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ABSTRACT

The Scholastic Journalism--Civic Journalism section of the Proceedings contains the following 14 papers: "Look Who's Reading Newspapers: The Impact of a Citywide High School Newspaper" (Elinor Kelly Grusin and M. David Arant); "Factors Affecting the Degree to Which the Student Press of Michigan is Subject to Prior Review and/or Prior Restraint" (Kimberly A. Lauffer); "Incorporating Media Studies in the High School Social Science Curriculum: Perspectives of South Florida Teachers" (C.A. Tuggle, Don Sneed, and K. Tim Wulfemeyer); "Education for Scholastic Journalism Revisited: Are We Doing Enough?" (Tom Dickson and Mark Paxton); "Learning to Do the Right Thing: Assessing Knowledge of Media Ethics of Leading High School Journalism Students in Louisiana" (Joseph A. Mirando); "Job Descriptions and Responsibilities of Scholastic Press Association Directors" (Julie E. Dodd); "Student Internet Rights" (Megan Moriarty); "Political Discourse, Economic/Fiscal Policy Issues, and Civic Journalism" (Sharon Hartin Iorio); "Is Public Journalism Cheap Journalism?: Putting Public Journalists' Money Where Their Mouths Are" (David O. Loomis); "The Visual Communication of Public Journalism: A Content and Textual Analysis" (Renita Coleman); "A Comparative Analysis of Objective and Public Journalism as Techniques" (R. Lance Holbert and Stephen J. Zubric); "Civic Journalism, Political Awareness and the University" (Robert Roberts, Anthony Eksterowicz, and Arian Clark); "Missing the Link: Citizen-Based Journalism Intent Rather Than Election Coverage Content Affects Public Trust in Media" (Eric J. Rhodenbaugh); and "Connection Vs. Distance: Teaching Public Journalism" (William T. Chronister). (PA)

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION (81st, Baltimore, MD, August 5-8, 1998). SCHOLASTIC JOURNALISM; CIVIC JOURNALISM.

Look Who's Reading Newspapers: The Impact of a Citywide High School Newspaper

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Look Who's Reading Newspapers:

The Impact of a Citywide High School Newspaper

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In fall 1997 the University of Memphis began publishing a monthly citywide high school newspaper, a joint effort with the Memphis daily newspaper, *The Commercial Appeal*, and the Memphis City Schools. This paper reports the launch of *The Teen Appeal*, its first year of operation and the results of a survey designed to measure high school student media use and readers' interest in a citywide high school newspaper. A student staff representing 25 high schools participated in writing the stories, taking the photographs and producing a paper that was distributed to all 29 Memphis high schools.

Look Who's Reading Newspapers: The Impact of a Citywide High School Newspaper

In fall 1997 the University of Memphis began publishing *The Teen Appeal,* a monthly citywide high school newspaper, a joint effort with the Memphis daily newspaper, *The Commercial Appeal*, and the Memphis City Schools. The Department of Journalism recruited and trained high school students as reporters, editors and photographers. *The Commercial Appeal*'s news editorial staff members participated in the training and its production staff began printing *The Teen Appeal* and distributing it to the city's 29 high schools. The Memphis City School officials approved the project, encouraged its principals to participate and provided access to the high schools for distribution. A grant from the Scripps Howard Foundation, the foundation of the parent company of *The Commercial Appeal*, funded the paper's operation the first two years.

This paper reports the launch of *The Teen Appeal*, the impact its first year of operation and the findings of a survey conducted to determine how Memphis high school students use the media and what news content would interest them. The survey asked students about how they use newspapers and other media as well as what kind of stories they would like to see in the citywide high school newspaper.

Launching *The Teen Appeal*

The Journalism Department at the University of Memphis began publishing *The Teen Appeal* in September 1997. The newspaper is student written and edited and distributed by *The Commercial Appeal* to all 29 high schools. Forty-six students, primarily juniors and seniors, from 25 of the city's 29 high schools are working on the staff either as reporters, photographers or both. Two of the city's 29 high schools are alternative schools for troubled youths and their principals opted not to participate this year. However, since that time, the principal of one alternative school has asked to be included in next year's staff. The newspaper is published eight times during the academic year. It comes out at the end of each month with November/December combined into one issue. It generally is a 12-page tab (one issue was eight pages) with no advertising, except for a half-page, in-house ad promoting literacy through newspaper reading.

The University of Memphis journalism faculty, in consultation with school officials, began in spring 1997 recruiting applicants for reporters and editors through principals and faculty at participating high schools. Recruiting teams of both graduate and undergraduate journalism students from The U of M visited each school. A committee from *The Commercial Appeal* and the journalism faculty selected one student reporter and an alternate from each high school from among 165 applicants, using the following criteria: interest in and enthusiasm for journalism, teacher/principal recommendations, grade point average and a short essay. Other students who applied were encouraged to work as freelancers and were invited to participate in the summer training workshop.

The journalism faculty organized and trained the student staff in a week-long August workshop. Twenty reporters and editors from *The Commercial Appeal* plus journalism faculty from The U of M led workshops on reporting, writing, editing, design, photography, law and ethics. During the week, students competed for prizes in all these areas that were awarded at a banquet on the final camp day. Students competed for the honor of naming the new newspaper and submitted entries that the entire group voted on at the banquet, resulting in *The Teen Appeal*. Once the fall semester began, *The Teen Appeal* students met and named the sections—*Attitude* for editorials and columns, *Motion* for sports and *Style* for a special back page devoted to teen fashion. The newspaper has a decided youthful look and uses full color on front and back.

