was determined based on how correct participants were in identifying the other parties' perceptions of college radio. The perceptions from respondents at U1 demonstrated a fair amount of accuracy. U1 administration correctly deduced that the department chair valued the real-world, hands-on technical experience and strove for an educational learning environment, and that student opinion focused on what can be improved. The U1 journalism department chair's perceptions accurately predicted the administration, station faculty adviser and student member's opinions. The department chair stated that administration knew about the college radio station and did not get involved in its content operations, letting the students take control and learn from their successes and failures, and she also accurately stated that the faculty adviser takes a macro-level approach and only gets involved on a case-by-case basis.

Non-accurate observations were also observed at U1 and U3. At U1, this was observed

between the faculty adviser and university administration. The adviser based her perception of the administration on previous experiences at other colleges and universities; in contrast, the university administrator, while not a frequent listener of the college radio station, was aware of its existence and had a positive perception of the station. At U3, inaccuracies occurred regarding opinions of adviser involvement. An administrator at the university stated the adviser was only involved in board meetings with the station, and did not work on-air, while the student mentioned the adviser had been hosting a show on the station for over two decades.

As with mutuality, the level of accuracy at other universities also fluctuated. In some cases, perceptions were strongly accurate regarding one aspect and inaccurate in the responses of another. This occurred at U2; while a student radio member accurately perceived that administration was aware of the college radio station's need to transition and that the station was embarking on that process, and administration correctly perceived that the students are working diligently to transition the station into a professional, respectable collegiate media outlet, perspectives were inaccurate in the role that the campus journalism department portrayed in the day-to-day operations of the college radio station. According to a student radio member, his perception was that the journalism department is largely uninvolved with the station and that it is a student affairs organization—not one with strong ties to the journalism department. By contrast, an administrator stated that while the college radio station was overseen by student affairs, the journalism department had a strong association with it through class work and real-world media industry training.

At U5, the university administrator correctly perceived that the students believed the college radio station was a worthwhile organization and that the students were involved with the college radio station. However, inaccuracies also existed. The student radio member believed the station was fine the way it was and did not need improvements, whereas the administrator listed several areas—notably, increased station promotion—for improvement.

RQ3: Congruency of the Perceptions of College Radio From Stakeholders Surveyed

Congruency is measured as a comparison between one group's perception of an item and its perception of another group's cognitions of an item. With this study, congruency looked at comparing a group's perceptions of college radio and how that group perceived another group's cognitions of college radio. In other words, did participants believe the other respondents at the university had the same perceptions about college radio as they did? As with mutuality and accuracy, the level of congruency among participants also varied.

An example of varying congruency occurred at U2. The student reporter's views of the station were not similar to how he thought the journalism department perceived it. Despite much education on the radio industry and FCC rules and regulations, the student believed the station was related to student affairs, with minimal input from the journalism department. The adviser's perceptions of the radio station, however, were more consistent with how she believed the station was perceived by the administration—that the station was seen as an important educational resource, albeit one that could be improved in certain key areas.

At U1, the administrator believed the journalism department chair and faculty adviser had similar views to her own perceptions about college radio: the station was an excellent

educational resource, but there was always room for improvement and growth in its promotion to the campus and community. Thus, there was congruency between the administrator's perceptions and what the administrator thought the other groups perceived.

RQ4: Preconceived Notions about the College Radio Station

Answers to all survey questions revealed the respondents' preconceived opinions about college radio. These notions provided substance on whether the participants agreed or conveyed accurate portrayals on the college radio situation at their institutions. One instance occurred with U1's college radio faculty adviser. According to the adviser, university administration had minimal awareness of the objectives of the college radio station, despite a lack of discussion with administration. As stated, this perception was contrasted by an administrator, whose perceptions that the college radio station was a strong educational resource and vital to the journalism program were in close connection to the opinions stated by the other university respondents.

Another preconceived notion about college radio was about its lack of educational value. This was noted by the faculty adviser at U7, who stated that he did not think the college radio station held any academic value because the station was online-only (thereby making it exempt from implication and practical education of FCC rules and regulations) and that there was no journalism department on campus to academically connect to the station. Administration and the student leader of the station disagreed; the U7 administrator stated the college radio station provided supplemental learning and practical education to help gauge students' interest, while according to the student leader, students learned how to program radio shows and gained practical education about the radio industry, in addition to their studies at the university.

In addition to the research questions, several themes emerged, some relating to co-orientation theory and others appearing for the first time during data collection and analysis.

Perceived Lack of Knowledge from University Administration

One theme that emerged across institutions was the perception that administrators were not supportive or aware of their college radio stations' functions. This perception was illustrated by examples from both the present and the past of college radio stations.

