Boxercast: Creating Web Video Broadcasts for The Pacific Index

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Boxercast: Creating Web Video
Broadcasts for The Pacific Index

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By Samantha Richards

This Senior Presentation at Pacific University was the winner of the 2009 Berglund Center Award for Undergraduate Research on the Impact of the Internet

Newspapers all over the country are pairing news stories with web video and posting a dramatically increased amount of multimedia content to their websites. For my senior project, I looked at the college newspaper scene and evaluated the content of several different college newspaper websites. E-publishing is a must in the newspaper industry today, for both college and professional publications, and anything that can attract additional traffic to a paper’s website is an asset to its business. Because of this, I created Boxercast – short online broadcasts that come out with each issue of the student newspaper, The Pacific Index.

During the research portion of my project I created a website evaluation form that I used to compile notes while looking at small and large school newspaper websites as well as small and large professional newspaper websites. The evaluation form was especially important for the school newspaper websites I chose to assess because it included information about the college or university’s media programs. This was important because I later tried to find a correlation between the programs the school offered and the content found on the website. My final conclusion was that the smaller school newspaper websites that I looked at (mainly schools in Pacific’s league, i.e. The Linfield Review or Willamette University’s Collegian) had virtually no correlation between the media programs offered and the content available on their websites. For example, Eastern Oregon University offers media arts programs including journalism, as well as an English/literature program with a film concentration, but the school newspaper, The Easterner, posts virtually nothing more than the text of the news stories to their website. The large school newspaper websites I evaluated definitely had a correlation, but this may have been a result of my selection; I chose to look at newspaper websites of some of the top journalism schools in the nation.
Another significant portion of my project was introducing myself to the broadcast media world online. Previous to the beginning of my project, I had zero experience with any type of broadcast journalism. Materials about the basics of writing for broadcast media as well as the production basics of news reports proved very helpful in the beginning stages of my project. This part of my research almost seemed to be an independent study rather than actual senior thesis research work.

Once I had completed the majority of my research (I say majority because it is essentially never-ending; there are always new relevant articles being posted online) I started to create Boxercast. My first broadcast was a feature story about the Kickboxers, the half-time basketball dance team. They had lost their coach but were continuing to self-teach routines and planned on performing all season long – in fact, they were better than ever. I chose this story because I thought it would be an easy and light first feature and I knew it was going to be a great opportunity to get lively video footage. I discovered that there were all types of things I still needed to work on. I was uneasy and out of place, I showed up with a videographer without an extra battery and, of course, the battery on the camera died, I didn’t like my writing or how my voice sounded in the narration, and I was just about ready to give up.

Fortunately, I didn’t give up; in fact, my learning curve was exponential after that first production. I started picking up the ins and outs of the business and began to learn Apple Final Cut, the software that was used to edit all of the Boxercasts this year. Brian Pan, a senior integrated media and film double major, was paid to help me with the filming and editing, but toward the end of my project I started editing much more on my own. To view the Boxercast archive, go to The Pacific Index homepage and type “Boxercast” in the search engine [1].

I am proud to say that my project does not end here. I have authored a handbook with all of the things I learned this year and all of the elements needed to continue producing Boxercast. Future staff members of The Pacific Index have already expressed interest in taking it over, so plan on web video content being a part of thepacificindex.com for years to come.

Endnotes


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