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# Editor's Note

**LILLIAN LODGE KOPENHAVER**
*Associate Editor*

Perhaps nowhere is change more evident than in journalism. The world of communications is rapidly evolving, and as this evolution takes place, those of us who work with college and university student media sometimes need roller skates to keep up with what is happening with professional media in order to better prepare our students to go to work in that world.

Two of our authors in this volume of *College Media Review* deal with change and look at the issue of convergence, a word we hear all around us. Media organizations across the country are rushing to figure out how to converge their news operations, and readers and viewers are demanding more and faster options to get information. Campus media, however, are struggling with this issue and searching for the best model.

Mark Smith and Don Krause from Truman State University look at the topic in both print and broadcast operations in Missouri colleges and universities. Their article explores the status of convergence as well as its challenges and the reasons for the lack of convergence in numerous institutions.

Another take on the topic is the article by Lindsey Wotanis, Janice Richardson and Bowei Zhong of Marywood University who surveyed a broad range of advisers to ascertain if college media organizations are practicing convergence and, if so, to what extent. What they found out will be helpful to those faced with moving ahead and not knowing how to proceed.

With the credibility of media under such scrutiny and criticism today, admitting mistakes and providing swift and visible corrections are critical to building trust with the public. Kirstie Hettinga, California Lutheran University, Rosemary Clark, University of Pennsylvania, and Alyssa Appelman, Northern Kentucky University, discuss their study of how college and university student media are publicizing corrections and why some are not doing so. Student media can build credibility and respect from their campus audiences by giving strict attention to this issue.

It is frequently said that communicators are the worst communicators. From a practical standpoint, increasing readership or viewers is critical to survival. Carol Terracina-Hartman, Michigan State University, and Robert Nulph, Missouri Western State University, look at the visibility of student media on a selection of top campuses and discuss options for creating greater awareness for these operations and promoting them to on-campus audiences.

All these articles provide practical advice on current operational topics to assist advisers and editors as they strive to better serve their campus communities. The mission of *College Media Review* is to do just that by publishing research that you can use. We always welcome manuscripts which explore areas related to college media advising and student media from our colleagues.

Hettinga, Kirstie, Rosemark Clark and Alyssa Appelman. 2016. "Exploring the Use of Corrections on College Newspapers' Websites." *College Media Review*, 54(1), 4-17.

# Exploring the Use of Corrections on College Newspapers' Websites

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## ABSTRACT

A previous study found that college newspapers have perceived levels of credibility on par with their professional counterparts, but suggested that quality could be assessed in other ways. Previous research has documented the potential for error corrections to increase perceptions of quality. In a content analysis of College Media Association members' websites (N = 419), the researchers found that some college publications are publicizing corrections, but some are not. Additionally, these practices seem to depend on publication and university differences. Similarities between college and professional publications are noted, and recommendations for improvement are discussed.

## INTRODUCTION

> *The Daily Illini* prides itself on the accuracy of its reporting … When *The Daily Illini* makes a mistake in its print publication, a correction will run on page 2A as soon as possible. When *The Daily Illini* makes a mistake in … its online publication, the article will remain posted with a disclaimer listing the mistake and the appropriate changes made to the article.

This policy from University of Illinois' daily student newspaper may be the exception, not the rule. While some newspapers such as *The New York Times* have established policies for errors and corrections, both online and in print, this is not the case for all professional publications (Hettinga, 2011). As such, corrections may be an area of difference for college papers and professional newspapers.

For example, *The Daily Illini*, despite its policy above, has some issues that yield no corrections on its website. By comparison, in one week, *The New York Times* averaged about nine corrections per day, with three corrections being a light day and 16 a heavy day. Certainly, *The New York Times* would be expected to have more content and, therefore, more mistakes than other publications, but are readers to believe that on the days *The Daily Illini* printed no corrections, there were absolutely no mistakes in the issue? Sources are often reluctant to point out errors and, "Newspapers can hardly be expected to correct errors that they do not know were made" (Maier, 2007). However, as a learning environment, it is inevitable that mistakes will be made at college newspapers. So why are there so few corrections?

In online publications, the most likely explanation is that errors were made but their corrections were not publicized. Professional news organizations have been inconsistent in their online corrections policies (Hettinga, 2012). Some are simply correcting the error without acknowledging it was there in the first place (i.e., "scrubbing" (Silverman, 2008)), while others are correcting the mistake as a note on the original page. Is this the case with college publications? Are student editors merely ignoring the mistakes and leaving them online? Are they fixing the mistakes without acknowledging them? Or are they adequately publicizing their errors and corrections? And do these practices depend on publication and university differences? This research explores how college newspapers use corrections on their websites to address such questions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Student newspapers are often considered a proving ground for students who wish to pursue careers in communication and journalism. However, while some student newspapers are independent through advertising, many smaller student papers require supplemental funding to survive, which may be acquired through student fees or funding from their schools. This dependence on their institutions has actually increased in recent years, as college newspapers, like their professional counterparts, struggle with underpaid staffs (Grasgreen, 2013) and lackluster interest in print ads (Fidler, 2012).

With this institutional connection, many campus newspapers tend to be described as experiential learning opportunities. The characteristics of promoting students' initiative, providing students with regular comments and suggestions on assignments and giving them the ability to learn from their mistakes as those most consistent with experiential learning (Brandon, 2002). In a case study of *The Muleskinner*, Central Missouri State University's student newspaper, the publication came under the oversight of the mass communication department (Rampal, 1982). While this setup proved to be effective for Central Missouri (it still runs as a laboratory newspaper today), not all schools have had success with this arrangement. Also, the financial dependence on universities and student fees can lead to fraught relationships and coverage. Indeed, much research regarding student newspapers addresses the relationship between school administration and campus publications, (Merrett, 2007) the potential for censorship (Bickham, et. al., 2010) and issues of control (Silver, 2007).

No matter the funding structure, "student newspapers can … be valuable and semi-realistic environments in which to teach management, advertising, public relations and law, and in which to learn the complexities and peculiarities of readership communities" (Nelson, 1988). And for students who plan to pursue careers in journalism, having hands-on experience in working for a newspaper, either through internships or working for student papers, is seen as a résumé-builder (Neidobf, 2008).

While some may argue that there are significant differences between professional papers and campus papers, previous research found little difference in qualities such as readability, thoroughness and story interest. However, there were other measures of "quality" that he did not assess, such as "story accuracy, the balanced use of sources within a news story, the relative importance and placement of articles, the effect of packaging writing with graphics" (Bodle, 1997).

One possible way to examine story accuracy is through the use of corrections. Corrections and clarifications are one way that journalists are able to demonstrate to readers that they care about being accurate. In fact, *The New York Times*' decision to print more corrections "may have improved that newspaper's reputation for fairness and accountability" (Nemeth, et. al., 2009). This effort is particularly important, as the public's trust in the news media has continued to diminish. In fact, all forms of news media have reported double-digit declines in reported "believability" between 2002 and 2012 ("Further Decline," 2012). Previous research that compared credibility in print and online products also found that "content credibility of both platforms is problematic" (Payne, et. al., 2013).

Theoretically, media and newspapers serve a vital function in the process of democracy. Silverman, of *Regret the Error,* noted, "the press plays an essential role in the flow of critical information that affects every part of our lives" (Silverman, 2007). According to Democratic Theory, "What people know, the accuracy and extent of their understanding, bears directly on their ability to function as citizens" (Scheuer, 2008). This would suggest that when information is faulty, media outlets have an obligation to print corrections providing accurate information. Student newspapers, like their professional counterparts will make mistakes. Arguably, as learning environments, student newspapers have even more potential to contain errors. As a logical extension then, student newspapers should also have more corrections.

Getting things right should be at the forefront of all journalists' minds. Accuracy and credibility are strongly linked. As the presence of corrections has been shown to cultivate a good relationship with readers, (Nemeth, et. al., 2009) it may be beneficial for college newspapers to use corrections to continue to further enhance their reputations.

This research seeks to explore whether campus newspapers are, in fact, using corrections in their publications. Specifically, as it has been documented that not all professional newspapers have transferred their correction practices online, (Hettinga, 2011) this research seeks to examine the presence and use of corrections in the online version of college newspapers. As such, the researchers put forth the following research questions:

RQ1: Do college media websites provide information about: (a) corrected errors, (b) contact information, (c) funding structures, and (d) advertising?

RQ2: How do corrections on college media websites differ in terms of: (a) type, (b) objectivity, and (c) impact?

RQ3: Do characteristics of college media websites affect the likelihood of published corrections?

## METHODS

### Sample and General Procedures

The researchers conducted a content analysis of college newspaper websites. All of the websites belonged to schools or publications that had at least one faculty member or media adviser listed in the College Media Association directory. After removing duplicates, there were more than 500 college newspapers. The authors then removed any newspapers that did not have websites and then any websites that did not have search functions. Ultimately, the researchers coded 419 college newspaper websites. The unit of analysis was the website.

### Coding and Intercoder Reliability

The websites were coded based on a codebook developed by the primary researcher. Aspects of a previous codebook used to assess corrections at *The New York Times* were used to code the corrections on the student newspapers' websites (Hettinga, et. al., 2014). Two authors coded the first 120 websites, or about 29 percent (which falls within the ranges of content units needed for reliability tests (Lacy, 1996)), and the primary researcher coded the remaining sites. All of the websites were coded for 17 factors. Intercoder reliability was calculated using Cohen's Kappa (see Table 1). Of the 17 factors, all but one factor had strong Kappa values of 0.8 or higher. However, there were some factors that were found to be more subjective. The categories with discrepancies are discussed below.

*Contact information*. This measure indicated whether the website had contact information such as email addresses or phone numbers and was coded 1-3 (1 = Yes, 2 = No, 3 = Unknown). The intercoder reliability for this measure was high (K = .812). For this measure, the coders did not specify whether a contact "form" counted as a means of contact. The codebook indicated that the coders were looking for email addresses and phone numbers. One coder also counted contact forms if these were the only means of contact available.

*Accuracy*. This measure documented whether there was a statement regarding accuracy or ethics on the site. It was coded 1-2 (1 = Yes, 2 = No). The intercoder reliability for this measure was high (K = .816). While some publications had language as explicit as the statement from *The Daily Illini* that opens this research, other "language" was as simple as *The Bucknellian*'s policy on free speech, which states, in part, that the school supports free speech and as such, relies "on the good judgment of Bucknell students to follow journalistic ethical guidelines, good taste and compassion."

*Funding*. As much of the existing literature addresses the funding of student newspapers, each website was coded for information regarding how the newspaper is funded. This measure was coded as 1-5 (1 = Independent, supported through advertising, 2 = Supported through student fees, such as a media fee, 3 = Supported by student government funding, 4 = Supported through the institution or produced by a class, a laboratory paper, 5 = No information available on website, unknown). The intercoder reliability for this measure was high (K = .825). However, this proved to be a very difficult measure to code. Few publications disclose this information on their websites. Many institutions use a hybrid model of some institutional support and some advertising revenue, or else label themselves as "independent" without distinguishing if that was editorial or financial independence; therefore, many newspapers had to be coded as unknown.

*Advertising*. As it was so difficult to determine where many college newspapers got their funding, the researchers added a measure for advertising. It was coded 1-2 (1 =

Yes, 2 = No = 2). The intercoder reliability for this measure was fair to high (k = .759). This measure was also difficult to code. Occasionally, the only evidence that a newspaper accepted advertisements was the presence of an "advertising sales representative" on the staff list.

The subjective nature of other measured variables — such as the objectivity or subjectivity of corrections, the type of error, and the impact of error — has already been documented (Hettinga, et. al., 2014). The full list of categories and their options can be seen in Table 2.

## RESULTS

### Sample description

Table 2 shows descriptions of the coded college media websites. Most of the schools were located in the South (n = 147), and the category with the fewest schools was international (n = 3). The West was the least represented U.S. region. Most of the schools were four-year programs (n = 347), and the remainder (n = 70) were two-year programs. The majority of schools (n = 391) had some kind of media studies, communication or journalism program. Most of the newspapers were weekly (n = 183), but a good number of the publications did not clearly indicate their publication frequency and were coded as unknown (n = 61). About 84 percent of the papers (n = 354) were up to date based on their publication frequency.

**RQ1: Information on college media websites**

(a) *Corrected errors*. More than half of the websites coded had at least one correction that could be found using the websites' search functions (n = 237). However, only 6.2 percent (n = 26) of the websites had a correction for their most recent issue. Most corrections (n = 88) were more than one year old.

(b) *Contact information and statements*. Most of the websites (n = 374) did have contact information such as a phone number or email address. However, only 17.6 percent (n = 74) had a statement or language referencing accuracy or ethics on their websites. Only 5.2 percent (n = 22) had a link that directed readers to a page containing information about how to submit a correction, an error archive, or a policy.

(c) *Funding structures*. The overwhelming majority of college newspapers—71.1 percent—did not disclose their funding structure (n = 298). Of those that did report their financial information, just under 10 percent (n = 41) indicated that the publications were financially independent, and 8.3 percent described themselves as laboratory papers (n = 35). A smaller number of student newspapers (n = 10) got support through student fees (2.4 percent), and 1.7 percent (n = 7) reported getting some financial assistance from student government.

(d) *Advertising*. While there was little information about the source of all the publications' funding, the majority of college newspapers, or 71.4 percent (n = 299), did have some information regarding advertising on their websites. This suggests that the majority could have earned income through advertising, but does not make clear to what extent the advertising supports the publications.

**RQ2: Types of corrections on college media websites**

(a) *Type*. Of the errors/corrections that were coded, most did not fall under Tillinghast's original 14 categories and had to be classified as "other" (n = 63) (Tillinghast, 1983). An example of an "other" correction appeared in Ithaca College's student newspaper, *The Ithican*. The correction reads, "The original story said that Toibin came to speak to students in the Ithaca College Honors Program, but he came as a visitor for the Ithaca Seminar Program, including the Honors Program." This correction could be classified as a clarification, which has been suggested as a possible addition to Tillinghast's original categories (Hettinga, 2014).

The most common error after "other" was "names" (n = 38) followed by "other numbers" (n = 30) and "over emphasis" (n = 21).

(b) *Objectivity*. Most of the errors coded were objective errors of fact (n = 211).

(c) *Impact*. The majority of errors were coded as "low-impact" (n = 195). During the coding process, the researchers had to amend the codebook for the categories of objective/subjective, type and impact. Nine publications indicated that an error had occurred but provided no additional information such as what the mistake was, or how it happened. For example, on an article in the *Loyola Phoenix*, the student newspaper of Loyola University Chicago, a correction read, "Editor's note: This version of the article has been updated from the version that appeared in print Wednesday, Feb. 27, in order to reflect corrections to the article. *The Phoenix* regrets these errors."