The Journalism Department hired a full-time coordinator to work with student staff members each week at the U of M Meeman Journalism Building. In addition to the coordinator, a graduate assistant, who was a teen page editor at a 100,000-circulation daily newspaper, coaches students 20 hours per week in reporting and writing stories.

Other graduate students work as page designers and writing/reporting coaches in the newsroom, which is open to students five afternoons per week and Saturdays and is equipped with Macintosh computers to write and edit their stories and a refrigerator for after-school snacks. The relationship between the coordinator and graduate students and their high school staff is a mentoring and counseling one. Young staffers get help with scholarship and college applications along with training in journalistic skills and ethics.

Content has developed into a good mix of features on teachers, students and programs along with issues such as, school safety, the relationship between teens and police, youthful drivers, smoking and race relations. An interview with the city's police director on teens and police ran in a question and answer format in a two-part series. The second part was teen experiences with police. Another issue featured a school board report on the decrease of serious crimes in schools with reaction from teens and administrators. Another story in the same issue focused on whether teens feel safe in school and whether students think metal detectors are effective. Teens have written sports features on outstanding female basketball players, a female quarterback on a junior varsity football team, a bicyclist with Olympic ambitions and a football player adjusting to life after a spinal injury. People features have also included a teacher who is in the classroom by day and a studio by night as a D.J. for an R & B radio station.

Student staffers have interviewed sources from the city's police director to state legislators and school board members in addition to their classmates, principals and teachers. Their writing must follow accepted journalistic standards of fairness, balance and accuracy and they must turn in phone numbers of sources for accuracy spot checks.

Standard features are a page devoted to fashion for boys and girls, part of a page devoted to student poetry submissions, a student-drawn cartoon strip and student-written editorials. In short, the newspaper provides many of the same services and types of news and features to be found in a commercial newspaper, only targeted to a teenage audience.

In both content and appearance, the newspaper reflects the diversity of the community by providing a balance of stories and photos from all participating schools as well as issue stories and stories about sports and entertainment events of interest to all teenagers.

Recruiting visits to schools for next year's staff began in early March and yielded 296 applications from 28 of the 29 high schools. The 29th high school is an alternative school for troubled teens. While its principal opted not to participate, he asked to continue receiving the newspaper. Plans for next year include repeating the journalism workshop for the high school journalists in August and working with school librarians to archive *The Teen Appeal* in their reference collection in each high school. *The Teen Appeal* will be available on the Internet next year.

The Teen Appeal's Readers and Their Media Use

To determine the general media use and newspaper reading habits of high school students as *The Teen Appeal* entered the high schools, a graduate research methods class in the Journalism Department at the University of Memphis conducted a readership study for the citywide high school newspaper. High school students were asked whether they read the newspaper and what their interests were. The questionnaire replicated many questions from a 1982 national survey of high schools in six U.S. cities.[1] The basic research questions for the survey included:

What media do high school students use and how often?

What is high school student use of daily newspapers?

What are high school student attitudes toward newspapers?

What kind of content do students want in a citywide high school newspaper?

The students in the graduate research methods class prepared and administered the survey. First the class submitted their research proposal to Department of Research Standards and Accountability, Memphis City Schools and gained approval to survey a class in each high school. Students seeking to survey a particular high school had to obtain the permission of the high school principal. Surveys were administered at 12 high schools. A class in each high school was selected, alternating among the grade levels, using this randomization procedure: the principal was asked to send the graduate student to the homeroom class in the selected grade taught by the English teacher whose name was first in the alphabet.

A total of 271 surveys were completed. The respondents included 51 ninth graders, 59 tenth graders, 61 eleventh graders, and 99 twelfth graders and one unidentified. Forty-three percent were male and 55 percent female. Student reports of their grade average were: 24 percent A, 46 percent B, 27 percent C, and 3 percent D. Only one person admitted to an average below D.

Not surprising in the report of their media use, television was the big winner: 98 percent of students watched it at least once a week and 78 percent every day. And 95 percent of respondents indicated that they watched television news once a week and 50 percent every day.

The medium used second most often was the newspaper: 81 percent read the newspaper not for a class assignment at least once a week, and 40 percent of those read it most days of the week. Newspapers beat out book reading (not counting what was read for school), which was done by only 62 percent at least once a week, as well as reading anything in a magazine (79 percent at least once a week). Twenty-nine percent of respondents said they got information on the Internet at least once a week.

However, when students were asked if they happened to read a *daily* newspaper in the past week, readership dropped to 65 percent. Twenty-eight percent of the respondents said they read it yesterday. This is in the range of a national survey: 38 percent daily readership for 16-to-17 year-olds and 26 percent daily for 12-to-15 year olds.[2] In addition to the 28 percent of Memphis high school students who said they had read the paper yesterday, another 28 percent of the respondents said they had read the newspaper the day before yesterday.

The respondents who said they had read a daily paper in the past week were asked to write the name of that paper. Seventy percent of those who said they had read a daily in the past week wrote in *The Commercial Appeal* as the paper they had read, and another five percent wrote in *USA Today.* Another 8 percent wrote in something else, usually one of the local weeklies, among them the *Tri-State Defender*. Although only 44 percent said a daily newspaper was sent to their home, 86 percent said they read it at home. One explanation is rack sales.

Students were asked specific questions about their use of newspapers. When asked how much trouble students had reading articles in newspapers, only a minority admitted to having a lot (2 percent) or a little (19 percent) trouble reading it. Seventy-eight percent said they understood most of what they read in newspapers. A whopping 91 percent said that teachers had asked them to use a newspaper as part of a classroom assignment. While 10 percent of the students said they disliked reading newspapers, 68 percent said they liked reading papers.

