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Rights

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As society becomes more dependent on the Internet, the expectation on other forms of media is to adapt as best as possible in the name of advancements. This expectation is harshest on journalism as it simultaneously challenges the definition of journalism, changes the way journalism is read and written, alters the expectations of what a journalist needs to do, and forces educators to re-evaluate the entire teaching model in order to train journalists for a job that may not exist anymore. Journalism's adaptation to the internet is therefore changing every aspect of journalism, from the tasks to the education process.

A journalist used to be a person who worked for a newspaper or news channel, but as new news platforms have emerged, the definition of a "journalist" has needed to become more fluid because "in this age of blogs and WikiLeaks the definition of journalist has been challenged and changed… How can one say that a blog about topical news is any less valid?" [1] Without a stable definition right now, journalism is currently in a state of flux that Lia-Paschalia Spyridou et. al. explains, is affecting it "as a practice, a product, and a profession." [2] This shift stems from the uncertainty of whether journalism should be considered "a craft or a profession." [3] These are the two main contrasting forces in journalism. One side believes journalism to be an art form that takes time and dedication, and the other sees it as a business tool to make money. Even people within the field are arguing about how to label it. As is, the writers tend to view journalism as a craft, while anyone on the business side tries to emphasize journalism as a profession. Unfortunately, the industry doesn't have the luxury of being considered a craft right now, and instead emphasis needs to be on journalism as a profession and a business, to keep up with the changes being forced upon them. This isn't a matter of pride anymore, but a matter of survival. Companies are losing momentum, and will suffer drastically without the focus of staying financially afloat. Lawrence Pintak goes as far as saying that journalism needs to "continually re-tool, or die." This is because "20% more people now get their news from digital sources," [4] and that number is continually increasing. As the world becomes more dependent on digital files and documents, the use of paper lessens, and the expectation is

that information will be available in other formats. Newspapers have become increasingly digital, making the news more accessible to the next generation of readers, but this change is to the dismay of the journalists who have been writing for print since the beginning of their career. A change to digital news doesn't just change the platform in which the news is read, it also changes how it must be written. An online report is shorter, and focuses on getting the details out as fast as possible, rather than expanding on the story and taking the time to create an in depth piece.

There is a sense of nostalgia from sitting in a deep Lay-Z Boy recliner on a Sunday morning, a mug of coffee to your side, and opening the first page of a large newspaper. The sound of the paper opening and the recognizable soft texture of the newspaper won't last forever, though. Mitchell Stephens admits that, "some of the discipline's most cherished practices will have to change." [5] The web is constantly expanding, technology is constantly becoming more advanced, and so journalism needs to be able to grow as well. The world isn't ever going to stop changing. The only way to sustain a form of media is to be flexible, and change as the world does, because "what's state-of-the-art technique may well be obsolete tomorrow." [6] The shift from print to digital is just one many that is occurring because of advancements in the internet, and it is the large amounts of recent changes that are making journalists upset. With the internet being a multi-media platform, there is pressure for sites to use these capabilities and incorporate other forms of media. "News is becoming platform-agnostic: print is just one of several delivery vehicles a 'newspaper' must utilize." [7] It's no longer enough for a news source to succeed with print alone. The incorporation of a website to distribute news is vital to reaching a large audience, and with the different platform comes a different structure for writing. A journalist can't just copy and paste the same article, because a website needs to follow the rules of the web, rather than that of the newspaper. The internet focuses on speed and brevity, as well as incorporating multiple different facets for sharing information. By not abiding by the expectations of the internet, news websites risk losing readers who can go to competing news sources for their information. Images or videos need to be incorporated, and articles should be briefer to hold the attention of the audience. These changes are what concern journalists. "Most of the journalists said they are willing to adapt, and most have done so, but their primary concern is sacrificing quality journalism for faster, softer, inaccurate piecemeal web nuggets." [8] It is the drastic changes that worries the journalists, as well as the negative impact this may have on their writing if they have to change their style, and focus on speed rather than quality of an article. Nicholas Lemann's defends their worries, observing "the quality of Internet Journalism is bound to improve over time, especially if more of the virtues of traditional journalism migrate to the internet." [9] Journalism

is in a transition stage when it comes to entering into internet, and so people are still trying to understand the capabilities and the limitations. After there is an understanding of what can be done with the internet, journalists can utilize this information for their benefit. Until then, they are learning as they go to find what is successful in keeping the industry intact.