**RQ3: Presence/Absence of Published Corrections**

Logistic regression was used to analyze the influence of seven publication and university characteristics (frequency, funding, type of school, degree offered, presence of accuracy statement, presence of ads, presence of correction link) on whether the website published corrections (Nagelkerke R2 = .26, omnibus model X2 = 85.62, $p < .001$).

Frequency was positively related to publishing corrections, Wald = 38.27, $p < .001$. Specifically, newspapers that publish daily (b = -2.83, SE = .59, Wald = 23.10, $p < .001$), semi-daily (b = -1.78, SE = .49, Wald = 13.18, $p < .001$), and weekly (b = -.90, SE = .34, Wald = 6.88, p = .009), were significantly more likely to publish corrections. (Note: Publishing corrections was coded as 1 and not publishing was coded as 2; therefore, the negative beta weight indicates a greater likelihood of publishing.)

Funding was also positively related to publishing corrections, Wald = 10.36, p = .035. Specifically, newspapers that are independent (b = -.75, SE = .43, Wald = 3.04, p = .08) and those that are supported with student government fees (b = 2.33, SE = 1.19, Wald = 3.84, p = .05) were significantly more likely to publish corrections.

Type of school was negatively but not significantly related to publishing corrections, b = .10, SE = .35, Wald = .09, p = .77. Degree offered was negatively but not significantly related to publishing corrections, b = .53, SE = .50, Wald = 1.11, p = .29. Presence of an accuracy statement was positively but not significantly related to publishing corrections, b = -.41, SE = .33, Wald = .1.56, p = .21. Presence of ads was positively but not significantly related to publishing corrections, b = -.24, SE = .27, Wald = .79, p = .38. Presence of correction link was not significantly related to publishing corrections, b = .02, SE = .60, Wald = .001, p = .98.

### Summary

In response to RQ1, most college media websites had at least one correction, most provided contact information, and most included advertising information. However, most did not include statements about accuracy or ethics, most did not disclose their funding structure, and only 5 percent linked readers to information about how to submit a correction. Additionally, in response to RQ2, most corrections were objective, low impact, and "other." Finally, in response to RQ3, college newspapers that were most likely to publish corrections were those that published more frequently and those that were independent or funded by student government fees.

## DISCUSSION

### Interpretation

The goal of this study was primarily to document the use of corrections on college newspaper websites. Are college publications adequately publicizing their errors and corrections? And do these practices depend on publication and university differences? Based on this study, yes, some college publications are adequately publicizing corrections, and, yes, these practices seem to depend on publication and university differences.

The first main finding of this study is that researchers could find corrections in just over half of the websites examined. This means that almost half (43 percent) did not have easily identifiable corrections. As it is difficult to believe that these student publications are perfect, this observation yields additional questions. Are college journalists fixing mistakes without acknowledging them i.e., scrubbing? Are these publications publishing corrections in their print editions? Do they have policies regarding how to address error? As discussed earlier, professional news organizations have been inconsistent in their online corrections policies; based on this study, it appears that college publications have been inconsistent, as well.

Another commonality between professional and college newspapers is the similarity in kinds of corrections and their impact. In this study, most corrections were objective, low impact, and "other." Previous research has documented similar patterns for corrections at *The New York Times* (Hettinga, et. al., 2014). This was mirrored in corrections coded on college newspaper sites, suggesting similarities.

Interestingly, the findings seem to suggest that the more professional a student newspaper is, based on its publication schedule its financial independence, the more likely it is to use corrections. It is important to note, however, that these student publications all have faculty members or advisers who are members of the College Media Association; this could mean that the publications in this study are already more professional than other student media outlets.

During the coding process, the researchers also observed that many college newspapers lacked information about themselves, which suggests deeper issues with transparency. Nearly 15 percent (n = 61) of the websites coded provided no way for the researchers to determine the frequency of publication. Among those whose frequencies could be documented, the researchers were often forced to use advertising information to determine print schedules. Additionally, almost 10 percent of the websites (n = 41) failed to provide any means of contact, such as a phone number or email address. This lack of transparency was also noted in the lack of information about publications' funding—nearly three-quarters of the websites coded did not reveal their financial situations. The lack of transparency in errors and corrections, then, could be seen as part of a larger lack of transparency across the publication.

### Practical Implications

This research suggests that college newspapers are similar to professional publications in terms of the types of errors they correct and in terms of their less than vigilant approach to chronicling errors online. As responding to mistakes promotes credibility, (Nemeth, et. al., 2009) it may be in the best interest of campus publications to re-establish their corrections policies, especially online.

To fully serve their democratic function, student newspapers have just as much of an obligation to publish corrections as their professional counterparts do. As many students ultimately prefer their campus publications for community news, (Krueger, 2010) college newspapers must strive to provide accurate information and corrections whenever necessary.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research is limited in that it provides only a snapshot of college newspapers. Not all college newspapers are members of the College Media Association and, as such, did not have the potential to be included in this sample. Additionally, the regions are not equally represented, with more schools in the southern region of the United States being included than schools from other regions. This may reflect a preference for the College Media Association, which was based at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee when the sample was generated. Therefore, this research is not representative of college newspapers in the United States.

The finding that few websites were transparent with information about the publication was interesting in itself; however, the current research is limited by the lack of information about the funding structures. Moreover, upon review it was noted that there was the potential for overlap in the categories of student government funding and student fee funding. Future research should more thoroughly investigate student newspaper funding and the reason for other areas of missing data, such as publication frequency, by obtaining more information through an interview-based study.

Additionally, this data does not suggest that college newspapers are not making or correcting errors; it simply shows that they are not publicizing those errors or corrections on their websites. As discussed earlier, professional online news organizations have been inconsistent in their online corrections policies. Some are simply correcting the error without acknowledging it was there in the first place (i.e., "scrubbing"), while others are correcting the mistake as a note on the original page. It is, therefore, likely that this is happening on college newspaper websites, as well. This study, then, is meant to show the preponderance, or lack thereof, of official, publicized corrections on news websites; because of the inconsistency in online corrections policies, this study cannot make claims about the number of published mistakes, corrected or otherwise. A future study that monitored individual articles for revisions and updates could begin to address this concern, but such studies will still be limited until online publications establish consistent methods for acknowledging and correcting errors.

This research does establish a starting point for research about accuracy and the use of corrections at college newspapers. Future research should compare print and web editions of campus newspapers. It is possible newspapers are using corrections more frequently than this research documented, but that the corrections have not been transferred online. Additionally, other research may wish to examine the prevalence of student newspaper websites in the south. Other studies could also examine handbooks or policy manuals for college newspapers to see if they have policies or procedures in place for handling error.

Despite limitations, what this study does show is that certain publications are more likely to publish corrections than others. Although the presence of corrections may or may not correlate with the presence of errors, it does indicate a focus on quality and transparency. This study's findings indicate that, on the whole, college newspapers' websites still have work to do in increasing quality and transparency through the publication of corrections.

## APPENDIX

TABLE 1 INTERCODER RELIABILITY FOR 17 CODING VARIABLES
Intercoder reliability using Cohen's Kappa was calculated for two coders for about 29 percent of the overall sample (n = 120). Total N = 419 college media websites.

| | K |
|---|---|
| **Region** | .987 |
| **Institution** | .867 |
| **Program** | .884 |
| **Frequency** | .974 |
| **Current** | 1.00 |
| **Corrections** | .942 |
| **Current Correction** | .904 |
| **Age** | .859 |
| **Number** | 1.00 |
| **Link** | 1.00 |
| **Nature** | .878 |
| **Type** | .807 |
| **Impact** | .815 |
| **Accuracy** | .816 |
| **Contact** | .812 |
| **Funding** | .825 |
| **Ads** | .759 |

TABLE 2 FREQUENCY AND VALID PERCENT STATISTICS FOR 17 CODING VARIABLES
(n = 419 college media websites)

| VARIABLE | LEVEL | FREQUENCY | VALID % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Region** | Northeast | 75 | 18.0 |
| | Midwest | 120 | 28.8 |
| | South | 147 | 35.3 |
| | West | 72 | 17.3 |
| | International | 3 | 0.7 |
| **Institution** | 2-year program | 70 | 16.8 |
| | 4-year program | 347 | 83.2 |
| **Program** | Yes | 391 | 93.8 |
| | No | 26 | 6.2 |
| **Frequency** | Daily | 50 | 12.0 |
| | Semi-Weekly | 44 | 10.6 |
| | Weekly | 183 | 44.0 |
| | Biweekly | 45 | 10.8 |
| | Monthly | 25 | 6.0 |
| | Less than monthly | 8 | 1.9 |
| | Unknown | 61 | 14.7 |
| **Current** | Yes | 354 | 85.1 |
| | No | 61 | 14.7 |
| **Correction** | Yes | 237 | 57.0 |
| | No | 179 | 43.0 |
| **Current Correction** | Yes | 26 | 6.3 |
| | No | 390 | 93.8 |
| **Age** | No corrections | 178 | 42.9 |
| | Less than 1 month | 62 | 14.9 |
| | 1-3 months | 23 | 5.5 |
| | 4-6 months | 12 | 2.9 |
| | 7-9 months | 21 | 5.0 |
| | 10-12 months | 31 | 7.5 |
| | More than 1 year | 88 | 21.2 |
| **Number in Current Issue** | No corrections | 393 | 94.5 |
| | 1 correction | 18 | 4.3 |
| | 2 corrections | 5 | 1.2 |
| **Link** | Yes | 22 | 5.3 |
| | No | 394 | 94.7 |

| VARIABLE | LEVEL | FREQUENCY | VALID % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Nature** | No corrections | 191 | 45.9 |
| | Objective | 211 | 50.7 |
| | Subjective | 5 | 1.2 |
| | No information | 9 | 2.2 |
| **Type** | No corrections | 180 | 43.3 |
| | Omission | 4 | 1.0 |
| | Under-emphasis | 3 | 0.7 |
| | Over-emphasis | 21 | 5.0 |
| | Misquotes | 12 | 3.1 |
| | Faulty headlines | 4 | 1.0 |
| | Spellings | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Names | 38 | 9.1 |
| | Ages | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Other numbers | 30 | 7.2 |
| | Titles | 18 | 4.3 |
| | Addresses | 3 | 0.7 |
| | Other locations | 5 | 1.2 |
| | Times | 4 | 1.0 |
| | Dates | 19 | 4.6 |
| | Other | 63 | 15.1 |
| | No information | 9 | 2.1 |
| **Impact** | No Corrections | 180 | 43.0 |
| | Low impact | 195 | 46.9 |
| | Some impact | 24 | 5.8 |
| | High impact | 8 | 1.9 |
| | No information | 9 | 2.2 |
| **Accuracy** | Yes | 74 | 17.8 |
| | No | 342 | 81.6 |
| **Contact** | Yes | 374 | 89.9 |
| | No | 41 | 9.8 |
| | Unknown | 1 | 0.2 |
| **Funding** | Independent | 41 | 9.8 |
| | Student fees | 10 | 2.4 |
| | Student government | 7 | 1.7 |
| | Laboratory/School | 35 | 8.4 |
| | Unknown | 298 | 93.3 |
| **Ads** | Yes | 299 | 76.5 |
| | No | 92 | 23.5 |

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# A Survey of Convergence in Missouri Higher Ed Journalism Programs

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## ABSTRACT

With changes in how audiences receive information, much attention has been placed on the implementation of multi-media storytelling tools and convergence of media outlets to enhance the news consumption experience. Through a survey administered to both print and broadcast association members advising student media in Missouri, as well as a focus group comprised of broadcast journalism advisers, this study closely examined the status of convergence at institutions of higher education in Missouri and the challenges of converging. A significant finding reveals that advisers introduce convergent storytelling techniques in coursework and have engaged colleagues in discussions of convergence, yet in practice convergence in student media in Missouri higher education remains a challenge for faculty advisers and students. Some of the reasons for the lack of convergence include the different ownership structures of student media within the same university, lack of time among advisers to oversee implementation of convergence as well as learning software to aid in the effort, and difficulties in working through university IT departments to implement combined websites.

## INTRODUCTION

The rapidly changing nature of access to information continues to shape and reshape journalism departments at colleges and universities nationwide. Much of that change is audience-driven in which the news consumer increasingly demands control of what they want and when they want it. Such control is embedded in the convergence of technological factors such as online (website) access to news and information and "computers in our pocket with smartphones" (Fisher, May 2014, fifth paragraph).

At Truman State University, faculty advisers and students have faced numerous challenges implementing a convergent journalism model that melds traditional media entities into a new structure combined with the intriguing but still time-consuming areas of multi-media storytelling. The purpose of this study is to identify both the status and challenges of journalism convergence in student media at select Missouri colleges and universities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Defining Convergence

The implementation and evolution of "convergence" in higher education journalism programs and student media has been the subject of considerable debate. Its origin traces to the transformation of information distribution and consumption gained through computing and its inherent, flexible digital processes. For example, Huang et al. (2006) conclude that using a variety of platforms is a norm in the commercial news distribution process; therefore, "dealing with media convergence in college journalism education is an urgent necessity" (254). At the same time, student media operations and commercial media settings are confronted not only with devising workable, day-to-day models of convergence but also the challenge of defining convergence, which "remains elusive even as buzz about the term increases among media scholars and industry professionals" (Dailey, 2005, 150).

For college educators, the focus of this research project, morphing traditional media systems into a new configuration has been difficult to grasp, leaving some educators to wonder about their efforts. Many convergence models blend broadcast, print and online journalism, which creates some doubt in the value of traditional curriculum in a converged world (Huang et al., 2006).

With the growth of the Internet and increased competition, commercial media companies have experimented with various facets of journalism convergence for the last 20 years. In the 1990s, for example, the *San Jose Mercury News* was among the first media entities to produce online content through the nascent America Online (AOL) Internet service. Other newspapers formed strategic partnerships with television news operations, which yielded content sharing and convergent cross-promotion opportunities (Gordon, 2003; Kolodzy, 2006).

As professional media began converging, many queried whether colleges were properly preparing younger journalists to meet the challenges created by a converging media landscape. Even at the turn of the new century, the president of the Association for Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication questioned whether college students were being properly prepared for a career in the changing world of journalism (Huang et al., 2006). At that time, one media manager concluded that college students need to be made aware of the new ways news can be disseminated, noting being prepared meant being able to work in a multimedia world (Huang et al., 2006).

J-schools experienced much change in the late 1990s and early 2000s in response to the perceived commercial media landscape. According to Huang et al. (2006), from 1998 to 2002 about 60 percent of the nation's J-schools modified curricula in preparation for convergence.

As colleges wrestled with convergence in its earliest manifestation nearly 20 years ago, there was some concern on how well instructors were prepared or willing to include convergence-related material in coursework. A 2002 study found about eight in 10 professors were theoretically prepared to teach convergence, compared to only 53

percent indicating they were technologically prepared (Huang et al., 2006).