The newspaper content that at least a third of the students said they read most of the time when they were looking at a newspaper included: movie schedules (47 percent), news about your town or city (41 percent), sports (42 percent), comics/jokes (41 percent), and teenage clothing /styles (40 percent), teenage columns/styles (40 percent), news/reviews about music (37 percent), horoscopes (36 percent), and stories about television celebrities and movie stars (35 percent).

The student respondents were asked about their attitudes towards newspapers. Fifty-four percent agreed that newspapers were fair, told all sides of a story. Forty-eight percent disagreed that newspapers were old-fashioned, out of touch versus 28 percent who thought they were. Forty-eight percent agreed that papers have too many things they are not interested in reading while 46 percent said it was meant for adults more than for young people. However, only 26 percent agreed that newspapers were not important to people their age. Sixty-seven percent agreed that "the newspaper has lots of things I want to know."

The students were asked about the kind of content they would like to see in their citywide high school newspaper. Sixty-five percent wanted entertainment information; 61 percent checked information on college preparation/application process; 59 percent, stories on high school sports; 55 percent, fashion news; 51 percent, information on high school academic issues and programs; 51 percent, features on outstanding students; and 49 percent, stories on teen health issues.

What *The Teen Appeal* Contributes to the Journalism Profession

Faculty of Department of Journalism began the citywide newspaper for high school students to serve the interests of the journalism profession by cultivating young readers and recruiting a more diverse group of future journalists. Its founders also believed such a newspaper would create a much-needed sense of community among the city's youth by crossing all racial, ethnic and economic lines.

Many journalists publish their first news stories in high school newspapers, and the experience on a student newspaper sparks an interest that leads to careers in print and broadcast news. The student newspaper also provides an outlet to develop some basic editing and journalistic writing skills.

Unfortunately, the opportunity to work on a high school newspaper did not exist for most Memphis city high school students. Although a 1991 survey found that 78 percent of high schools nationwide published newspapers, in Memphis that number drops to 18 percent. Only five out of 29 high schools publish a newspaper as often as four times during an academic year. The schools that do not publish newspapers tend to be the ones in which almost all students are African Americans. [3]

While high school journalism is in trouble in Memphis, especially in inner city schools, high school publications elsewhere also are falling victim to funding cuts, social change, administrative censorship and weakening support from both school officials and the public. The number of high schools nationwide publishing newspapers continues to plummet.[4] As a result of the decline of high school newspapers, the chair of the American Society of Newspaper Editors' Education for Journalism Committee called on member editors to help rescue high school journalism. In her 1993 report to member editors, Diane McFarlin wrote, "We should be concerned (about rescuing high school journalism) because the journalism programs in our secondary schools play a major role in developing the readers--as well as the journalists--of the future."[5]

Although the chase for the elusive young reader is by now old news, it is no less important to the newspaper industry. Despite attempts to incorporate news of interest to teenagers into metro dailies, many teens simply do not read commercial newspapers.[6] In 1996 average readership by 16-to-17 year-olds was only 37.7 percent daily and readership by 12-to-15 year-olds dropped to 26.1 percent daily.[7] They are, however, more likely to read newspapers written for their age group by their peers.[8]

A 1991 poll of teenagers in Chicago showed teens also were more apt to be regular readers of one of the city's dailies if they also read the citywide newspaper for teens,[9] *New Expression,* which reports a circulation of 70,000 in 80 Chicago schools.[10] Launched in 1977, *New Expression* is a member of Youth Communication, a network of eight citywide high school newspapers with a combined circulation of 400,000.

The citywide high school newspaper in Memphis reaches a large number of black teenagers. African Americans make up 80 percent of the students in the Memphis City Schools system. Members of this group are most likely to feel alienated from mainstream media, and those in inner city schools are less likely to come from homes where parents subscribe to the daily newspaper.[11] A 1991 ASNE study advises newspaper editors that minorities are the fastest growing segment of the population and that editors must turn Hispanics and blacks into "loyal" readers if mass metro dailies are to survive.[12]

However, editors first must diversify both their newsrooms and news coverage. In 1995 only 12 percent of professional journalists in the newspaper news editorial departments were people of color, although racial minorities make up 23 percent of the U.S. civilian workforce, and the percentage in top editorial positions was even smaller.[13]

In order to change these statistics, newspapers may need to grow their own staffs through a partnership with inner city high schools and journalism programs that want to increase their numbers of minorities. One goal of *The Teen Appeal* is to expose talented young minorities to journalism at an early age. Already four students from *The Teen Appeal* staff have applied for admission to the University of Memphis and plan to major in journalism. A fifth *Teen Appeal* staff member has received a diversity scholarship to the University of Missouri where she will major in journalism.

How the Citywide High School Newspaper Helps the Community

The Teen Appeal serves broad community and educational needs as well as concerns vital to the journalism profession. The newspaper's staff members, a racially diverse group of students, work together to produce a newspaper that provides information about the accomplishments and concerns of students throughout the city. The newspaper also provides Memphis high school students with a sense of community in which shared information may help ease racial tensions and erase stereotypes. Over time, the project could lead to better understanding among students from different social, economic and ethnic backgrounds.

According to the 1990 Census, the city's population has changed from majority white to about 55 percent black. Several organizations, including Goals for Memphis, are starting projects to improve race relations in the workplace.[14] A citywide high school newspaper would set students on that path at an even earlier age.

The Memphis City Schools system, now 83 percent minority, reflects the racial divisiveness of the greater community. Many city schools, especially those in the inner city, have resegregated and are almost entirely African American. High schools in more affluent suburban areas have majority white student populations and tend to be the ones that publish newspapers.