Several respondents suggested that university administration viewed the college radio station as a student club more than a student media outlet. According to the student station manager at U2, the college radio station was not seen as a media outlet providing the campus and community with news and information. Rather, it was only seen as an extracurricular club. At U1, the faculty adviser's perspective of university administration perceptions were based upon previous experiences at other universities, and not regarding the station she currently advised.

While it could be warranted to base an assumption about administration on past experiences, this could also lead to incorrect assumptions and an ecological fallacy about administration and, thus, present a form of severe disconnect within the university. An administrator at U1, while not a listener of the college radio station, disagreed with the adviser's claims that the station was unknown. She was aware of the station and had a very positive outlook about it because of a broadcast at the start of the semester:

I have a very positive perception of them because during Move-In Day, I know they came and set up outside the halls and they played updates for stu-

dents of ‘this is going on now, don’t miss this, here’s free food over here’... and they really engaged with the new students and made them feel at home, and I was really impressed with what they did for Move-In Day. I thought that was very cool.

Although expecting university administrators to regularly listen to the station may not be reasonable, the knowledge of the campus radio station’s efforts to cover news and events within the campus and community can build positive station perceptions.

Educational Value

Another theme crucial to the current and future state of college radio stations was educational value. If college radio stations can provide educational content and/or experience to its students, then the format can thrive. If stations do not have a clear connection to the academic vision for the university, then the entity may be seen as expendable.

One example of a college radio station’s educational failure happened at U6, where the station was student-run until it was leased to an off-campus public radio network. A major factor in this transition was the station’s lack of educational value as a student-run outlet. An administrator at U6 stated the college radio station did not tie into the university’s academic mission:

It needs to be integrated into the curriculum of the institution...That never happened. And I think that contributed to its demise eventually...if an academic department took it on, as an important outreach for an internship possibility, then that would support the academic mission. But when there was no connection, no formal connection, other than granting internship credit, I think, then why did we do it?

With no educational value, administration saw the college radio station as an entity that served little purpose, and transformed it into a format that would benefit the campus and community. In contrast, college radio at U1 had an immense educational benefit because of its integration into the university’s academic structure. According to the faculty adviser, the station served to provide basic radio training that prepared students for work in the radio industry, a stance echoed by an U1 administrator:

Where the biggest benefit is to the people that are participating, because they get to...be hands-on and run the board and learn how to do recordings and how to do interviews...as far as learning, there’s nothing like, there’s nothing like facing that microphone and doing it yourself, and I mean...that is huge. If we didn’t have [the campus radio station], we’d have to invent it.

The opinions that college radio stations prepared students for the commercial radio industry were also prevalent at other universities. An administrator at U5 worked with commercial radio stations in a metropolitan area and as a result believed the college radio station provided immense real-world educational experience because of its accurate representation of how commercial radio stations operate. Additionally, the U2 station adviser also described how the campus radio station provided corporate media industry experience:

My perception is that we’re in an evolutionary phase from what was kind of... a hobby and just sort of a fun thing students did on the side, to...creating more of a vibrant, vital student organization that would mirror some of our other student organizations that are...fun and a good experience, but are also

preparing you for a possible career...maybe not specifically radio, but other areas of, say management, public relations, creative avenues.

By heightening the focus of college radio as a multi-faceted media entity geared toward the practical training for students to obtain careers in the corporate media profession, it not only furthers the educational value of the station, it builds strong media skills among its student members.

College Radio's Campus Integration

College stations are also integrating themselves into the heart of student life. Several participants surveyed indicated the stations have moved from obscure locations on campus, such as the basement of an academic building, to high-profile locations in the student union where students can see the college radio station broadcast live on-air and interact with the station's staff members. A journalism department chair at U4 believed her campus radio station's move from isolation to a brand-new studio in the student union helped build the station's visibility and accessibility to the student community. A U5 administrator also pointed to the effects of their station's student union location; as it is in a "student hub," the high-traffic locale helped build the college radio station's on-campus visibility. U3's college station, also online-only, was able to build awareness and student involvement by participating in campus organizational fairs. According to U3's student station engineer:

Of all the student organizations on campus, we actually have more students sign up for participating at [the college radio station] than any other student organization on campus. I think there's definitely interest in us out there... we're really good at getting our students involved.

By immersing itself in university culture, the station made conscious efforts to incorporate itself into campus life and, thus, was able to build station promotion and student involvement. At U7, the airing of the station at the student union center enabled its staff to apply and implement rules on indecency and obscenity—as FCC-licensed radio stations would—thereby furthering the station's educational value and reach.

Connecting With Listeners

One of the primary ways in which college radio stations were trying to evolve as a format was through increasing their connection with listeners on campus and in the community. Some stations had a good connection with listeners; others stated it needed substantial work, as suggested by the student reporter at U2:

We've become better at listening...and not just to the students—'cause we've talked the big thing this year was we don't want to just be a station for the college, but we want to be a station for the community.