Since the push toward greater convergence began, the results among student media operations appear mixed. Most recently, a national survey of college media advisers revealed three significant findings. First, reporting across media platforms surfaced, among the respondents, as an important model (or definition) of convergence. Next, convergence in the curriculum is closely tied to the level of convergence practices in student media. Finally, regardless of definition, media advisers encounter significant roadblocks to convergent implementation (Wotanis, Richardson and Zhong, 2015).

This study offers a snapshot of convergence within Missouri higher education institutions based upon: 1) the degree to which particular types of convergence are in practice in student media in the Show-Me state; and 2) regardless of the convergence model employed, what are challenges and barriers to convergence practices in student journalism? First, the study defines various models of convergence, followed by examples of convergence in student media.

## Modes of media convergence defined

Broadly stated, Gordon (2003) finds that media convergence may be parceled into five distinct categories: ownership, tactics, structure, information gathering and storytelling. The sections below explicate each category to better understand how the digital world and modern journalism intersect. The model presented here dates to the early 2000s; however, the individual modes continue to challenge newsroom convergence in 2016.

*Ownership*. Media companies, large and small, have engaged in attempts to find operating and editorial efficacies through mergers and acquisitions. Charges of "media monopolies" are of frequent concern, especially in light of Ben Bagdikian's scholarly work beginning in the 1980s that raised alarms of increasing information control in the hands of a few. The Time-Warner/AOL merger in the early 2000s was touted as a model of modern convergence although company executives struggled "mightily to figure out how they could get their different media properties to work together more effectively" (Gordon 2003, 64). That merger foundered, among other reasons, when the dotcom financial bubble burst in 2001. A long-standing cross-ownership model is found in Chicago. The Tribune Company has owned a television station, radio station and newspaper for several decades, but for much of its cross-ownership history rarely shared content or resources. By the early 2000s, however, greater efforts at synergistic operations emerged. According to Jack Fuller, a company executive, cross-ownership not only is a means of lowering costs and increasing efficiencies but also the opportunity to "provide higher quality news in times of economic stress" (Gordon, 2003, 64).

*Tactics*. For companies that operate under separate ownership umbrellas, local newspapers and electronic media have engaged in tactical convergence. The hope is that promoting a news-gathering entity on another media platform will drive readers and viewers back and forth among local news producers. For example, a local TV meteorologist provides weather content for a newspaper that in turn, or so the thinking goes, will drive newspaper readers to TV station news broadcasts. Beyond sharing content, perceived cultural barriers to greater convergence efforts, such as enterprise reporting, hindered tactical partnerships in the early years of industry convergence (Gordon 2003). Tactical relationships, however, continue to thrive. Recently, *The New York Times* and National Public Radio joined forces to share video content, including social media websites and apps (Mullin, 2015).

*Structure*. Traditional newsrooms have long maintained specific job titles that have changed little over many decades. A TV news broadcast typically has its news director and/or producer; a managing editor oversees news and editorial operations at newspapers. Online news production has created new job descriptions, especially in converged operations. The *Orlando Sentinel*, for example, created a cable news channel and with it the new position of multimedia editor. Other media operations have added multi-media reporters tasked with creating online news content (Gordon 2003). Convergence continues to drive newsroom structures. In response to consumer access to video streaming on cell phones and pads, *The New York Times* has revamped its information distribution system. With a greater emphasis on visual storytelling, *The Times* has, for several years, deployed a video department (Somaiya, 2015).

*Information Gathering*. Using multiple tools to tell stories certainly enhances final content but the reality of new storytelling tools has created additional challenges in converged operations. Should reporters gather not only information for textual delivery online but also pictures, video and audio? Fears of reporters morphing into "Inspector Gadget" are not unfounded (Gordon, 2003). The foundation of journalism is built on accuracy, fairness and sourcing, among other news values. As Kolodzy (2006) notes, those principles need not be sacrificed in the online age in which multi-media tools carries with it the promise of enhanced storytelling.

*Storytelling*. Virtually unlimited space online (versus limited column inches in print and restricted timeframes for broadcast) means that reporters have greater freedom to tell meatier stories (Gordon, 2003). And with the availability of smartphones that record audio and video, and shoot pictures, "the computer in the pocket" is a commonplace tool for reporters. The level of storytelling is likely dependent upon the nature of a particular news story. Is it breaking news or a longer feature that explores a subject in greater depth? For example, some aspects of enhanced audio, video, animation and interactive graphics may be more applicable to special news events; whereas, text, pictures and "raw video" may better mesh with breaking news coverage.

Video storytelling online, even among traditional news outlets continues to grow. At *The New York Times*, for example, the newspaper employs 75 persons involved with video collection, editing and online distribution (Somaiya, 2015).

The five categories of Gordon's (2003) convergence model are geared to commercial media operations. At the same time college and university student media outlets seek to mirror industry standards; therefore, Gordon's model is applicable in the shift toward journalism convergence in higher education. The challenges of media ownership and tactical relationships are not unique to the commercial world of news gathering. In higher education, student media "ownership" may lean toward use of university facilities and budgets, which combine to produce journalism products that may or may not function within co-curricular programs. Likewise, "independent" student publications and broadcast facilities on university campuses may receive funding through student fees and/or other sources, and may or may not engage with faculty advisers and curricular programs. Regardless, the challenge of "merging" stand-alone student media systems "owned" by universities or through tactical affiliations is likely as challenging for students and faculty advisers as it is for media producers in commercial settings. The structure of converged student media along with its inherent challenges of deciding what and how to implement news gathering tools and the level of storytelling produce further quandaries for students and faculty advisers in large part because of the vast swaths of uncharted area heretofore rarely or never explored. As Augie Grant

(2014), a long-time proponent of journalism convergence, noted, "the biggest barriers to implementing change in a newsroom are not economic or technological; rather it is resistance from people who need to learn new words and new ways of doing things" (no page number). Finding consensus among the staffs of media systems with differing cultures of news gathering and reporting creates its own challenges, not only in the commercial world, but likely in student media as well. Illustrations of convergence, explicated in the next section, demonstrate that faculty and students are rethinking the long-standing ethos of journalism through various forms of modern convergence.

## Examples of convergence in student media

The mutable news tastes of consumers, driven in the 21st century through such cultural shifts as reliance on portable technology and online social media access, have reconfigured student media at four universities that serve as models of convergence in this study.

*University of North Carolina, Asheville. The Blue Banner* is a weekly student newspaper. A tactical relationship led to a focused delivery of online news content and a structural shift and perception of the weekly, printed product. Funded by a one-time grant, the Banner formed a partnership with the *Asheville Citizens-Times* to deliver web content targeted to readers in western North Carolina. The *Banner* both shared and posted content from other members of the same journalism project (DiPalma and Gouge, 2011-2013).

From a storytelling perspective, the *Banner* streamlined its initial vetting process that very much mirrors a traditional radio station newsroom. Reporters post news, video and pictures online minus the scrutiny of a copy editor. The *Banner* staff actively engages in social media, which has led to higher website traffic. A print edition remains in place, but is produced more so as a "promotional product to drive readers to the website" (DiPalma and Gouge, 2011-2013, 79). Student print newspaper editions normally generate revenue to cover print costs; however, a paradigmatic shift is on the horizon as Banner advertisers have begun to demand that ad messages communicate to audiences online rather than through print. But as DiPalma and Gouge (2011-2013) note, in much the way that television did not replace radio, "the printed college newspaper still has its place" (80).

*University of Florida*. Tactical, structural, news gathering and storytelling convergence has produced the ROPE model at UF: Report Once, Publish Everywhere. Students are trained to deliver content on more than one medium. For example, radio reporters record audio, but also take pictures for online news distribution; meanwhile, print students produce stories supplied to the radio station. (It is unclear if electronic media contributes to print operations at UF.) Traditional electronic news staffs occupy positions in radio and TV, and the Integrated News Facility brings those broadcast media together in a single large space. But having student media physically sharing space did not immediately translate to cooperative storytelling efforts. Lack of communication among Traditional content managers impeded the free-flow of information-sharing (Sheehan 2012). To promote greater content involvement, UF student media began using Google docs and other means to communicate news coverage and story production updates. Sheehan notes that the next step to increase the efficiency of the INF model is "to find—or build—a content management system that works for all platforms" (Sheehan, 2012, no page number).

As of late 2015, the UF student print and electronic news websites maintained dis-

tinct barriers. Although radio and television media share a converged website, the student newspaper maintains a separate website. [The WUFT TV and FM station website can found at wuft.org. *The Independent Florida Alligator* is found at alligator.org.]

*Texas Christian University*. A student media website that approaches coverage through Gordon's (2003) five categories of ownership, tactics, structure, newsgathering and storytelling convergence is found on TCU 360. A combined newsroom brings together print and electronic media with an emphasis on "digital first" (Chimbel, 2013, no page number). Much like the changing news consumption habits at other universities, online reporting and an emphasis on social media emerge at the forefront of this convergence model. Students are experimenting with new web tools to tell stories, but full migration from the traditional mindset of news coverage is ongoing. Managing Editor Jordan Rubio notes:

> When it comes to breaking news stories, we only have text and photos… we need to incorporate some other media such as video and infographics. Nevertheless, 360 has evolved to become more digital first in its approach. (Chimbel, 2013, no page number)

And although TCU student media touts a digital first approach, the director of student media notes that coursework and the traditional nature of student media (a weekly newspaper now focused on in-depth coverage and regularly scheduled TV news shows) means that convergence at TCU has reached it limits (Chimbel, 2013).

Although structural positions, such as student media managers remain in place at TCU 360, those traditional roles have morphed into overseeing content placement already produced; one executive editor determines coverage for all media with faculty advisers for print, broadcast and online (Chimbel, 2013). Other structural changes include the addition of a visual editor and projects editor (TCU 360.com).

Efforts of convergence within student media can take several forms, but aim to bring multiple outlets together to provide a better experience for the end-user and students learning the trade of journalism in 2016. As explicated in the results section, institutions in the state of Missouri have achieved varying levels of convergence.

## METHOD

To gain a better understanding of the levels of convergence in journalism at institutions of higher education in Missouri, a two-prong research method was employed. The researchers, who are affiliated with two higher educational media organizations based in the state of Missouri, prepared and administered a survey that queried members in several areas related to convergence in journalism.

In the spring of 2015, advisers attending the Missouri College Media Association and Missouri Broadcasters Education Association annual meetings completed the survey, which was also administered through email to advisers on record with MCMA for schools that did not complete surveys at the April meeting. Fourteen members of MCMA and six members of MBEA completed the form. There was no duplication of schools between the two groups.

If multiple surveys from a single school were completed at either MCMA or MBEA, only one survey was used for this study to ensure equal representation.

The survey covered a variety of areas including institutional information, composition of student media, funding sources and use of student media websites (See appendix.). In addition to the survey instrument, a focus group was conducted in April 2015 with six MBEA member-schools participating. The institutions were composed of two

public universities and four private colleges. The half-dozen institutions ranged in size from a public university with 11,000 undergraduate students to a private school with an undergraduate enrollment of 1,700. One private school had three participants; the other five institutions were represented by one faculty member each.

Researchers closely examined the surveys and responses from focus group participants to detect themes that provide a snapshot of convergent journalism in Missouri higher education. Based on the literature, the researchers targeted themes related to the convergent categories explicated by Gordon (2003): ownership, tactics, structure, information gathering and storytelling.

## FINDINGS

### Survey Results

Responses were split evenly among public and private schools, 10 of each. The majority of responses, 18 of 20, were obtained from four-year schools. Size of schools ranged from 600 to 16,000. Nearly half of the respondents, nine of 20, reported their school size being 3,000 students or fewer. Three schools reported enrollment at 12,000 or more.

*Co-curricular activity*. Most schools reported that student media is a co-curricular activity. Only three of 16 responses specified no co-curricular affiliation.

*Adviser's role*. Two-thirds of the 20 respondents indicated they "advise student media," with one-third indicating they "directly manage student media outlet." When asked to describe their duties, two advisers responded with "assist with story ideas." The majority of respondents, however, indicated they avoid editorial decisions and focus instead on media system guidance, training staff and assisting with the business aspects of a particular student medium.

*Newspapers dominate campus media*. From the survey, newspapers are still the most common form of student media on campuses across Missouri. The respondents indicated that 15 of 20 schools have newspapers, with weekly papers, (10 responses), being the most common cycle of distribution. Broadcast or cable television was second, with 11 responses, and broadcast radio service received eight responses. In addition to being the most common form of student media, newspapers also have the most stand-alone websites, as all schools with newspapers reported an online presence. Radio is the next most common form of stand-alone website, with four responses, and TV with three. However, in a positive move for convergence, seven respondents reported their schools utilize a shared website for student media. Four schools reported more than one student media stand-alone website, only half of the respondents reported the use of a hyperlink from one site to another.

*Student media working together*. Survey results point to some form of convergence (tactical, structured, etc.) in student media at Missouri colleges and universities, but as noted below and in the focus group findings in the next section, active discussion of convergence has not produced robust convergent practices. Four of 16 respondents agreed to a statement asking if the student media news coverage at their school is "largely a configuration of separate news units that cover the same events/news stories." Six responded to the question with a "no," while another six responded with "occasionally student media come together for coverage." For those schools not actively converged, 12 out of 15 respondents reported there has "been discussion among faculty and students to shift toward some model of converged media."

## Focus Group Themes

Six MBEA members participated in a focus group to better understand the challenges of converging student media. Several themes—grounded in ownership, tactics, structure, information gathering, and storytelling—emerged from the focus group that responded to levels of journalism convergence at their respective institutions. "Ownership" of media on the college/university level varies among institutions, which has affected the tactical ability and willingness of student media systems to "come together." Specifically, differences in funding sources and the level of co-curricular status between traditional news entities and departments strongly shape converging student media operations on a day-to-day basis. The focus group was asked to evaluate the blending of print and electronic student media units into singular "war rooms" in a tactical effort to share story ideas, news coverage possibilities, website collaboration and financial budgets. The six participants reported varying levels of "cooperation" but none had converged student media systems into singular operating units. The road to this definition of convergence (i.e., student media units working together) is marked, in part, by ownership and tactical complexities as one faculty member at a public university explained:

> Some [media]…is club driven, [some] is classroom driven…. And so it's not convergence between media outlets [we encounter], but between the department and student media groups, which is one reason why the newspaper is still kind of standing alone to a certain extent because their funding sources are different and [the] advising structure and freedom of speech is different.

Faculty staffing and time pressures present further roadblocks to merging traditional student media outlets into a singular unit. As one faculty member lamented, "It's one guy doing all the video and one guy doing all the [print] journalism and every once in a while [we] see each other in the hallway and say [to one another] 'are you still breathing?'" And it's not solely faculty that face time burdens. Another instructor noted that widely varying class schedules present yet another obstacle for print and electronic media to find common ground in news coverage: "They [students] go do stories in between classes, so I'm not sure they could ever be coordinated…TV deadlines are different than print deadlines."