The Teen Appeal has become a forum for discussion of issues directly affecting the present and the future of these students. For example, in one issue students explored racial bigotry in Memphis. The story grew from a Time-CNN poll that said nine out of 10 black teenagers feel racism has little impact on their lives. *The Teen Appeal* staff interviewed Memphis teenagers to ask them about their experiences and found that, while most experienced no prejudice in school, they reported instances of racial prejudice within the wider community. A staff reporter also interviewed a sociologist who is an expert in racial and ethnic minorities. In a related story, teens aired their feelings on interracial dating.

Students writing for students have tackled problems directly affecting Memphis teenagers. One attempt by teen staffers to provide such information was a teen's interview with the city's police director in which he explained what teenagers should do if they feel they are victims of police harassment.

Another benefit of teens writing for their peers has been the communication of health information. Some health educators view the high school newspaper as a powerful partner in communicating health issues to teenagers, and one study recommends a plan for comprehensive coverage of heath education issues in the school newspaper.[15] Such articles in *The Teen Appeal* so far have included school safety, smoking, risk of infection from tattoos and information on a drug and alcohol conference.

The Teen Appeal might provide broader educational benefits to student journalists through improved writing skills. Jack Dvorak, director of the High School Journalism Institute at Indiana University, found that college freshmen who had participated in high school journalism achieved higher writing scores on standardized tests.[16] When 1,204 college freshmen were divided into four groups according to ACT English Assessment scores to equalize abilities in language arts, those with high school newspaper or yearbook experience had higher writing scores and were better writers than students who had no high school publication experience. Dvorak concluded that participation in high school journalism aids students in general writing ability--the key to all learning .[17] Already four students from *The Teen Appeal* staff have applied for admission to the University of Memphis. They are candidates for scholarships designed as an incentive for students who participate on the staff. These students will be eligible for internship grants recently provided to the journalism department by Scripps Howard. A fifth *Teen Appeal* staff member has received a diversity scholarship to the University of Missouri.

The Teen Appeal also should stimulate more interest in reading at the high school level. Those teens who read little else may be inclined to read a newspaper that is readily accessible and written by teens for teenage readers. Several English teachers report that they are using *The Teen Appeal* in teaching: making the citywide newspaper required reading and quizzing students on its content. The teachers say that because students are interested in its content, it is not difficult to get them to read *The Teen Appeal.* With 100,000 Memphis area residents estimated to be functionally illiterate,[18] any means of stimulating more interest in reading in the schools should be welcomed.

Conclusion and Further Research

After the first year of publication of *The Teen Appeal*, the authors see many tangible results of this initiative. Although some principals were reluctant at first to participate in the citywide program, the holdouts are seeing the value of having their school featured in this publication and the benefits to their students who participate.

For the administrators in the city schools, *The Teen Appeal* is another vehicle for telling the school system's story to the larger community. Nearly 45 percent of the students who picked up a copy of *The Teen Appeal* in their school took it home with them. In addition, editors at *The Commercial Appeal* have run about six articles from each issue of *The Teen Appeal* in the zoned editions of the Neighbors section of the daily newspaper.

For the Journalism Department *The Teen Appeal* has been an avenue for student mentoring and recruitment. The University of Memphis student chapter of the Society of

Professional Journalists adopted *The Teen Appeal* as its service project and its members have helped recruit *Teen Appeal* reporters. *The Teen Appeal* has provided a great laboratory for Journalism Department graduate students for coaching the novice teenage reporters and editors.

And the impact on *Teen Appeal* reporters and editors is substantial: the one-on-one coaching in writing and reporting is making a difference in the lives of these individuals. A gauge of its impact and importance to the teenagers is that already five of *The Teen Appeal* staff members who are seniors plan to major in journalism in college. And two of them who are planning to attend the University of Memphis have indicated their desire to work with *Teen Appeal* reporters when they become college students.

Further research on the impact of *The Teen Appeal* includes a follow-up survey of the selected panel at the end of this first year of publication to track the impact of *The Teen Appeal* on student media use. The Journalism Department will return to the same students at the end of a full year of publishing the citywide high school newspaper and repeat the media use questions. These findings will indicate whether a year's worth of exposure to *The Teen Appeal* has increased interest in and reading of newspapers. In particular, the comparison will assess whether the presence of the citywide high school newspaper has influenced student reading of the local daily newspaper. And, of course, the authors are interested in the extent of distribution and readership of *The Teen Appeal*. Specific questions about the citywide newspaper's content will help shape next year's issues of *The Teen Appeal*.

In addition, *The Teen Appeal*'s teaching staff will administer a written test to students attending the August training camp. This test will be repeated at the end of the school year. While it does not control for extraneous variables, the test results, particularly those measuring journalistic writing style, will be of interest to the teaching staff.

Appendix

Enrollment '97-'98/Student Newspaper Publication in Memphis City Schools

High School	Student paper Issues per year	Enrollment Black	(by race) White	Other
Carver		717	2	
Central	6	1,163	140	57
Craigmont	4	964	841	43
East	2-3	1,567	26	26
Fairley		1,106		
Frayser	Varies	1,1058	57	2
Hamilton	2	1,63	2	
Hillcrest		1,183	2	
Kingsbury	2	646	539	49
Manassas		654	1	
Melrose		963		
Middle College	4	184	7	
Mitchell		650	1	
Northside		1,069		
Oakhaven		815	22	4
Overton	6-8	924	415	28
Raleigh-Egypt	2	853	114	11
Ridgeway	2	512	756	33
Sheffield		1,233	25	159
South Side	2	855	1	
Treadwell		844	83	13
Trezevant		1,286	10	
Washington B.T.	3	623		
Westside		500	133	1
Westwood	2-3	1,056	3	
White Station	5	627	1,217	97
Whitehaven		1,591	7	
Wooddale	2	1,044	117	17

[1] Newspaper Advertising Bureau, "Assessing the Impact of Newspaper in Education Programs: Changes in Student Attitudes, Newspaper Reading and Political Awareness," September 1982.