There is no way to reverse the influence the internet has had, and will continue to have, on journalism, so the only way to continue in the industry is to try and follow along as best as possible. For anyone within the profession, it is clear that the job is changing. There is a continuing decrease in available jobs, and the stress put on news companies is reflected in the continuing list of expectations for the industry. According to Scott Reinardy, "The State of the Media 2009 Annual Report said about 5,000 full-time journalism jobs disappeared in 2008… Between 2005-2007 newspaper stocks lost 42% of their value. In 2008 it grew much worse as newspapers dropped 83% of their remaining value." [10] The newspaper industry is in a decline right now, and while the whispered words of "journalism is dead" isn't a proven statement, it is well on its way unless drastic measures are taken. News organizations are being pressured to reconsider root values and practices by the technology that is being created in order to preserve some semblance of journalism, and not allow the entire medium to die out. In order to cut costs, jobs have been lost, or condensed. "News workers… are being asked to do more (writing, stories or shooting video for the web, compiling photo galleries, blogging, etc.) with less (layoffs, buyouts, hiring freezes, etc.)[sic]." [11] This forces the journalists to put in more hours and learn entirely new programs, as well as understand how to portray a news story best through those programs, or become another statistic in the count of journalists who have lost their jobs. Success in journalism now lies in understanding that "proficiency in computer technology and the internet has become central to the ability of journalists to do their jobs." [12] While there is leniency in teaching current employees the programs and skills necessary for an internet-based news story, there isn't any for new hires. An employee isn't likely to hire someone who is incapable of doing their job without constant instruction. With jobs scarce, new hires need to have these skills to keep up with the strong demands of the job, and to stand out against other applicants, when the employer is hyper-selective of whom they hire. According to Lawrence Pintak, "print and broadcast organizations alike that are hiring tell us they will not employ a graduate who does not have multi-platform skills." [13] This media knowledge is now a crucial skill that employees need to have to be able to keep up with the demands of the industry.

The way to combat these changes in the industry is to focus on how journalism is taught. If the education process can change, then these students will be better prepared to enter into a field of unknowns, and still succeed.

Barbara Kelley explains this by suggesting that, "as the mediascape morphs at breakneck speed… Journalists who succeed amidst change will be those whose education taught them to think critically." [14] The issue with the present education system is that the future jobs in this "media industry" may not exist right now. Essentially what needs to be studied more in-depth is what Jo Bardoel calls "Network Journalism." This is a form that focuses on the main features in journalism (interactivity, hypertextuality, multimediality and a-synchronicity) to educate on the concept of journalism more than the act. [15] If the focus of education is to teach students how to conceptualize the meaning of journalism, rather than to just churn out a pretty story, than the basis of journalism can be shared throughout the different platforms, and keep its integrity. This concept can then be molded however necessary to fit the specific needs of the news, because these students would be trained on how to work around the unknown. With technological changes happening so quickly, it is necessary for students to face the idea that the job they aimed for then they began school may be completely different when they enter the work field. By expecting changes in the industry, it gives students a better opportunity to succeed with the differences, and brace themselves for the unknown.

According to Mitchell Stephens, "the present education needs a heart transplant." [16] This education system is still training students for a job in journalism, but the training is old and outdated. The worry that journalism schools have with change is that a focus on multimedia will build a generation of technicians, rather than thinkers and journalists. The key is to find the balance in teaching the art of journalism, as well as the technical skills that will be necessary to be journalists. In this new phase of journalism it will not be the student who is the most grammatically correct, who dots there I's and crosses their T's, that is the most successful. The most successful student will be the one who can take the information given to them and adapt it to any given situation.

Journalism cannot turn back now. It is on a set, society-driven path, and, in order to survive, it must meet the demands of technological advancements. The best it can do is brace itself and try and get through the transition phase of becoming a multimedia vehicle for sharing information. If journalism can work with elasticity, being able to bend and weave as necessary while still keeping its core value, it will succeed. There is a danger in holding on too tight to old ideas, because they make it difficult to follow a successful business path. With print journalism on the decline, the only way for journalism to survive is to incorporate digital news as well. It is the integration of the multiple different methods of sharing information that will keep journalism alive throughout the current changes. It is possible for journalism to thrive with the internet, it just may be in a different format that how it was 20 years ago. Print is just a small

aspect of an entire package labeled "media journalism," and journalism can be shared throughout each of the different mediums.

Notes

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[3] Mensing, Donica. (2010). Rethinking [Again] the Future of Journalism Education. *Journalism Studies*, 11(4), 511-23. pp. 514.

[4] Pintak, Lawrence. (2013). J-School Survival Tools. *Chronicle of Higher Education* 60(11), B4-B5.

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[9] Lemann, Nicholas. Journalism without Journalists. *The New Yorker*. pp. 3.

[10] Reinardy (2010) pp. 70.

[11] Reinardy (2010). pp. 70.

[12] Spyridou, L.-P. et. al. (2013). pp. 83.

[13] Pintak (2013). pp. B4.

[14] Kelley (2007). pp. 5.

[15] Bardoel, J. (2002). The Internet, Journalism and Public Communication Policies. *International Communication Gazette*, 64(5), 501-11. pp. 504-505.

[16] Stephens, M. (2000). pp. 63.