The structure of converged operations (print and electronic student media working together) did not materialize as a topic in this focus group as the majority of institutions had not resolved the challenges of ownership and tactics; therefore, discussions had not progressed on how to construct a converged newsroom with updated production titles.

A significant finding of journalism convergence reveals a distinct disconnect between classroom learning and actual practice for audience consumption. Most university programs among focus group respondents have implemented, at some level, information and storytelling convergence in coursework. Broadcast instructors stated that communication and mass communication students are exposed to convergent news reporting techniques. Basic media courses teach multiple writing styles including traditional print/online, broadcast and the new frontier of multimedia presentations. The respondents reported that online information techniques include the incorporation of text and hyperlinks along with picture galleries, video and embedded audio. A typical comment, from a large university, noted that students are exposed to multiple news story techniques through "…courses as part of multi-media journalism but they're also

getting…print, layout and design and management [courses]." Smaller institutions have forged similar classroom experiences. As one faculty member noted, "for sports reporting, that's a true convergent class. They'll write articles for the [news]paper, produce radio pieces, [and] produce television pieces." Further probing reveals; however, disengagement between the classroom experience and what appears online in student media reporting (regardless of the level of ownership and/or tactical convergence). The majority of schools reported that convergent instruction, which promotes a variety of multi-media tools in the classroom, does not regularly translate to what students produce online for public consumption. At most, what is created by students for traditional media platforms is, many times, "shoveled" online with few enhancements. As one faculty adviser remarked, "We don't shovel up individual stories, it's all part of the [TV] newscast that gets shoveled up. There's no other hyperlinks or anything else or an individual story or anything…I guess I could do that." Another broadcast instructor acknowledged the curriculum-daily practice disconnect: "I think we do it in our classes but I think if you want somebody running the newspaper [for example] where stories have video and links to other articles, that takes a serious effort." Another respondent pointed to the time pressures on faculty who advise student media: "There's not enough hours in the day. What you're [the moderator is] saying sounds wonderful and it's like 'wow' [but] the hours aren't available…[there's a lack of] man or woman power right now."

Related to the information and production processes, the focus group was asked to explain how each school implemented website design and information uploading. Only one of the six schools utilizes third-party services for web design and maintenance (including coding issues):

> Currently, the newspaper has a site that sits outside the university, and the other media stuff is happening [loaded] on the university website, which is slow and does not get updated enough, so we have a web designer who is moving us to another site, another server in the fall.

The other five participants stated that news delivery online is facilitated by local Information Technology departments at the respective institutions or by instructors. Website creation and updates to student media news pages emerged as significant challenges. Two schools stated that faculty advisers maintained student news sites (uploading and maintenance); the other schools reported dependence upon sometimes lukewarm relationships with IT departments. As one respondent stated, "…our IT department thinks they own every computer and every monitor on campus. And they're getting better at it [working with us, but] you have to kinda go through them."

Only one school reported utilizing "user-friendly" website software, such as WordPress (another instructor was unaware of WordPress, a common open source content management system). Lack of training in convergent media software (including not only website software but also updated video and other multi-media software) by and for faculty emerged as a significant theme. IT departments at some universities offer website training, for example, but as one instructor implied, the time spent learning and retaining website maintenance is challenging for busy faculty:

> We have a web design team at our university and we send them pictures and stuff and they update it. We recently went to a training session on how to do it ourselves, but I have not had five seconds [to try it] since the training session was 60 days ago and it's [the knowledge] is gone. So I'm going to go back for a [another] training session.

Faculty resistance to incorporating media convergence and learning new technologies surfaced as a factor for at least one respondent:

> Everybody's on board, the newspaper adviser's onboard, other media, except for the one guy [instructor] who says 'no' to everything. He just doesn't want extra work…. Yeah that's the vision I think all of us share, but when I say 'onboard' I mean that when we go out for lunch [we say to one another] 'wouldn't it be great if we could do this?' and then nothing happens.

## CONCLUSIONS

Findings from a questionnaire and focus group reveal that the level of day-to-day convergence in student media is relatively modest among the sample of Missouri colleges and universities in this study. In addition, faculty advisers strongly suggest that significant barriers inhibit further convergence in student media operations.

One challenge for researchers lies in defining "convergence" in journalism programs in college and university programs. For example at Truman State University, the school in which the authors teach, convergence refers to student media maintaining traditional identities but at the same time "coming together" for collaborative reporting and storytelling opportunities and the shift to a singular, branded online news and entertainment presence. Meanwhile, the largest university that took part in the focus group defined convergence as the melding of traditional student media with commercial media in the sense that students prepare not only media products for an online news site (operated by the student newspaper) but also for commercial print and electronic media in the market in which the university resides. With that qualification in mind, several themes were detected that serve as a snapshot of convergent journalism in Missouri higher education. While many advisers report including convergence into coursework, student media in Missouri has experienced limited progress in moving toward true convergence outside the classroom. Through the survey and focus group, we conclude there is no single reason for the lack of convergence. Instead, a combination of influences, ranging from funding sources to time and skills constraints among advisers, prevent true convergence from taking hold within student media.

Most advisers indicated that convergence is part of classroom instruction; however, a converged mindset, for the most part, does not find its way to practice within student media. Of 20 schools responding only seven survey responses (35 percent) indicated "shared" websites between student media at the same school. For those schools without a shared website, only four responses indicated there are links from one media website to a sister site. But most significant, the majority of student media in Missouri, of the schools in this study, still largely operate as separate entities.

Dissimilarities within the "ownership" of student media statewide surfaced as a hindrance to convergence. If a university boasts multiple student media outlets, they may be funded differently, which can create difficulties in bringing traditional media systems together. Despite those disparities, convergence is a topic on the minds of those advising student media, but with reservations. At schools where student media is not converged, 12 of 15 respondents indicated there has been discussion to bring some form of convergence to student media. Yet, from the focus group, concerns of simply not having enough time—hours in the day to implement convergence—was a theme echoed by nearly every school. Another constraint to convergence, interestingly enough, is the very technology that propels the new journalism archetype. Lack of training in the software required for a converged website emerged from the study as

a concern, as did the requirement at many schools to work through IT departments. Lack of technical skills, along with less than amicable relationships with IT departments, creates significant barriers to improving the functionality of student media websites. Finally, the perception among faulty that students endure time restraints (e.g., the challenges of meshing class schedules and differing media deadlines) adds another challenging layer of convergence complications.

The structure of student media raises complex issues for Missouri journalism programs. Focus group participants noted that traditional print and broadcast content is frequently "shoveled" online with few enhancements. With consumer tastes rapidly shifting to digital delivery, the structure of student media outlets likely requires new position titles and staffing, but at the same time schools with thin journalism staffs continue to produce traditional print and broadcast product. These stresses bedevil advisers and students alike who seek to juggle the traditional media world with the new frontier of online content.

The meaning of convergence continues to evolve. Regardless, it is clear in this study that the devil in the details lies in its implementation. The literature, however, points to signs of hope for convergent journalism on the university level. Institutions that have implemented convergence in practice are producing positive results. Texas Christian University has created an enhanced model of student media collaboration that serves audiences gravitating more and more to online news consumption. A converged website (i.e., all student media on one web address) focuses on "digital first" with an emphasis on breaking news (i.e., text with pictures). Traditional printed newspaper delivery at TCU concentrates on depth; however, much like Missouri universities in this study the digital emphasis at TCU has yet to achieve a normative schedule of robust storytelling. A strong template, however, has been forged at TCU for others to closely examine and emulate as needed. Other tools to assist faculty and students in the convergence process include innovative software, such as Camayak, which tracks story proposals and submissions across media platforms.

This study offers a preliminary look at convergence efforts by student media within Missouri higher education. To fully understand how convergence could be implemented at more schools, further study in several areas would be helpful. From the focus group, an interesting discussion relating to the advisers emerged. Further inquiry could address the time constraints and technology concerns facing advisers. Another area of inquiry could evaluate convergence at the high school level and its effects on the college level since many college journalists start with a high school program. Furthermore, future research could examine other schools that have implemented convergence to determine how those programs overcame the challenges of technology and working with IT departments.

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## APPENDIX

### Student Media/Convergence Survey

To obtain the most accurate snapshot of convergence in journalism within Missouri higher education, we request information regarding your university. Although we do ask for the name of your institution, the scholarly paper we are preparing does not reveal individual institutions by name. Do not provide responses in which you feel uncomfortable providing such information.

### PART I: INSTITUTIONAL INFO

Name of Institution

❏ Public ❏ Private

❏ 2 Year ❏ 4 Year

Approximate undergraduate enrollment

### PART II: COMPOSITION OF STUDENT MEDIA AT YOUR SCHOOL. (Not just your advising duties.)

1) Printed newspaper? ❏ yes ❏ no
If yes, ❏ weekly ❏ daily ❏ other

2) Printed magazine ❏ yes ❏ no (If yes, describe printing schedule.)

3) Broadcast radio service? ❏ yes ❏ no

4) Broadcast or cable television services? ❏ yes ❏ no

5) Is student media at your institution a co-curricular activity? ❏ yes ❏ no

If no, is student media a club/organization (without ties to coursework)? ❏ yes ❏ no

6) Do you directly manage a student media outlet or serve merely as an adviser?
❏ directly manage student media outlet ❏ student media outlet

How many student media outlets do you manage or advise?

What student media/medium do you manage/advise?

7) Briefly describe your role as a manager or adviser.

## PART III: FUNDING
## (answer "yes" or "other" to 1-4)

1) Is funding for student media at your institution provided solely through the university? ❑ yes

2) Is funding for student media at your institution provided solely through a dedicated, department or university-wide student fee? ❑ yes

3) Is funding for student media at your institution a combination of a dedicated student fee and funding provided by the university? ❑ yes

4) Other (Describe.)

5) Is advertising/underwriting part of the revenue stream for student media at your institution? ❑ yes ❑ no

6) If student media at your institution receives revenue from multiple streams, indicate a percentage for each (estimates are acceptable).

## PART IV: STUDENT MEDIA WEBSITE(S), NEWS COVERAGE

1) Stand-alone newspaper website ❑ yes ❑ no

2) Stand-alone radio website ❑ yes ❑ no

3) Stand-alone television website ❑ yes ❑ no

4) Combined student media website ❑ yes ❑ no

5) If your school uses more than one stand-alone website for student media (for example, separate websites for the newspaper and TV), is there a hyperlink to the other outlet?

6) Is student media "day-to-day" news coverage at your institution largely a configuration of separate news units that cover the same events/news stories? ❑ yes ❑ no ❑ occasionally student media come together for coverage

7) If student media is not converged, has there been discussion among faculty and students to shift toward some model of converged media (either through news coverage, a combined website, and so on). ❑ yes ❑ no

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# Convergence on campus

## A study of campus media organizations' convergence practices

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## ABSTRACT

Scholars disagree on how to define "media convergence," but in the past 15 years, literature suggests many newsrooms have shifted toward convergence, and they're looking to hire journalists who understand it. Many university journalism programs have updated their curricula to emphasize convergence. However, students often learn journalism best by practicing it at campus newspapers, television and radio stations, or on web platforms. This paper asks: Are college media organizations practicing convergence? Researchers surveyed 142 campus media advisers to learn about convergence practices in campus newsrooms. Findings show that while half of advisers report their campus media organizations are practicing convergence, most are only practicing cross-platform publishing. Findings also suggest a correlation between campuses reporting converged media organizations and those reporting convergence-focused curricula.

## INTRODUCTION

In May 2008, Carl Sessions-Stepp's article, "Maybe it is time to panic," was the cover story of the *American Journalism Review*. Sessions-Stepp wrestled with how journalists could continue doing their jobs well in light of all of the changes to the news industry. "Today journalists stand not at the head of the pipeline but in the middle of a boundless web of interconnected media, messages, senders and receivers. This is the new, right-brain, digital world. The journalist-in-the-middle is a ringmaster, a maker and a consumer, a grand impresario of a two-way information flow that has no beginning, end, or fixed schedule" (Sessions-Stepp 2008, 24).

All of this change, he said, didn't affect the way we define news. But it has had a profound effect on "how news is assembled and shared." The new ways in which news is assembled and shared has often been referred to as convergence. Scholars (Lawson-Borders 2003; Dailey, Demo, and Spillman 2005; Jenkins 2006; Quinn, 2006; Sarachan

2011; Kolodzy, Grant, DeMars, & Wilkinson 2014; Filak 2015) disagree on exactly how to define the term, but studies suggest newsrooms have shifted toward convergence, and they're looking to hire journalists who understand it (Singer 2004; Dupagne and Garrison 2006; Smith, Tanner, and Duhe 2007; Massey 2010; Wenger and Owens 2010).

To keep pace, many college and university journalism programs have worked to update their curricula to ensure that students are getting exposure to the practice in the classroom (Huang, et. al 2006; Bhuiyan 2010; Sarachan 2011; Folkerts 2014; Kolodzy, et al. 2014). But, often where students learn how best to practice journalism is by doing it at college media outlets like campus newspapers, television and radios stations, or on web platforms. This paper examines convergence practices at college media organizations in the United States.

## DEFINITION OF CONVERGENCE

For the past 15 years, scholars have been working to study media convergence. Seminars and workshops were devoted to it at places like the Poynter Institute in the early 2000s (Wendland, 2002). In 2002, Haagerup suggested in a speech on media convergence that no one was quite sure just what convergence was and, more to the point, whether others were actually doing it. He said: "Media convergence is like teenage sex. Everybody thinks everybody else is doing it. The few who are actually doing it aren't very good at it" (Dailey, Demo, and Spillman 2005, 151).

Scholars do seem to agree that convergence is complicated, but a common definition is difficult to find. Dailey, Demo, and Spillman (2005) said that the lack of a common, "behavior-based definition" of convergence has slowed scholars ability to study it. Scholarship in the past 15 years has tried to nail down the meaning of convergence, yet there remains little certainty that all of the work has led to a common definition.

At its most complex level, Jenkins (2006) points to factors that when combined, lead to media convergence. He said convergence "manages to describe technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes" within the media industry (2-3). He argued that convergence applies not only to the work of journalists, but also involves "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences" (2-3).

Huang, Davison, Shrieve, Davis, Bettendorf and Nari (2006) examined literature on media convergence and identified four categories of convergence. Content, they said, has to do with the ways that news is combined or shared at or among news organizations. Form convergence deals with the technology that allow for the combination of "video, audio, data, text, still photo, and graphic art." Corporate convergence refers to media mergers that have led to consolidated newsrooms. And finally, role convergence relates to journalists' ability to work across platforms (227-228).

Subsequent research seems to fit consistently into Huang et al.'s categories, though scholars and practitioners' understanding of convergence has evolved over time. Fifteen years ago, according to Kolodzy, Grant, DeMars and Wilkinson (2014), convergence was thought of as cooperation and partnerships between two or more media outlets that shared resources and content (p. 198). As time went on, however, ideas shifted. "By 2005, educators and critics had started to move on from the partnerships kind of thinking about media convergence and started recognizing technology influences on journalism" (199).