.[2] Carolyn Terry, "Teaching by Example: Newspapers Partner with the Next Generation of Readers," *Presstime*, October 1997, 32.

[3] See appendix for list of schools, racial composition and publications.

[4] Terry, 31-33.

[5] ASNE Education for Journalism Committee, Rescuing High School Journalism, American Society of Newspaper Editors Foundation, Reston, Va., 1993; see also Mary Arnold, "Inner City High School Newspapers: An Obituary?" unpublished paper presented to the Scholastic Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Kansas City, Missouri, August 1993.

[6] "Age of Indifference," survey by the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press, 1990: see also Mark Fitzgerald, "Most Young People Are Not Reading Newspapers," *Editor & Publisher*, April 28, 1990; Debrah Gersh, "Reaching the Teenage Reader," *Editor & Publisher*, April 7, 1990 and Cathy J. Cobb Walgren, "Why Teenagers Do Not Read All About It," *Journalism Quarterly* 62 (Summer 1990): 340-47.

[7] Terry, 32.

[8] Reva Klein, "Reflected Glory," *The Times Educational Supplement*, Nov. 23, 1990.

[9] Mark Fitzgerald, "Student Paper Poll: Teens Read Dailies, Too," *Editor & Publisher*, March 23, 1991.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Elinor Kelley Grusin and Gerald C. Stone, "The Newspaper in Education and New Readers: Hooking Kids on Newspapers Through Classroom Experiences," *Journalism Monographs* 141, October 1993.

[12] American Society of Newspaper Editors, "Keys to Our Survival: Report on At-Risk and Potential Readers," ASNE Foundation, Washington, D. C., 1991.

[13] Junior Bridge, "Diversity's Slide: Newspaper Employment of Minorities, Women Remains Static, Still Lags Behind U.S. Workforce," *Quill*, April 1997, 43-46. See also "The Next Step Toward Diversity in the Newspaper Business," booklet by the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation (now the Newspaper Association of America) and The Poynter Institute for Media Studies, 1991; see also Ted Pease, "Race, Gender and White Male Backlash in Newspaper Newsrooms, paper presented to the Media Management and Economics Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Montreal, August 1992.

[14] Quintin Robinson, "Institute to Bridge Races Economically Nearing Realization," *The Commercial Appeal*, August 8, 1993, B1, B3.

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15 Onie R. Grosshans, Glenn Richardson, Faye Perkins and George L. White, "The High School Newspaper and Health Education: A Powerful Partnership," *Health Education*, August/September 1988, 49-51.

16 Jack Dvorak, "High School Publications Experience as a Factor in College-Level Writing," *Journalism Quarterly* 65, No. 1 (Summer 1988): 392-398.

17 Ibid.

18 "Illiteracy Hurts. TPA's 'STAR' program joins the helpers," *The Commercial Appeal*, A8.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE STUDENT PRESS OF MICHIGAN IS SUBJECT TO PRIOR REVIEW AND/OR PRIOR RESTRAINT

A Paper Submitted to the Scholastic Journalism Division
for Presentation at the Annual Convention of
the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
in Baltimore, Maryland, August 5-8, 1998

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Factors Affecting the Degree to which the Student Press of Michigan is Subject to Prior Review and/or Prior Restraint

Abstract

A 55-item questionnaire was sent to 350 randomly selected high school publications advisers in Michigan. The response rate was 55 percent after the third wave. While an adviser's experience was not significantly correlated with incidence of censorship, an adviser's perception of administration as likely to censor was. Size of school was significantly correlated with how advisers perceived administrators' views of prior review as was size of school and whether that school had an editorial policy regarding student publications.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE STUDENT PRESS OF MICHIGAN IS SUBJECT TO PRIOR REVIEW AND/OR RESTRAINT

The Supreme Court progressively has established more stringent restrictions for the freedoms of speech and press in the school setting since the 1969 *Tinker v.Des Moines Independent Community School District*[1] decision, which set the standard for determining whether students' personal expression within the confines of a school setting was acceptable. The majority opinion of the Court stated, "It can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate."[2]

Fewer than two decades later, two decisions in the 1980s allowed school boards and administrators to judge what is appropriate for students to view and hear in light of their emotional maturity[3] and to restrict those curricular materials and educational activities[4] that they deemed inappropriate, "pervasively vulgar,"[5] or "otherwise lacking in 'educational suitability'"[6] or those they thought would undermine the school's educational mission.[7] While these decisions did not necessarily change the Court's view toward constitutionally guaranteed freedoms within a school setting, they did provide the framework for the 1988 decision that prompted a reevaluation of the freedoms enjoyed by student journalists.