Striving toward an increased presence with listeners is not just an on-air practice. Visible presence within the campus and community is another way a college radio station can connect to listeners and build the station's profile. The student reporter at U2 noted that the station is becoming a community-oriented media outlet by obtaining sponsorships from local businesses and discussing the station's mission for the campus and community. Administrators also consider a college radio station building a relationship with the campus and community of vital importance. The administrator at U5—while supportive of the university's college radio station—believed that the station could be greatly improved by more station promotion and a better connection with the university, thus building the sta-

tion's profile.

Discussion

The findings of this study offer insight into how college radio stations can build its campus and community profile in order to survive. Three factors of co-orientation theory—mutuality, accuracy and congruency—were used in this analysis, leading to mixed results. Such results are not uncommon with qualitative responses; each respondent had his or her own perceptions about important issues regarding college radio.

College radio stations can build a good rapport within the campus environment by promoting its educational and journalism value: what it can offer students academically as a campus organization. This belief in educational value was a common theme across all of the universities studied; it was agreed that college radio stations must adhere to the academic environment and integrity of the institution to thrive. Thus, there was great similarity and consistency that college radio can have a role in educational institutions as long as there is learning at stake; letting students run the station amok, which occurred at U6, constrains the educational integrity of the university, and will likely cause the station to become obsolete and/or nonexistent.

In this study, several survey responses pointed to examples of college radio stations strengths and weaknesses in serving as an educational resource. Consistency in responses at U1 indicated that strong educational values are vital to the future of college radio. Knowing administration believed that, without college radio, there would be no educational format for students to learn and gain practical experience within the media industry is a pinnacle reason for the survival of college radio stations, as well as another reason for stations to ensure their operations are serving the educational needs of the university.

Another important finding was the evolutionary and transitory status of college radio stations. While college radio still exhibits freedom in broadcasting and allowing students (within FCC guidelines) to have creative and diverse programs, they are also striving to serve entire communities, not just tailoring broadcasts for specific groups or excluding the community at large.

An evolutionary or transition phase of college radio could be a pinnacle theme in preserving the future of the college radio industry. This transition of a college radio station from niche programming to striving to incorporate the campus and city communities into its broadcasts can provide additional ways station advisers and student personnel can boost the awareness and listenership of the college radio station among its entire market audience. If advisers and their students can accomplish this marketing, in addition to promoting the educational and practical value of the station to faculty and administration, its status as a viable media resource can be established.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the lack of respondents from specific departments at universities. Multiple invitations to participate in this research study were sent to journalism department chairs (or their communications equivalent) at three universities; at two universities, no response was received, and one university chair declined to participate in

the interview. Additionally, correspondence was sent to four administrators who did not participate in the research study; three did not respond to the research request, and one declined to participate while forwarding the request to a departmental figure non-essential to the research.

Another limitation was the lack of specific departments at universities. Some universities did not have a journalism or communications department, and therefore, those perspectives could not be gauged at that particular university.

Directions for Future Research

As co-orientation-based college radio research is minimal, there are directions for future research. While this study was qualitative, a mixed-methods study approach could benefit by additionally integrating quantitative data to further college radio research. Future mixed-methods and/or quantitative research could also focus on analyzing perceptions of the college radio station from the general university student population. In collecting the data, this research could provide additional data into students' opinions and perceptions of the college radio station as both an educational and marketing resource for university programming.

Another direction for future research is the sample. This research studied seven college radio stations at universities across a Midwestern state. Future college radio co-orientation studies could expand the research zone to educational institutions in multiple states, or even a nationwide study on university perceptions and educational standing of college radio stations to gauge if the themes presented in this study are consistent across the entire college radio field.

Conclusion

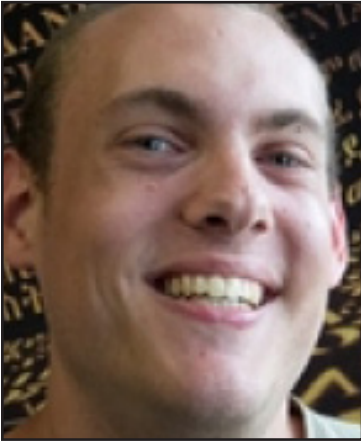
College radio can be a successful format as long as it is integrated into the educational curriculum and is able to serve the best interests of the university. Stations that promote their educational value and strive to teach students how to effectively manage, program, and promote the station to the campus and community have adequate administrative support.

Whether located in a student union, conducting live on-campus broadcasts or assisting other college media, a college radio station that immerses itself in the university academic culture, and heightens its campus and community presence, can build respect within the university as a true campus medium. The foundation and building blocks for college radio stations to re-emerge as a wholesome media format are there. It is up to the stations to use this foundation to transform themselves into a powerful media and educational resource.

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