Stephen Quinn (2006) said that "if pressed for a simple definition," of media convergence, he would argue "it is about doing journalism and telling stories in the most

appropriate medium" (xiiii-xiv). Sarachan (2011) said that convergent journalism "consists of using video, audio, text, and other emerging platforms, and may also contain elements of interactivity, especially through the use of Web 2.0 tools" (165).

Still, while some scholars have simplified the definition, others argue there is nothing simple about it. Lawson-Borders (2003) said that convergence involves seven elements--what she called the 7Cs: "1) communication, 2) commitment, 3) cooperation, 4) compensation, 5) culture, 6) competition, and 7) customer" (94).

In the past five years, ideas about convergence shifted again, recognizing and in many ways focusing on the role that consumers, the seventh "C" in Lawson-Border's elements of convergence, play in partnerships with media organizations (199). Filak (2015) said that the goal of convergence is "to provide audience members with content they need, in formats they like, in a way they will accept" (2). To produce such work, journalists must have cross-platform skills, or as Huang, et al, found, they need to understand the new role of the journalist in a converged media environment.

But, being able to produce across multiple platforms isn't necessarily enough. They need to understand their roles and the roles of others in the newsroom and to be able to collaborate with them easily. In addition, in a study of convergence at the Tampa News Center (Dupagne & Garrison 2006), a journalist said that sharing the physical workspace is key to convergence (246).

When taken together, the various definitions suggest that media convergence is a complex practice of news work that, at its most utopian realm, involves journalists collaborating to produce and share content across multimedia platforms, and doing so in a shared workspace under systems of cooperative management, communication, and newsroom culture.

## CONVERGENCE IN THE INDUSTRY

Despite the variety of ways convergence has been defined, evidence suggests that convergence has made its way into the journalism industry. Wenger and Owens (2010) analyzed more than 1,400 journalism job postings and found that while traditional journalism skills remain in demand, web and multimedia skills--often identified as skills critical to media convergence--are growing in demand for broadcast journalists and remaining steady for print journalists (22). Massey (2010) analyzed more than 200 journalism job postings and found "a modest labor market demand for multi platform skills by legacy news organizations" (150). However, Massey also discovered that "contemporary definitions of multiplatform newswork … tend to be overly broad and, thus, ambiguous" suggesting that it may be difficult for educators to know best how to alter curricula to meet the needs of the news industry (151). It may also suggest that news organizations also are unsure of their own needs in a disrupted media environment.

Still, the job ads suggest a need for cross-platform skills in newsrooms. However, as the literature on convergence shows, cross-platform skills do not alone prepare journalists to enter converged newsrooms. Dupagne and Garrison's (2006) study of the Tampa News Center, which combined *The Tampa Tribune*, WFLA-TV, and the Tampa Bay Online service all under one roof in 2000, suggested other factors are equally important to success in a converged operation. While technical convergence was something that most of the journalists talked about, they pointed to other critical factors, including the ability to share resources, cooperate and communicate among different units, and be versatile.

Killibrew (2002) found that media managers who want to implement convergence

need to "create an organizational value shift" among employees (45). This process, he added, takes time and as other researchers have found, the process could be met with resistance. Singer (2004) found that print journalists had "little or no motivation to participate in convergence" (850). Reasons included a perceived professional superiority to their television and web counterparts, as well as a lack of training in multiplatform storytelling (850).

Attitudes and perceptions may also vary among news managers and news workers. Smith, Tanner, and Duhe's (2007) nationwide study of convergence at small and medium market television stations found that news workers and managers had differing opinions on the impact of convergence practices on their newsrooms. News workers were "significantly more likely" to feel that convergence practices negatively impacted the quality of the news they produced, that technological "hurdles" created challenges for producing shared content, and that their managers shared different values about cross-platform content creation.

These studies show how difficult a transition to convergence can be. The literature thus suggests that convergence involves technological, managerial, and cultural shifts in the newsroom, all which require time and effort, and which may be met with resistance. Still, it is clear from research on journalism job ads that colleges and universities need to be preparing journalism students to work in such environments.

## CONVERGENCE IN THE CURRICULUM

As such, some colleges and universities have been revising their curricula to include more emphasis on convergence. According to Huang et al. (2002), "about 60 percent of the J-schools in the United States redesigned their curricula or developed new courses to prepare students for practicing news in multiple media platforms" between the years 1998-2002. However, only 53 percent of professors said that they felt "technologically prepared" to teach across platforms. Regardless, believing in the trend, 84 percent of professors reported incorporating elements of convergence into their journalism classes (248).

According to Kraeplin and Criado (2005), teaching convergence requires a cultural shift best taken using an interdisciplinary stance, because "a truly converged curriculum requires the blending of two different cultures and approaches--print and broadcast. Add the Internet to the mix and one has a slew of different terms, writing formulas, technologies, visual needs, conceptual approaches, etc." (48).

The challenge, as Auman and Lillie (2008) point out, is that convergence needs in the industry are not one-size fits all, as "smaller news organizations need versatile backpack journalists; larger ones can afford to have specialists in teams" (361). Some scholars and professionals fear that changing curriculum to place more emphasis on convergence skills dilutes the traditional journalism curriculum, which include critical thinking, reporting, and writing (Tanner and Duhe 2005). As such, Bhuiyan (2010) suggests journalism educators have a great opportunity to do a better job for students and the public just by incorporating new media skills into the basic courses" (121).

According to Miller and Lubbers (2014), students with strong portfolios have better chances of getting jobs in the field. One of the best ways to establish such a portfolio is to work for a college media organization. A few studies have examined convergence experiments at campus media outlets. Endres' (2008) longitudinal study at a Midwestern university showed that over the course of a semester, students did not buy "into the more general concepts of collaboration and convergence" at a new converged news

website. Hammond, Peterson, and Thomsen (2000) had similar findings in their study of a converged newsroom at Brigham Young University, where most students resisted a converged newsroom, identifying instead with a particular medium (23-24).

Steven Chappell, director of student publications at Northwest Missouri State University, experienced similar resistance. He created "Student Media Days," which require students from the newspaper, radio and television stations, and yearbook, to put on a media blitz, producing and distributing news every Thursday. Convincing students to work together took three years to accomplish. "It wasn't 'another outlet stealing our work.' It was 'we scratch your back, you scratch ours' instead, which had been hard to convince them of in previous years" (Chappell 2015). Chappell's experience shows the difficulties of converging organizations in order to prepare students for the industry. But more examples are needed. This paper explores if and how college media organizations are practicing media convergence.

## METHODOLOGY

The literature shows that there is a movement toward convergence in the media industry and in academic curricula. But what the literature does not show is how college media organizations are adapting to the shift. The convergence practices of college media organizations are the focus of this study.

The following research questions were developed for this analysis:

Q1: Are campus media organizations practicing media convergence?

To further probe how organizations that say they are practicing convergence are actually doing so, we developed the following additional questions based on findings from the literature:

Q2: Are campus media organizations operating in converged news spaces?

Q3: Are campus media organizations working collaboratively?

Q4: Are campus journalists producing content for multiple platforms?

Q5: Are journalism curriculums influencing campus media convergence?

To answer these questions, we conducted a survey of college media advisers across the United States. To connect with college media advisers, we asked the College Media Association and the Society for Collegiate Journalists, both organizations that serve college media advisers, to send out an email containing a link to an online survey via their list-servs in late January 2015. At that time, the CMA email distribution list has a total of 857 email addresses; the SCJ email distribution list had 32 emails. The sum of recipients totaled 889 college media advisers.

A week after the original emails were sent by CMA and SCJ, the principle investigator of this project sent a follow-up email to each list-serv, thanking those who had already participated and urging those who had not yet done so to complete the survey. A link to the survey was provided in both the original and follow-up emails. One hundred forty-two participants completed the survey—a 16 percent response rate. Of them, 72 identified as male and 68 as female; one participant preferred not to identify.

The cross-sectional survey was designed by the researchers and contained 37 questions. The questions were developed after a review of the literature on convergence; all questions were designed to tie back to the five main research questions on convergence practices related to management, space, technology, and the sharing of content. The survey included 24 closed questions, which asked participants to select from a pre-determined set of responses, and 14 open-ended questions, which asked participants to draft responses that described their experiences. The survey was created using Survey

Monkey, a leading industry provider of web-based survey tools. The project and survey instrument were approved by Marywood University's Institutional Review Board.

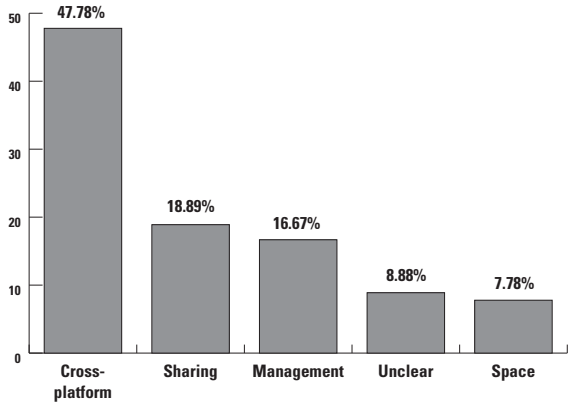
Qualitative data were given several close readings by all three authors in search of emerging themes. As themes were identified, the data were reviewed again and cross-checked by all three authors to ensure similar categorization of material.

## FINDINGS

**Q1: Are campus media organizations practicing media convergence?**

One of the first non-demographic questions on the survey asked: "Are your student media organizations converged?" Just more than half (51 percent) of respondents said that their campus news organizations were converged. Those who answered yes were asked to explain what made their media organizations converged. Responses were coded for multiple themes and often, responses fit into multiple categories.

FIGURE 1. WHAT MAKES YOUR ORGANIZATION CONVERGED?




The majority (48 percent) of respondents (fig. 1) considered cross-platform publishing and reporting to mean convergence in their newsrooms. For example, one respondent said: "We publish in print and on the web site. We also have a weekly video news broadcast, we use online video, and we use blogs" (Respondent 119).

Others described sharing content and reporting resources as convergence. For example, one respondent said: "I encourage all the media organizations to work together. We share photographers and copy editors. My students are encouraged to participate in all groups. Everyone is free to learn editing, writing, photography, and graphic design" (Respondent 56). Another added that sharing happened "to some extent": "The newspaper and TV news staffs do exchange story ideas and sometimes write stories (especially sports) for TV, newspaper, and the website" (Respondent 69).

Some respondents described a collaborative management structure as making their organizations converged. One respondent said that "the newspaper, website, and yearbook all operate under a single staff" and that those students "partner with the broadcast station" (Respondent 106).

Only 8 percent of respondents indicated they share physical space when answering this question, saying things like "we have one integrated newsroom" or "web, TV, and radio students all work out of a common newsroom."

The answers to these two questions were interesting when compared to later, more detailed questions asking about cross platform reporting, collaborative management, and shared space on campus. As respondents answered more specific questions about each of these elements, it became clear that many media advisers did not consider things like collaborative management or shared space as essential to convergence in the newsrooms they advised, as the remaining findings show.

**Q2: Are campus media organizations operating in converged news spaces?**

Forty percent of respondents said their media organizations share the same physical space on campus. The extent to which that is actually promoting converged activity, however, is unclear and in need of further investigation.

> One of the clearest examples of a converged space was this: "[We have a] 5,000 square feet open-concept media center with radio and TV studio space, 18-desk newsroom, 12-desk advertising/design" (Respondent 34).

Yet other advisers said even though their organizations were housed within close proximity, they were not in open-concept floor plans that promoted collaborative work. For example:

> "It's not quite the same physical space, as there are separate, adjacent offices on the same floor" (Respondent 39).
>
> "If by share the same physical space you mean that we're in the same building, on the same floor, then the answer is yes. We lack a converged newsroom, though. We have a J-Lab open to all majors and student media workers. Generally, it is the newsroom. We have separate TV and radio studios just down the hall from the newsroom" (Respondent 25).
>
> "The newspaper, radio station, tv station, and literary magazine are all close—on one level of one building—but are not connected. Our newsroom has one office with two computers, one "meeting room" type space, and two offices that are rarely used" (Respondent 31).

Other respondents echoed this, saying often the workspaces set aside for campus media work were underutilized.

> "We have a converged newsroom however the media outlets rarely use it. We all have other physical spaces" (Respondent 46).

More investigation is needed to understand why existing spaces are underutilized as well as how shared spaces can do more to promote collaborative media work.

**Q3: Are campus media organizations working collaboratively?**

According to the literature, collaboration is an important component of media convergence, yet less than half of campus advisers report that their student media organizations work together. More than half (56 percent) of advisers reported the organizations at their schools operate independently, suggesting that most schools still operate under traditional silos. Only a third of organizations have joint editorial meetings to discuss and plan content; likewise, nearly the same amount employ students who serve as managers overseeing multiple platforms.

Just more than half of advisers (52 percent) reported their organizations share reporters and editors, suggesting that students at schools with multiple media organizations tend to work across organizations.

Organizations that have moved toward more collaboration seemed to do so at the advisers' encouragement. Sixty-four percent of advisers said they initiated a shift toward

more collaboration at their schools.

"I stopped hiring staffs for both and rewrote job descriptions" (Respondent 115).

"We had three staffs. I joined them to one" (Respondent 106).

However, several advisers wrote that they've tried to encourage collaboration to no avail, citing several barriers.

"We're trying to get the newspaper to collaborate with TV and radio for news and sports coverage; it's very hard because of cultures of competition and independence" (Respondent 105).

"I've tried repeatedly to encourage collaboration, but have had limited success" (Respondent 97).

"At times, our media work collaboratively. However, it is too infrequent IMHO (in my honest opinion). As for initiating the shift, yes, I've pushed it. Students, though, have been less than enthusiastic about embracing it" (Respondent 25).

"No encouragement from administration on convergence. Student media is an afterthought. Instructors have tried to get the students to work together, but they don't want to. My university gives the big money and encouragement to other academic areas" (Respondent 138).

"Would like them to work together but they are run by different groups of students and want autonomy because there are more management positions for resume building" (Respondent 71).

"We are starting to collaborate more, but it is slow moving" (Respondent 7).

TABLE 1: COLLABORATION DATA

| | |
|---|---|
| **Do your media organizations have joint editorial meetings?** | |
| Yes | 34% |
| No | 66% |
| **Does each platform have its own student manager?** | |
| Yes | 85% |
| No | 15% |
| **Do you have one or more students serving as managers who oversee the workflow across organizations?** | |
| Yes | 38% |
| No | 62% |
| **Do your media organizations share reporters/editors?** | |
| Yes | 52% |
| No | 48% |

Advisers suggested that changes to culture, modes of operation, and workspace helped in making the organizations converged. Culture and collaboration were frequent themes.