The ruling in *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*[8] provided the most sweeping restrictions on student freedom of expression. This ruling gave educators greater control over school-sponsored student expression, including school-sanctioned publications, theatrical productions and other expressive activities.[9] Hafen suggested the impact of *Hazelwood* lies in its limitation of any student speech that shows inconsistency with the institution's "basic educational mission."[10] Decisions to censor under *Hazelwood*, according to Hafen, must satisfy two queries: does the expression run counter to the mission of the institution, and is there a rational (not necessarily educational) basis for its removal?[11] As Hafen noted, "*Hazelwood* characterizes the entire category of student expression within official educational channels or activities as speech entitled to only minimal judicial protection."[12]

In light of the near-decade of *Hazelwood*'s influence, a study to determine some of the factors affecting the rate of prior review and prior restraint of Michigan's high school presses was undertaken in the spring of 1997, nine years after the Supreme Court's decision in *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier* (1988)[13], which arguably restricted the freedom of scholastic presses. The given factors included school size, adviser training, editorial policies, how favorably advisers perceive administrators' views of prior review to be, and how that perception affects the actual rate of prior review and/or restraint.

Dating from the 1969 *Tinker* decision, student publications have been viewed as forums for student opinion, and as such, have traditionally been free from censorship by administrative entities. However, with the *Hazelwood* ruling in 1988, student publications created as part of the school curriculum have been redefined as "school-sponsored expressive activities"[14] that cannot be considered open forums and as such are no longer subject to the freedoms offered by *Tinker*. Many scholars, as well as dissenting Justices Brennan, Marshall, and Blackmun, find such a restriction on freedom of expression untenable for a variety of reasons, including the lack of inculcation of critical thinking skills[15] and democratic values[16] and the potential financial responsibility that could be placed on schools for content of student publications.[17]

Dvorak and Dilts cited several court cases which whittled away at the rights of both teachers and students within the school environment.[18] They noted the Court's primary concern in all cases, including *Hazelwood,* seems to be maintaining order and efficiency in the school commensurate with community concerns to promote learning. In these cases, the rights of the teacher to choose methodologies and forms of expression and the rights of the student to express him- or herself seem to be secondary.

What previous research has found

Eveslage found that restraint of student expression was more common among advisers with five or fewer years experience and no journalism training.[19] Principals and advisers who were most aware of student press rights had different sources of knowledge. Highly aware principals were more likely to read about student rights in professional publications. Highly aware advisers were more likely to gather information about student press rights by attending professional meetings.[20] Eveslage also found that restraint was higher among principals and advisers who were more aware of student press rights.[21]

In a study of Kentucky advisers, Dodd found that advisers with more journalism training were more likely to address controversial topics based on their knowledge of student press rights and to challenge administrative decisions about student journalism.[22]

A 1993 national mail survey of high school journalism educators by Arnold found that new teachers with two or fewer years of experience, teachers from small towns and rural areas, and teachers who are not certified in journalism were most likely to seek assistance from the principal in making decisions about content. These advisers were also more likely to make changes themselves when student copy was sensitive, controversial, or critical of school administration.[23]

In terms of what advisers consider censorship, Dickson found that more than 70% of respondents knowledgeable about scholastic journalism said "an adviser should read the entire newspaper before publication."[24] Only 14.5% said a "good adviser" should not read the newspaper before publication. When it came to spelling mistakes, 37.5% said an adviser should make changes only if there wasn't time to tell the editor, and 25% said the adviser should make corrections whether or not there was time to tell the editor. However, Dickson also found that most experts agreed that advisers should not change copy for "inadequate research" (73.2%), unbalanced reporting (63.7%), taking a non-neutral position on a controversial political topic (83.7%), or addressing mature subjects (81.3%).[25]

Although Dickson found that a majority of principals had not kept materials from being printed, nearly all said they would censor certain subjects under specific circumstances. Objectionable material included vulgar language, sex, drugs, and student pregnancy.[26] Salomone concluded that although other intervening variables made it impossible to determine whether *Hazelwood* had, indeed, increased the amount of administrative censorship; in general, the larger the school, the more controversy over publications.[27] However, Dickson asserted that "principals in larger schools appear to be more tolerant of open student expression than are principals in smaller schools."[28] Also, Dickson noted that "advisers may be more likely to show principals such questionable articles because of the *Hazelwood* ruling."[29]

In a 1992 study, Dickson determined that "advisers who had taken more college journalism courses or who had more advising experience sometimes were more likely than their less-educated and less-experienced counterparts to use prior restraint."[30] Dickson found that school size affected whether controversial topics were addressed by the student newspaper.[31] He also found that prior restraint was used infrequently by advisers and principals.[32]

Editorial policies also may have an effect on acts of prior review and/or restraint by advisers and administrators. Eveslage found that lack of journalism training and lack of written policies on appropriate content affected restraint of student expression.[33] Eveslage also found higher reports of restraint among advisers and principals who were more aware of student press rights.[34] Dodd and Mays found that 48% of Florida high schools surveyed had a written policy while 33% did not; 10% of survey respondents did not know and 9% did not answer the question.[35]

In summary, advisers with less experience seem to address less controversial topics and exercise more restraint than more experienced advisers. Additionally, the size of the school affects the frequency with which controversial topics are addressed. In terms of what constitutes censorship, many experts do not include prior review within the definition of censorship. Most experts agreed that advisers should read student newspapers before publication. More than half said it was acceptable for advisers to change spelling during the course of prior review, and that doing so did not constitute censorship. However, for an adviser to change copy because of inadequate research, unbalanced reporting, non-neutral political reporting or coverage of mature topics was not considered appropriate by most experts.

Parameters and procedures of the current study

The general intent of this study was to survey high school publications advisers about their advising experience, their likelihood of censorship, and their perception of how favorably their administrators viewed censorship activities. Advisers were chosen because they would be able to provide information about their own views toward and acts of prior review and restraint. Additionally, advisers also could respond regarding their perceptions of their administrators' views toward and acts of prior review and prior restraint.