> "Our organizations historically were remote from one another until I began pressing, years ago, for greater collaboration and convergence. When our building was renovated, creating a single media center, the groups were forced to interact physically which led to better collaboration. Each of them previously had separate offices. Travel funds were pooled a couple of years ago to encourage greater collaboration on conferences, workshops, seminars, etc. Periodic meetings of chief student officers from each group were implemented a few years ago to encourage dialogue. At the start of the year we host an open house for all media orgs together" (Respondent 61).
>
> "[Our shift was a] product of a multi-year strategic plan that included structural and cultural changes in operational reporting models" (Respondent 51).
>
> "By moving all the media organizations to the same work area the students got to know each other more and began working together particularly with editing and design training" (Respondent 56).
>
> "It took about two years in the same workspace before students began to work together on projects after they became friends and developed a level of trust …" (Respondent 32).
>
> "There is a smattering of interest in convergence but when it comes to operationalizing it, the students stay in their silos" (Respondent 24).
>
> "We're a small operation at a mid-sized university without a journalism school or major. The media organizations are fully autonomous, which makes deep, substantive change and convergence a real challenge" (Respondent 61).

Barriers including a culture of independence and competition among organizations and students, resistance or lack of support from other advisers or administrators on making changes, and lacking shared space on campus seem to be the most significant in the transition toward convergence. Likewise, those who are trying to converge say the process is a slow one.

**Q4: Are campus journalists producing content for multiple platforms?**

Eighty-two percent of advisers said their student reporters were producing content for multiple platforms. As noted earlier, many advisers (48 percent) take cross-platform reporting to mean that their organizations are practicing convergence.

> "We think of convergence simply as working in multiple platforms. So, for us, convergence for print also includes online (which includes video and audio editing). I do not know how the television/radio station thinks of convergence, but they also have a website" (Respondent 89).

The spirit of responses indicated that most advisers are working with students to produce content across multiple platforms using various technologies. However, as Respondent 46 pointed out, converging technology is the easy part; inspiring collaborative production of content is far more difficult.

"Converging technology and equipment is EASY … Getting people to be excited and want to work together to create converged content is very very difficult because everyone's agenda has different goals" (Respondent 46).

**Q5: Are journalism curriculums influencing campus media convergence?**

Curriculum seemed to be a key factor in whether campus media organizations were practicing convergence. While only 35 percent of advisers said their student media organizations are tied directly to the journalism curriculum, a cross tabulation showed a correlation between convergence curricula and converged media organizations. Twenty-three percent of advisers who reported converged organizations also reported that their journalism curricula emphasized convergence. Twenty-one percent of advisers who reported that their organizations were not converged also reported that their curricula did not emphasize convergence.

TABLE 2: CROSS-TABULATION OF CONVERGED CURRICULA AND ORGANIZATION

| | **Are your media organizations converged?** | **Is the communication or journalism curriculum at your school centered on convergence?** |
|---|---|---|
| 23 percent of advisers said | Yes | Yes |
| 21 percent of advisers said | No | No |

In the comments, several respondents elaborated on their connection.

"Every class and organization is focused on convergence. Our students graduate from the program knowing how and having the experience in producing content for multiple platforms" (Respondent 45).

"Because of the curriculum, the media organizations have improved" (Respondent 16).

"The curriculum is focused on multimedia and drives changes in student media" (Respondent 80).

The cross-tabulation also showed that those without convergence curricula were less likely to have converged media organizations. Likewise, respondents commented on this negative correlation.

"When the curriculum 'was' connected to publications, student involvement was high, student satisfaction was high, and readiness for the professional world was fairly uniform. About 10 years ago the faculty disconnected the curriculum from publication. All outcomes are now lower (in my opinion). I am working to encourage the faculty to require publication in reporting classes again" (Respondent 111).

"Sadly, the curriculum has limited impact on student media operations. Few of the courses have actual practical application for student media operations, even the journalism courses. Only the broadcasting courses developed by the radio station adviser and adopted by the communication department have curriculum impact on our operations" (Respondent 102).

"The curriculum is a decade or so behind the times, leaving me to fill in the holes for all who work here" (Respondent 49).

Some respondents expressed frustration at the difficulties of making the transition toward converged curricula and organizations because of limited resources.

> "We're at a small school with basically no budget and only two full-time journalism instructors. It is a strain on us to try to give hands-on experience to students. We both have to teach different courses--not three or four sections of the same course. Not to complain because I enjoy what I do, but this makes our jobs extremely tough" (Respondent 40).

## DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

Studying college media organizations is complicated. No two campuses, curriculums, or campus media organizations are alike. For instance, some advisers advise only one campus media organization, while others advise multiple organizations and/or platforms. This makes wording survey questions to gauge their experiences difficult. Furthermore, there are significant differences among organizations based on school size, categorization as public or private, and operating budgets. In the concluding comments, some advisers alluded to the complicated nature of this topic. Respondent 25 said that some "survey questions are difficult to answer with yes-no responses." Respondent 108 echoed the sentiment:

> "Some things are true for my dept—convergence, collaboration—which are not true of all student news/media operations on this campus (because they are currently part of four different campus departments, two academic and two under student affairs). So yes, I'm pursuing collaboration, but it has not happened yet outside this department (though inside, with the various publications/outlets here—it has)" (Respondent 108).

Respondent 72 said one of the major challenges to convergence is the fact that the media organizations span multiple campuses that are separated by significant physical distance. "I know this isn't what you're looking for, but it is a convergence issue," added Respondent 72.

Despite the challenges, research on the state of campus media and the ways campus media organizations operate is important and more is needed. Special attention should be paid to the culture of student media organizations and their processes for adopting convergent or digital-first workflows, as such knowledge could help student media advisers as they work to make such transitions on their campuses. Likewise, more research is needed to understand if convergence is still an industry practice and by extension, a practice worth implementing at college media organizations. Is convergence as its early scholars knew it a fad or is the practice transforming as new media technologies continue to develop and change the ways we gather and share news? The findings of this study--one of the first to look at the convergence practices of a large swath of campus media organizations across the country--are significant for a number of reasons.

First, they suggest that many campus media advisers don't define convergence as scholars and practitioners do. That 48 percent of advisers believe cross-platform reporting is the primary criteria for convergence is interesting and worthy of further investigation. Campus media organizations serve as important training grounds for future professionals; it's important that the people advising those organizations are up to speed on the expectations in the industry so they can fully prepare students to enter a collaborative work environment. As Respondent 24 said, his/her school is "stuck in the past." While core journalism skills may remain consistent, journalism programs need

to adapt to prepare students for work in an increasingly collaborative environment.

Second, the fact that schools with convergence curricula were more likely to have converged media organizations is significant. It suggests that updating curricula to reflect convergence practices, which include cross-platform reporting, collaborative management, and shared space and resources, is a key for success with convergence at campus media organizations.

And finally, the survey revealed that advisers face several barriers when trying to converge campus media organizations. Cultures of independence and competition, lack of support from fellow advisers and administrators, limited resources, and disinterest in collaboration among students mean that many media organizations remain in their siloes, making a shift toward convergence difficult to achieve.

However, knowing these challenges and barriers can allow more campus media organizations to create tools to support advisers as they move toward more collaborative organizational structures at their schools. More research is needed to better understand the cultures and practices of campus media organizations as well as the experiences of campus media advisers. Advisers are often isolated on their own campuses without colleagues who share their experiences. Offering more support for and awareness of campus media advisers' experiences is important for the continued health of campus media organizations, which serve as training grounds for future journalists across the country.

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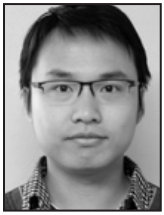

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# Can You See Me Now?: Measuring the Visibility of College Media at 'Home'

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## ABSTRACT

With prior research indicating successful college media programs, as judged against their peers, tend to be housed in academic departments with faculty-level advisers, this study examines how college media outlets are presented, promoted, and used for recruiting within departments and home institutions. How visible are they? Primarily housed in political science, visibility has expanded as a research interest with the advent of social media. For this study, visibility is "organizational behavior to present content communally" (Brunner and Boyer, 2008). After examining the top 35 award-winning programs, results indicate low levels not only of presence and visibility, but also self-promotion: college media references are two clicks from department home page (46 percent) and 3-4 clicks from university home page (57 percent). Media outlets most often post recruitment information (33 percent). These results suggest a need for growth in promotion, public relations, and associations.

## INTRODUCTION

College media is an area of active interest for communication scholars as college campuses are viewed as testing grounds for methods of content production and audience integration. Recent research into college media has examined practices related to content management systems (Brockman, Bergland, and Hon, 2011), social media usage and policies (Filak, 2014), crisis coverage (Heath and Blanton, 2015), comparison of online vs. print editions (Bergland and Hon, 2009), and overall newsroom operations (Kopenhaver, 2015). Other scholars address regional technology adoption (Payne, 2013), digital approaches to interviewing, newsroom sociology, content and legal issues.

While practices or policies relating to print and digital production or presence are very important, the visibility of student media is seldom studied. How do the university and department present or even acknowledge student media? How visible is student media? Much of college media visibility can be tied to its home institution. While editorial independence dictates college media are not a public relations tool for academic institutions, the media groups would be wise to take advantage of their home institution's public relations tools to garner visibility on their campus. While building promotion and digital visibility into staff responsibilities, the rotating nature of a student staff suggests when college media groups maintain academic or curriculum relationships, much of the visibility should take place at the department level. This relationship would allow for recruitment support and recognition through the department's public relations efforts, e.g., web sites, social media, and departmental press releases to the university and community media sources, creating a mutually beneficial digital visibility of college media.

For some media groups, it is a struggle to obtain links on a home page or as part of a department or curriculum-based program. Others are listed in less-than-prominent spots in a drop-down menu or gallery of buttons along the side of a department page, along with all "opportunities" or "options" for student experience or engagement.

With prior research indicating the most successful campus media programs, as judged against their peers, are housed in academic departments with advisers who have faculty status (Terracina-Hartman and Nulph, 2013; Kopenhaver, 2015) this study examines these top institutions and academic departments for the level of visibility of their college media groups. With today's college students labeled a "dreamer generation" (Diddi and LaRose, 2006) and highly likely to seek information online rather than in promotional brochures or catalogs for their academic research, a virtual presence "at home" becomes critical to visibility.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Various opportunities exist throughout the academic year for institutions to highlight college media as options for student journalists to practice their craft in a learning lab-type setting. Other opportunities exist to hold up these media organizations as recruiting tools for potential students considering Mass Communication and Journalism as a major as well as applicants, visitors, and recruits to campus who might be drawn to an institution that offers such hands-on opportunities no matter the intended major. After conference and awards season each spring semester, another opportunity exists for an institution and department to publicly acknowledge college media groups and promote them as worthy organizations to join as well as acknowledging the student members for being department leaders for these journalistic accomplishments. Awards from national conferences also give the institution and department the opportunity to highlight the relevance and stature of their program and the level of student work on the national stage. Yet are they doing so? When a physics team wins a science tournament or a robotics team wins awards at a state fair, it appears a common practice for academic institutions to celebrate this accomplishment with a feature article on a university home page, the department page, and in press releases sent to area media as well as relevant hometown papers. Is the same being done for college media?

As many college media groups tend to be curriculum-affiliated (Terracina-Hartman and Nulph, 2013; Kopenhaver, 2015), it is logical to expect such success would be similarly promoted. In short, with academic departments housing programs that build

upon curriculum with real-world opportunities, it would be expected that such options would be valued and highly visible among the department literature, home pages, and perhaps the university home pages. Links to student radio, newspaper, magazine, and television stations would be front and center on the home pages of the department and the division, and the university itself. Media build communities and anyone considering attending a university could find out most information about the campus, its citizens, and its activities from college media. Additionally, college media programs often are magnets for touring speakers, accomplished alumni (especially journalists) and professionals-in-residence for short courses. Such events also would give a host institution added impetus to promote and highlight college media. Departments that host speakers and guest professionals-in-residence routinely are in the spotlight for such special events. Is the same being done for college media?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of current literature reveals a shortage of research on college media and relationships to home institutions aside from funding agreements. Nonetheless, some studies have been selected that bring to light several variables.

An online presence, or visibility, is essential for any academic or curriculum-based student organization (see e.g., Park and Reber 2008; Poock and Lefond, 2001). Portability has leaped to new levels, which according to Diddi and LaRose (2006) makes today's college students a true "Internet generation" (p. 197). The students entering university or studying during this age of development in digital communication tools and technology are more likely to research information about their education, whether it is an academic program or a class schedule, on the Internet (Pew Research Center, 2011). Althaus and Tewksbury (2000) report that the Internet is woven into the fabric of the college experience when it comes to seeking and finding information (but not necessarily related to homework assignments).

Historically housed in the political science arena in which scholars linked visibility to presence and measured physical appearances to citizen response, visibility is considered both as a characteristic of an organization and as characteristic of an issue. How and whether a person appeared at an event, whether it was a scheduled news or social event, or post-crisis, such as weather or terrorism, for example offers one option to measure visibility based upon presence and the citizen responses to these appearances. With the advent and growth of communications media tools, visibility has expanded as a research interest. While visibility once had the primary goal of positioning and power-seeking through presence, recent research has linked this concept with public relations, branding, and relationship-building – essentially organizational dynamics. With new technology, communication has more options for two-way discourse, thus visibility becomes as much about association as it does about presence (Yang and Kent 2014). For the purposes of this study, visibility is defined with respect to use of digital technology: "[visibility] uses organizational behavior to present content communally" (Brunner and Boyer, 2008, 152). A definition of presence is "parties are communicating in a shared space (or place)" (Anderson, 1994).

With advances in Internet and social media communication tools, relations between university and students have altered. These tools offer new options to spread information and a new way to engage students – from visitors and potential recruits, to new enrollees, to enrolled students, to graduates and alumni (Lovari and Giglietto, 2012). University web sites become strategic communication tools in the higher education

arena. For example, Abrahamson (2000) reported that prospective students who view a university's web site as inadequate will regard this electronic experience as reflective of the university's overall functioning.

When it comes to future students and computers, the 2010 Social Media and College Admissions Study by Cappex found that college search sites, Twitter, and Facebook are among the most common digital approaches for recruiting and impressing students (*Education Insider*, 2010). A Pew Research Study found that 92 percent of young adults aged 18-24 are Internet users, while nearly 100 percent undergraduate and graduate students report Internet use (Smith, Rainie and Zickuhr, 2011). Hussar and Bailey reported National Council on Education Statistics showing the number of high school graduates nationally is predicted to rise 15 percent from 2006–2017 while the total enrollment of degree-granting institutions is predicted to increase 16 percent (2008).

Much mediated communication research has examined the role of digital environments in higher education (Aquilani and Lovari, 2009, 2010); Ellison, Steinfeld and Lampe, 2007; Griffith and Liyange, 2008; Hewitt and Forte, 2009). Will and Callison (2006) analyzed the web pages of 3,738 universities for content and approach, finding that the target audience is donors first, then alumni, and then current students and potential recruits. The content subsequently reflected this target demographic.

Applying Kent and Taylor's dialogic principles for the web (1998), Gordon and Berhow (2009) examined university web pages, selecting 232 of those listed on *U.S. News and World Report*'s "America's Best Colleges" in 2006 for their sample. The authors conclude that despite the variance in educational offerings and approaches, universities were surprisingly similar in adoption of digital features. Overall, the authors rated the sites high on providing information, particularly liberal arts colleges as compared to national, doctoral-level universities but less strong on dialogic principles, such as live chats or encouraging return visits with offerings of updated information. Additionally, study results show a small correlation between dialogic features and student retention rates ($r = 0.146$, $p < 0.05$). In short, the authors conclude that the university web sites tended toward one-way communication: while "advanced technology tools like chats, blogs, portals, instant messaging, podcasts, and RSS feeds are increasingly common features on the World Wide Web, universities have yet to fully realize the potential of such features in the prospective student recruitment process" (p. 152).

Recent research found that university web sites with dialogic features generated the most applicants and most return visitors (McCallister-Spooner, 2010). The author concluded that this level of communication served students who considered institutional programs and faculty before location when selecting a college to attend; thus, level of information was critical to attracting and serving potential recruits. This result supports earlier research (e.g., Abrahamson, 2000) which found web presence second only to college visits.

One of the only studies to survey adult students about specific experiences seeking information on higher education web sites, concludes the sites "come up short with respect to content" (Eduventures, 2007). The survey questioned students how useful they found the web sites on searches for specific information: 63 percent reported finding the information they sought.

But in a usability study, McCallister-Spooner (2008), found that even being unable to find more than half of the information sought, participants did not express strong opinions in favor of or against the sites. Survey participants did report negative feelings with regard to the lack of dialogic options (McCallister-Spooner, 2008).

## METHOD

To define a study sample of student media programs that have exhibited success at the national level based upon student media competitions, the present study examined results from five years of national-level student media competitions, including Associated Collegiate Press, College Media Association, College Broadcasters, Inc., Broadcast Education Association, and Society of Professional Journalists. These organizations were chosen based upon the depth of their national student media competitions and to provide a fair balance between broadcast, online, and print media. Analyzing five years of data from these competitions produced 144 institutions with at least two wins at the national level. The data was then sorted for total number of awards with greater weight given to those with fewer competitions due to the possibility that the same work was able to win a national award at multiple competitions. Then the data was sorted for first-place awards, then second, and then third, and honorable mentions. The resultant sort identified the top 35 programs across these various student media groups (Appendix: Table 1).

Using this information, a visibility measure was created to examine several variables, including university promotion, department promotion, award praise, recruitment, honors, and presence. This study operationalized visibility with two measures: counting the number of clicks to reach college media from home page and the number of clicks to reach a college media outlet from a department page. Coders also logged the route they took to reach college media (followed "academics" link or used "search" window). Measurement included mention in department description, announcement of awards, description of history, presence on campus or recent innovations.

Five coders, plus one author, conducted a pilot test using a sample of five university home pages with at least five college media outlets. Training in teams of two was continued as coders reported some difficulty with names of community relations offices at some university campuses. To allow for the possibility of chance agreement, a reliability test was conducted, achieving an average score of 0.82. Three coders then coded the entire sample of 35 colleges. The coding scheme is available in the coding protocol in the appendix.

Based upon the literature and test coding, several research questions were developed:

RQ1: How visible is college media on a college home page?

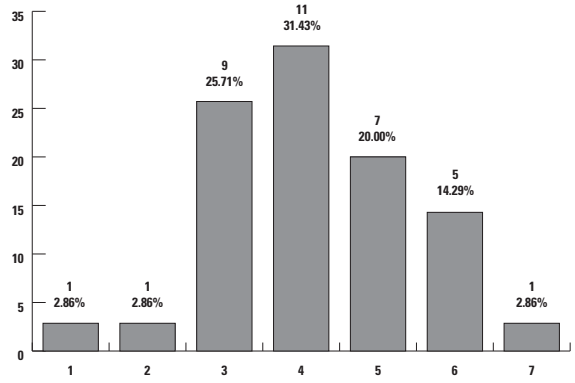
RQ2: How visible is college media on a department home page?

RQ3: Do differences exist in how various student media outlets are presented?

## RESULTS

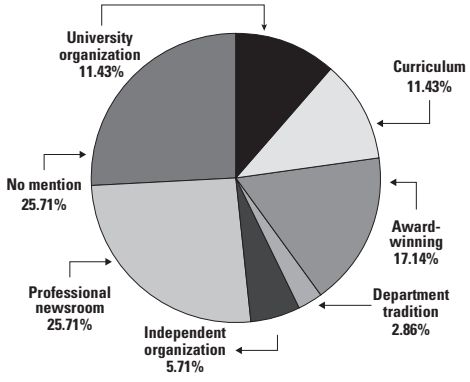
RQ1 asked how visible a college media outlet is on a university home page. Of the 35 university home pages examined (Appendix: Table 1) coders searched for all references to college media outlets identified in participation in national college media contests. Results indicate the most common response as three steps (26 percent) to four (31 percent) to find college media at one of the top-ranked institutions (Fig. 1).

FIGURE 1. NUMBER OF STEPS FROM UNIVERSITY HOME PAGE TO FIRST MENTION OF COLLEGE MEDIA



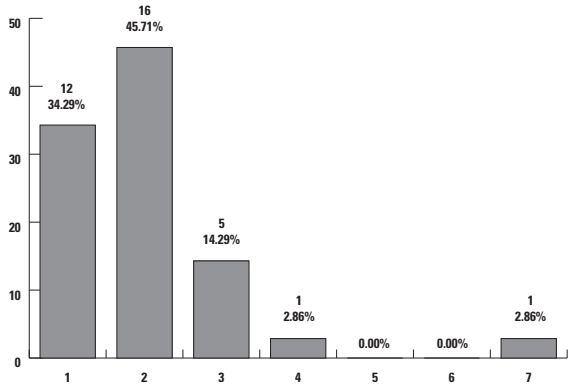

Additionally, coders were asked to identify how college media outlets were identified in the initial references on their home institution main pages (Fig 2). The most common reference identified was "as opportunity for students to work in a professional newsroom setting" (26 percent) followed by "as award-winning organization" (17 percent).

FIGURE 2. UNIVERSITY REFERENCE TO COLLEGE MEDIA OUTLET



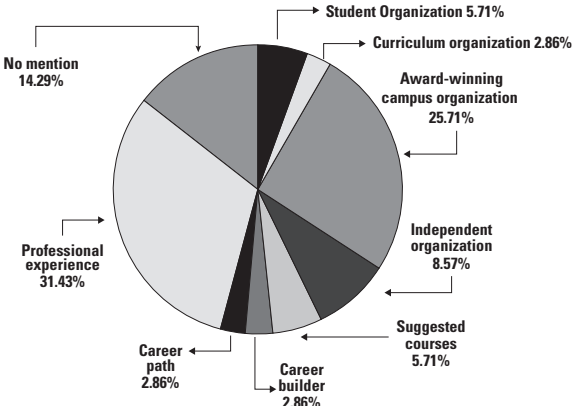

RQ2 asked how visible a college media outlet is on a department home page, given that many are associated with curriculum and housed in academic departments. Fig. 3 shows nearly half of college media programs in the dataset (16) were visible from a department home page in just two steps.

FIGURE 3. NUMBER OF STEPS FROM DEPARTMENT HOME PAGE TO FIRST MENTION OF COLLEGE MEDIA




To further answer RQ2, finding information about college media outlets (or links to them) appeared very straightforward: a link to the college newspaper from the department home page by name was visible 22 percent of the time while 78 percent of departments linked to college media (more than one) through their department home pages. References to these college media outlets tended to reference them as options for professional-level experience (31 percent), followed by "award-winning organization" (26 percent) (Fig. 4), which is slightly higher than the results found for university referent.

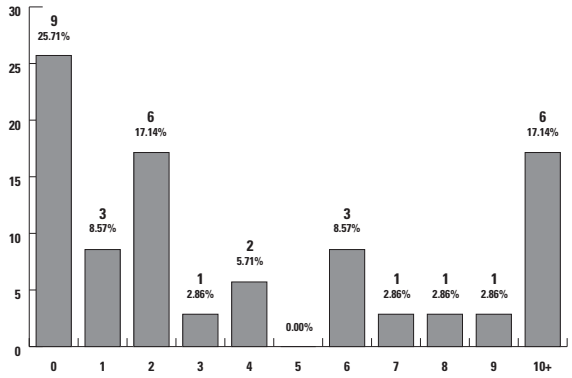
FIGURE 4. HOW DEPARTMENT IDENTIFIES COLLEGE MEDIA ORGANIZATION




Lastly, RQ3 asked whether the various media outlets at any university might be treated or presented differently. This question is an opportunity to investigate how various funding sources and associations a college or university might have for its college media outlets could influence visibility. For example, college broadcast stations require greater funding streams for equipment and licensing; thus student fees or even affiliation with student life or marketing establish a different relationship than a college newspaper or college magazine (Terracina-Hartman and Nulph, 2013). Coders did not find this to be the case; 34 of 35 colleges appeared to present their college media with similar levels of visibility.

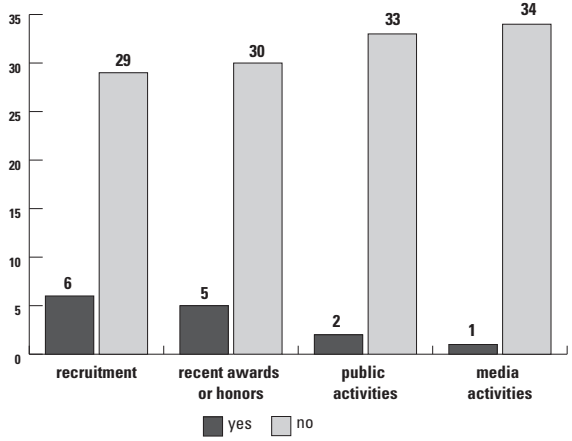
The last variable in the present study measured the content of the references to college media whether on the university home page or a department home page. Possible mentions include recruitment, class meetings, contact information, awards earned, guest or special lectures, and more. Results (Fig. 3 and 4) indicate the most frequent reference on both college home pages and department home pages is an opportunity for students to work in a professional-level setting. A drop-down menu is a popular option, but rarely is a link to student leaders presented, meeting times, or relevant coursework and adviser information posted.

FIGURE 5. NUMBER OF PRESS RELEASES FOR COLLEGE MEDIA FOUND ON UNIVERSITY WEBSITE




Coders also followed the links to college media themselves to determine how much of this information was contained in their own communication with the campus community.

FIGURE 6. FREQUENCY OF COLLEGE MEDIA POSTING THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ON THEIR HOME PAGES




Results, presented in Fig. 6, indicate that recruitment information consistently is a primary information post found among most college media outlets. Information about awards or honors or other events was minimally present.

Lastly, to verify whether success was associated with visibility at home, cross tabs and chi square tests of association were conducted for programs in which the result was reaching college media in four steps or less. A significant interaction was found ($x2(1) = 11.219$, $P < .05$).

## DISCUSSION

The goal of this research study was to ascertain to what level visibility was associated with college media and their home institutions, particularly among the top award winners in national level competition. What these results show can offer great direction to advisers and their home departments who hope to help their student journalists as they promote visibility as an organization value and thus, integrate visibility into work responsibilities and routines. Visibility, as an organizational value, may contribute to structure and stability.

In conducting this study, several expectations were present: 1) the coders would be able to locate the university's primary URL quickly and be able to ascertain the names of college media quite easily and precisely. Neither of these things happened. The coders expressed such frustration that a "virtual map" was prepared for coders, identifying the home pages of each academic institution, the names of the relevant departments, and the names of each award-winning college media group and at least one way to reach these virtual places. Coders were encouraged to use any option available on the protocol or develop their own. This need, therefore, revealed critical distances between college media and their home departments and institutions, particularly as the media selected for this study are among the most award-winning in the past five years.

The association between the top programs and the present study's definition of visibility suggests a small level of value at "home"; however, the best method to confirm academic value of student accomplishment would be to compare with other such group events, such as robotics team awards, marketing team competition, and others. Clearly, visibility could and should have a clear relationship to marketing and recruitment (Poock and Lefond, 2001). For institutions and departments, the question is: would four clicks be acceptable to potential applicants seeking to learn about college media as they are preparing to apply for college?

These results align with prior research (Filak, 2004): while it may be several semesters before curriculum addresses social media strategy and management in the journalism sequence, for example, but student journalists would be best served to begin viewing social media platforms as a tool in the news production process to maintain their presence and visibility with their audience. The interaction between reaching college media in four steps or less from a department home page and these successful programs suggests visibility is one area where advisers might direct efforts to support their student editors toward integrating these tasks.

This study has several limitations, not the least of which can also be a strength. Defining visibility as steps or a route to finding content about organizations for future students who will only expand their use of digital research suggests that organizations not only need to be present but with high visibility; maintaining one single path to information may not be sufficient. To that end, coders who went straight to a "Search" window as opposed to the "Academics" link on the home page reported more frustration that typing in names of a top newspaper or award-winning TV program did not lead them where they wanted to go. Similarly, tests of association suggest all coders traveled the same steps en route to their virtual location. Such is a weakness of coding

methods that risk self-report bias.

That leads to a second limitation: coders were instructed to report the first items they saw in the first mention of college media; however, that location could offer much information, including relevant curriculum, social media links, and event announcements. So, it must be reiterated that choices were not mutually exclusive.

## FUTURE

While this study was an outgrowth of prior research (Terracina-Hartman and Nulph, 2013), so too should this research continue to expand. A future study could add a separate calculation to measure social media presence (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram posts) to examine how and when the institution links to college media. Other research indicates most college media use hosting systems separate from their institutions; yet standards and branding must be followed either to associate or to separate the two entities. (Brockman, Bergland and Hon, 2011).

College media likely use social media to promote their news coverage during university events (sporting events, lecture series, commencement) (Filak, 2014). Yet a review of not only this relationship, but the reverse — does the university tweet about a guest lecturer to a newspaper production class? — could reveal helpful information about features that are successful, need adjusting, or should be implemented.

Lastly, repeating the analysis using a random sample of college media rather than top award winners could offer a broad spectrum of relationships between college journalists and their "home" institutions.

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# APPENDIX

## Introduction

This paper seeks to define and develop a typology of visibility within a college media context. While visibility has not been an active area of research, college media visibility among its home institution can prove to be a useful construct to measure. This study's findings suggest visibility may contribute to organizational structure and stability.