Hypotheses, research questions and operationalized terms

The following hypotheses and research questions were generated by a review of relevant literature:

H1) More experienced advisers will exercise prior review and/or prior restraint less frequently.
H2) An adviser who perceives administration as more favorable toward censorship will be more likely to exercise prior restraint.
Q1) How likely to censor student publications are Michigan advisers and administrators?
Q2) Does size of school affect the amount of censorship, and if it does, what is the relationship and what are the given reasons?
Q3) Does size of school affect whether that school has an editorial policy regarding student publications?

For the purposes of this study, censorship was defined as prior restraint or prior review. Prior restraint was defined in this study as "removing items in a publication prior to publication" or "removing questionable items prior to publication," and prior review was defined as "reviewing a publication prior to publication." Although these definitions differ somewhat from Dickson's, they were derived from consultations with members of the Michigan Interscholastic Press Association. While true censorship is often viewed as removal (prior restraint), some say that expecting the publisher to review copy prior to publication is tantamount to censorship, as it may affect the type or depth of the reporting, especially in high schools, where criticism of school officials could result in not only removal of the copy but sanctions levied against the offending students.[36]

For hypothesis one, advisers' experience was measured by years of teaching, length of time advising, and continuing education or training in journalism. Advisers were asked in open-ended questions to indicate the number of years they had been advising student publications and the number of years they had been teaching. In another question, advisers were asked what sort of continuing training they had received in journalism. A list that included university courses, undergraduate degree, graduate degree or course of study, workshops and conferences was provided for advisers to mark. Some elected to mark "other" and described that training.

For hypothesis two, advisers were asked closed-ended questions that offered a statement with a Likert scale of possible answers. The first statement stated, "The previous experiences of my administrator regarding student publications have been positive." Advisers were asked to respond using a Likert scale of 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree. Advisers also were asked to complete the statement, "My administrator views prior review (reviewing a publication prior to publication) as:" using a Likert scale of 1=highly favorable to 5=highly unfavorable.

For research question one, advisers were asked in an open-ended question for the average number of times per year the adviser had exercised prior restraint by removing items before publication. Several responded with qualified word responses such as "always," "rarely," "numerous," and "several," rather than quantified responses. In order to statistically analyze responses, only quantified numerical answers were considered. Other questions that addressed research question one were similarly constructed and analyzed; these asked for the average number of times per year advisers had exercised prior review, the average number of times per year administrators had exercised prior review, and the average number of times per year administrators had exercised prior restraint.

For research question two, demographic data (MHSAA classification) was associated with advisers' responses to two questions. The first question asked advisers to indicate the frequency with which they exercised prior review and/or restraint using a Likert scale of 1=frequently to 5=never. The second question (also used in hypothesis two) asked advisers to complete the statement, "My administrator views prior review (reviewing a publication prior to publication) as:" using a Likert scale of 1=highly favorable to 5=highly unfavorable.

For research question three, demographic data (MHSAA classification) was associated with advisers' affirmative or negative responses to one question, "Does your publication have a stated editorial policy?"

Method

A randomly selected sample of 350 public, private and/or parochial secondary schools in the state of Michigan was selected from the 720 high schools (public, private and parochial) in the state that are associated with the Michigan High School Athletic Association. Because two of the listed schools were not classified as A, B, C, or D, only the 718 classified schools were considered for the sample.[1] A random numbers table was used to generate a list of 350 random numbers from 1 to 718. Then the numbers were matched to their corresponding school entry and a database for mailing purposes was created using FileMaker Pro 2.0.

Included with the questionnaire was a cover letter that identified the source of partial funding (Michigan Interscholastic Press Association) and the rationale behind the research topic. Advisers were told in the cover letter that their responses would be confidential, not anonymous, for mailing purposes. An offer of sharing the results with advisers may have increased their willingness to participate, as 52 of the 195 respondents (26.7 percent) requested a copy of the results of the study.

Three waves of questionnaires were sent in order to maximize the response rate. The first wave was sent to publication advisers at the 350 randomly-selected secondary schools. Each letter and envelope was addressed to Student Publications Adviser. This first wave consisted of the cover letter, questionnaire and a stamped return envelope; 109 of 350 questionnaires were returned. The second wave consisted of a postcard reminder

[1] In 1996-97, the Michigan High School Athletic Association classified schools with 985 or more students as A, 519-984 as B, 262-518 as C, and less than 261 as D.

about the survey to all 350 potential respondents. It was sent three weeks after the initial mailing and resulted in an additional 37 responses.

Though responses were kept confidential, the researcher used a numbering system to determine which schools had returned questionnaires and which had not for third-wave mailings. The third wave involved remailing the cover letter, questionnaire and stamped return envelopes to all 208 non-respondents and resulted in another 50 respondents returning questionnaires.

Results

Demographics of respondents

The final response rate of 55% (195 of 354) was considered acceptable for a mail-distributed questionnaire. Because not all respondents answered every question, the respondent base number (n) is reported for each item.

Questionnaires were returned by 195 respondents respresenting 50 class A schools (26%), 46 class B schools (24%), 51 class C schools (26%), and 48 class D schools (24%) (SE_{prop} =3.6). The MHSAA directory listed a population of high schools that included 178 class A schools (25% of the total), 177 class B schools (24%), 179 class C schools (25%), and 184 class D schools (26%); this sample rather accurately reflected the true population. Of 194 respondents, 85% worked at public schools, 7 % at parochial schools, 6% at private schools and 2% at private parochial schools (SE_{prop} =3.6).