## Operational definitions

The unit of measure is the home institution's web page and available links. Coders will investigate how visible the individual campus media operation is from the home page, the department page, the faculty adviser bio (if applicable), and the campus press office. Information sought includes options for participation; history; organization; mentions of recruitment events; enrollment in associated courses or co-curricular programs; awards; activities, such as conferences, open houses, tutoring labs). There is a lack of theory in organizational visibility pertaining to a home institution when an element of independence dominates the relationship, as is the case with university and college media relationships; thus, we offer a theoretical model of visibility, offering seven steps of generalized visibility. Were a potential student journalist to look for information on a specific program at a specific university, how many steps would it take? Considering organizational visibility literature, which has strong ties to public relations, would this level of visibility indicate overall respect for the attributes, achievements, and offerings of college media?

## Visibility analysis code sheet

Coder
1= Carol, 2= Brianna, 3= Savana, 4= Justin, 5 = Ashley, 6 = Caitlyn

Basic Information
University (drop-down menu; select one)
ASU= [this will be a list of the universities]
UNC=
MSU=
UWM=

Name of the media organization (please select one; drop-down menu)
ASU= [this will be a list of the universities]
UNC=
PSU=
UWO

University home page format: How many steps to reach campus media organization? (Select one.)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 more than 8

Indicate how the university or college identifies the campus media organization:
- ❏ as an organization for students
- ❏ as an organization for journalism students
- ❏ as an award-winning campus organization
- ❏ as a proud tradition of the campus
- ❏ as a proud tradition of a department

Indicate what information is available at the last link: [open text box]

Locate the department home page (mass comm., journalism, mass comm., etc) Please indicate how many steps to reach college media organization? (Select one.)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 more than 8

Indicate how the department identifies the campus media organization:
- ❏ as an organization for students
- ❏ as an organization for journalism students
- ❏ as an award-winning department organization
- ❏ as a proud tradition of the campus
- ❏ as a proud tradition of a department

Indicate the department's faculty page. Find the faculty adviser for the media organization. Does this page link the faculty member to the media organization?
❏ yes ❏ no

Does the faculty adviser's page link to the college media organization?
❏ yes ❏ no

Find the link to the media liaison office (or community relations office). Peruse the links to press releases. Scan the headlines and count how many might feature college media for 1) recruitment 2) awards 3) activities 4) faculty adviser activities or honors. Report this amount. (Select one.)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 more than 10

Find the college media's home page or news page. Do you find evidence of…
recruitment? ❏ yes ❏ no
recent awards or honor announcements? ❏ yes ❏ no
activities (open labs, conferences, recruitment for the department) ❏ yes ❏ no

TABLE 1 TOTAL AWARDS: 5 YEAR ANALYSIS
ACP, BEA, CMA, CBI and SPJ
Shaded cells indicate schools used in analysis.

| | School | 1st place | 2nd place | 3rd place | Hon. Mentions | Total | No. of Comps |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Arizona State University | 41 | 32 | 12 | 25 | 110 | 2 |
| 2 | University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill | 35 | 32 | 7 | 16 | 90 | 4 |
| 3 | Kent State | 11 | 24 | 9 | 6 | 50 | 5 |
| 4 | University of Oklahoma | 6 | 12 | 10 | 19 | 47 | 3 |
| 5 | Elon University | 16 | 13 | 8 | 10 | 47 | 4 |
| 6 | St. Cloud State University | 20 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 42 | 2 |
| 7 | Penn State | 14 | 15 | 1 | 7 | 37 | 4 |
| 8 | Ithaca College | 11 | 24 | 4 | 4 | 35 | 4 |
| 9 | Savannah College of Art and Design | 10 | 18 | 2 | 5 | 35 | 4 |
| 10 | Marshall University | 8 | 20 | 3 | 3 | 34 | 3 |
| 11 | University of Miami | 8 | 6 | 7 | 10 | 31 | 2 |
| 12 | University of Southern Indiana | 7 | 16 | 3 | 3 | 29 | 2 |
| 13 | Brigham Young University | 6 | 9 | 4 | 9 | 28 | 2 |
| 14 | Rowan University | 4 | 20 | 1 | 2 | 27 | 2 |
| 15 | University of Missouri | 10 | 15 | 25 | 1 | | |
| 16 | University of Maryland | 9 | 15 | 1 | 3 | 24 | 2 |
| 17 | Indiana University | 5 | 5 | 3 | 11 | 24 | 3 |
| 18 | University of Minnesota | 13 | 10 | 23 | 2 | | |
| 19 | University of Montana | 8 | 12 | 2 | 1 | 23 | 2 |
| 20 | University of Wisconsin OshKosh | 4 | 17 | 1 | 22 | 2 | |
| 21 | Louisiana State University | 3 | 16 | 2 | 21 | 2 | |
| 22 | Colorado State University | 4 | 16 | 20 | 2 | | |
| 23 | Goshen College | 6 | 9 | 4 | 19 | 2 | |
| 24 | Iowa State University | 2 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 18 | 3 |
| 25 | North Carolina State, Raleigh | 10 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 17 | 2 |
| 26 | University of Florida | 5 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 17 | 2 |
| 27 | Michigan State University | 3 | 14 | 2 | 17 | 2 | |
| 28 | Ball State | 9 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 16 | 2 |
| 29 | Cal State Fullerton | 3 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 16 | 2 |
| 30 | University of South Dakota | 3 | 13 | 16 | 2 | | |
| 31 | Baker University | 8 | 5 | 3 | 16 | 3 | |
| 32 | Western Kentucky University | 3 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 16 | 3 |
| 33 | Texas State University | 4 | 11 | 15 | 2 | | |
| 34 | West Virginia University | 4 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 15 | 2 |
| 35 | San Francisco State University | 6 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 14 | 1 |
| 36 | University of Georgia | 3 | 11 | 14 | 1 | | |
| 37 | University of Wisconsin | 3 | 11 | 14 | 2 | | |
| 38 | University of Arkansas | 1 | 4 | 9 | 14 | 2 | |
| 39 | Appalachian State 4 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 14 | 3 | |
| 40 | Berry College | 2 | 11 | 13 | 1 | | |
| 41 | Baylor University | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 13 | 2 |

| | School | 1st place | 2nd place | 3rd place | Hon. Mentions | Total | No. of Comps |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 42 | University of Texas at Austin | 4 | 8 | 1 | 13 | 2 | |
| 43 | Minnesota State University | 3 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 13 | 2 |
| 44 | California Baptist University | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 13 | 2 |
| 45 | University of Alabama | 8 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 13 | 3 |
| 46 | Northwestern University | 5 | 7 | 12 | 1 | | |
| 47 | Central Michigan University | 5 | 7 | 12 | 2 | 2 | |
| 48 | University of California Berkeley | 6 | 5 | 11 | 1 | | |
| 49 | University of Southern California | 2 | 5 | 4 | 11 | 2 | |
| 50 | University of Texas Pan American | 2 | 7 | 2 | 11 | 2 | |
| 51 | University of North Texas | 7 | 1 | 3 | 11 | 2 | |
| 52 | University of California Los Angeles | 3 | 8 | 3 | 11 | 3 | |
| 53 | Northwest Missouri State 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 11 | 3 | |
| 54 | Loyola University, Maryland | 5 | 5 | 10 | 1 | | |
| 55 | Columbia College of Chicago | 1 | 9 | 10 | 1 | | |
| 56 | Eastern Illinois | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 2 |
| 57 | James Madison University | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 2 |
| 58 | Southern Illinois | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 10 | 2 |
| 59 | Georgia State 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 10 | 3 | |
| 60 | Illinois State University | 1 | 8 | 9 | 1 | | |
| 61 | American University in Cairo | 4 | 5 | 9 | 2 | | |
| 62 | Hofstra University | 2 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 2 |
| 63 | Cal State Chico | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 2 |
| 64 | Missouri Western State University | 4 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 2 | |
| 65 | Southern Utah University | 7 | 2 | 9 | 2 | | |
| 66 | Syracuse University | 5 | 3 | 8 | 1 | | |
| 67 | Coastal Carolina University | 1 | 4 | 8 | 1 | | |
| 68 | North Central College | 1 | 7 | 8 | 1 | | |
| 69 | University of Idaho | 2 | 1 | 8 | 1 | | |
| 70 | Washington State University | 2 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 2 | |
| 71 | University of Nebraska | 1 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 2 | |
| 72 | Rice University | 1 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 2 | |
| 73 | Westminster College | 5 | 2 | 7 | 1 | | |
| 74 | Saddleback College | 4 | 3 | 7 | 1 | | |
| 75 | University of Kansas | 3 | 4 | 7 | 1 | | |
| 76 | Western Washington University | 2 | 5 | 7 | 1 | | |
| 77 | University of Michigan | 1 | 6 | 7 | 1 | | |
| 78 | University of South Carolina, | 1 | 6 | 7 | 1 | | |
| 79 | St. Mary's University | 1 | 7 | 1 | | | |
| 80 | Flagler University | 3 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 2 | |
| 81 | Truman State University | 3 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 2 | |
| 82 | University of Texas at Arlington | 3 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 2 | |
| 83 | DePaul University | 2 | 5 | 7 | 2 | | |
| 84 | University of La Verne | 5 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 2 | |
| 85 | Loyola Marymount University | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 4 |

| | School | 1st place | 2nd place | 3rd place | Hon. Mentions | Total | No. of Comps |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 86 | Nanyang Technical University | 2 | 4 | 6 | 1 | | |
| 87 | University of Utah | 2 | 4 | 6 | 1 | | |
| 88 | Southeastern Louisiana University | 1 | 5 | 6 | 1 | | |
| 89 | University of North Florida | 1 | 2 | 6 | 1 | | |
| 90 | Muskingum University | 6 | 6 | 1 | | | |
| 91 | University of Iowa | 2 | 6 | 1 | | | |
| 92 | Northern Arizona University | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | |
| 93 | Bethany Lutheran University | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 1 | |
| 94 | Fordham University | 2 | 3 | 5 | 1 | | |
| 95 | Husson University | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 |
| 96 | Loyola University, New Orleans | 2 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 | |
| 97 | University of Mississippi | 2 | 3 | 5 | 1 | | |
| 98 | University of Oregon | 2 | 3 | 5 | 1 | | |
| 99 | George Washington University | 1 | 4 | 5 | 1 | | |
| # | Harding University | 1 | 4 | 5 | 1 | | |
| # | Mississippi State University | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 1 | |
| # | Missouri State University | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 |
| # | Texas Christian University | 1 | 4 | 5 | 1 | | |
| # | University of Texas at Dallas | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | | |
| # | University of Wisconsin Milwaukee | 1 | 4 | 5 | 1 | | |
| # | North Idaho College | 5 | 5 | 1 | | | |
| # | Oral Roberts | 1 | 5 | 1 | | | |
| # | Oregon State University | 5 | 5 | 1 | | | |
| # | University of Vermont | 1 | 5 | 1 | | | |
| # | Otterbein University | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 2 | |
| # | Lyndon State College | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 2 | |
| # | Harvard University | 4 | 4 | 1 | | | |
| # | Humbar College | 3 | 1 | 4 | 1 | | |
| # | Taylor University | 3 | 1 | 4 | 1 | | |
| # | Metro State College of Denver | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | | |
| # | Palomar College | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | | |
| # | South Dakota State 2 | 4 | 1 | | | | |
| # | University of Illinois | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | |
| # | Yale University | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | | |
| # | Abilene Christian University | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | | |
| # | Bowling Green State University | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | | |
| # | Oakland University | 1 | 4 | 1 | | | |
| # | Ohio University | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | | |
| # | Pittsburg State 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | | | |
| # | Southwestern College, California | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | | |
| # | Virginia Commonwealth University | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | | |
| # | Azusa Pacific University | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | | |
| # | Boise State University | 4 | 1 | | | | |
| # | Eastern Washington University | 4 | 1 | | | | |

| | School | 1st place | 2nd place | 3rd place | Hon. Mentions | Total | No. of Comps |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| # | Evangel University | 4 | 1 | | | | |
| # | Johnson County Community College | 4 | 4 | 1 | | | |
| # | Kansas State University | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | |
| # | Lamar University | 4 | 4 | 1 | | | |
| # | Seward County CC | 4 | 1 | | | | |
| # | Stony Brook University | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | |
| # | Temple University | 3 | 1 | 4 | 1 | | |
| # | University of North Alabama | 4 | 1 | | | | |
| # | Virginia Tech | 4 | 1 | | | | |
| # | Webster University | 4 | 1 | | | | |
| # | Westminster College of Salt Lake | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | | |
| # | Robert Morris University | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | | |
| # | City University of New York | 3 | 3 | 1 | | | |
| # | Ferris State University | 3 | 3 | 1 | | | |
| # | Liberty University | | | | | | |
| # | Chattahoochee Technical College | | | | | | |
| # | Florida State University | | | | | | |
| # | University of Connecticut | | | | | | |
| # | University of Nebraska at Omaha | | | | | | |
| # | University of Pittsburgh | | | | | | |
| # | Indiana State University | | | | | | |
| # | SUNY Oswego | | | | | | |
| # | University of Louisiana at Monroe | | | | | | |
| # | Midwestern State University, Texas | | | | | | |
| # | San Antonio College | | | | | | |
| # | Vanderbilt University | | | | | | |
| # | Elizabethtown College | | | | | | |
| # | Loyola University, Chicago | | | | | | |
| # | Wayne State University | | | | | | |
| # | American University | | | | | | |
| # | Bridgewater State University | | | | | | |
| # | Cal State Long Beach | | | | | | |
| # | Cal State Northridge | | | | | | |
| # | Kennesaw State University | | | | | | |
| # | Mt. San Antonio College | | | | | | |
| # | Pacific Union College | | | | | | |
| # | Purdue University | | | | | | |
| # | Quinnipiac University | | | | | | |
| # | Texas Tech University | | | | | | |
| # | University of Tennessee at Martin | | | | | | |
| # | University of Toledo | | | | | | |
| # | Bismarck State College | | | | | | |
| # | Cabrina College | | | | | | |
| # | College of Brockport | | | | | | |

| | School | 1st place | 2nd place | 3rd place | Hon. Mentions | Total | No. of Comps |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| # | Henderson State University | | | | | | |
| # | Illinois University Edwardsville | | | | | | |
| # | Lee University | | | | | | |
| # | Lewis University | | | | | | |
| # | Oklahoma City University | | | | | | |
| # | Oklahoma State University | | | | | | |
| # | San Jose State University | | | | | | |
| # | SUNY New Paltz | | | | | | |
| # | Texas A&M University | | | | | | |
| # | University of Kentucky | | | | | | |
| # | University of San Francisco | | | | | | |

# About College Media Review

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*College Media Review* is the flagship publication of College Media Association, Inc., the nation's largest organization for advisers and advocates of a college student media.

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