Advisers were asked to mark as many of the given sources of continuing education and training in journalism of which they had made use; some marked multiple sources. Of

175 respondents, 61% said they had attended workshops and 33% had attended conferences. Twenty-seven percent said they had training during an undergraduate degree program; 9% indicated they had received an advanced degree or course of study; and 25% said they had taken university or college courses in journalism (SE_{prop}=3.8). Other listed sources of continuing training were "on the job" experience (four responses), professional experience as a reporter (three responses), and none (ten responses). (See Figure 1.)

Most of the conferences and workshops attended by respondents were offered by Michigan State University and/or the Michigan Interscholastic Press Association (38 mentions of workshops and 27 mentions of conferences) and the printing companies (37 mentions of workshops and 7 mentions of conferences).

Advisers were asked to mark on a given list all the sources they used to gain information about court decisions affecting student publications. Of 183 respondents, 62% received information from commercial newspapers, 50% from MIPA publications, 25% from scholarly journals, 22% from news magazines, 22% from principals, 7% from the Internet, 16% from conferences and 9% from workshops. (See Figure 2.)

Relationship between advisers' experience and acts of censorship

Hypothesis one stated, "More experienced advisers will exercise prior review and/or prior restraint less frequently." This hypothesis was not supported by the research findings.

Previous research has indicated that advisers with more training were more likely to address controversial topics.[37] Advisers with less experience were found to be most likely to seek assistance from an administrator regarding content decisions and to make changes to controversial content.[38] One study found that advisers with less experience and training were more likely to exercise censorship,[39] while other research has indicated that advisers with more training are sometimes more likely to exercise censorship.[40]

Pearson correlations between the number of years advising and the average number of times per year an adviser exercised the right of prior restraint were not significant in a one-tailed test of significance with a Pearson correlation coefficient of .02 at p=.399 (n=174). Years teaching were not associated with incidence of adviser prior restraint to any degree of statistical significance in a one-tailed test of significance either with a Pearson correlation coefficient of -.05 at p=.254 (n=170).

An adviser's training and/or continuing education in journalism was associated positively and to a significant degree only with acts of prior restraint in terms of the variable "adviser has taken university or college courses in journalism" (X^2=38.95, d.f.=16, r=.049, p=.001). No other types of continuing education or training in journalism were associated with adviser's acts of prior restraint or adviser's acts of prior review to any statistically significant degree

Overall, an adviser's source of information about court decisions affecting student publications was not associated to a statistically significant degree with incidence of prior review or restraint. Incidence of adviser prior restraint was associated with getting information from a principal (X^2=31.36, d.f.=21, p=.068) and with getting information from MIPA (X^2=30.78, d.f.=21, p=.077), and both associations tended toward significance.

Administrative influence on adviser censorship

Hypothesis two stated, "An adviser who perceives administration as more favorable toward censorship will be more likely to exercise prior restraint." This hypothesis was partially supported.

Previous research has indicated that nearly all high school principals said they would censor certain subjects under specific circumstances, including vulgar language, sex, drugs, and student pregnancy,[41] and that inexperienced advisers are more likely to change student copy when it is sensitive, controversial, or critical of school administration.[42]

Advisers responded to a statement that their administrators' experiences regarding student publications were positive using a Likert scale of 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree. Of 181 respondents, 79% agreed or strongly agreed that their administrators' experiences had been positive. Thirty-three percent "strongly agreed" their administrators' experiences had been positive, and 46% "agreed;" 13% said they were "undecided." Only 7% said they "disagreed" that their administrators' experiences had been positive, while 2% "strongly disagreed." (See Figure 3.)

Advisers completed a statement of how favorably their administrators viewed prior review using a Likert scale of 1=highly favorable to 5=highly unfavorable. Of 170 respondents (SE_{prop}=3.8), nearly 50% said they perceived their administrators' views as favorable toward prior review, and only 14% said their administrators did not view prior review as favorable. Thirty-eight percent said their administrators viewed prior review as "highly favorable;" 11% said their administrators viewed it as "slightly favorable;" 38% marked "neutral;" 6% said their administrators viewed prior review as "slightly unfavorable;" and 8% said their administrators viewed prior review as "highly unfavorable."

An adviser's perception of an administrator's previous experiences with student publications was significantly correlated with the frequency with which an adviser exercised the rights of prior review and/or restraint. Advisers who felt their administrators' previous experiences with student publications had been negative exercised prior review and restraint more frequently. The Pearson correlation coefficient for both a two-tailed and a one-tailed test of significance was -.25 at $p=.001$ ($n=167$).

An adviser's perception of how favorably an administrator viewed prior review was significantly correlated with the frequency with which an adviser exercised prior review and/or restraint. The more favorably an adviser thought an administrator viewed the act of prior review and/or restraint, the more likely an adviser was to exercise prior review and/or restraint. The Pearson correlation coefficient for a one-tailed test of significance was .32 at $p<.001$ ($n=159$).

Frequency of adviser censorship

Research question one asked, "How likely to censor student publications are Michigan advisers and administrators?" Only 28.4% of 176 respondents indicated they did not exercise prior restraint. Another 3.4% said they exercised prior restraint less than once per year, but not zero times per year, making a total of 32% that had exercised prior restraint an average of less than once per year. This occurred when advisers indicated acts of prior restraint had happened an average of once in three years, for example. Only 15.3% said they had exercised prior restraint an average of once per year, while 8% said once or twice per year (average 1.5 times). Over 12% (12.5%) said they had exercised prior restraint an average of twice per year. Just over 5% (5.1%) indicated they had exercised prior restraint two to three times per year (average 2.5 times). Seventeen percent indicated they had exercised prior restraint an average of three to five times per year, while 8% said they had exercised prior six to nine times per year. A rather small percentage, 2.4%, said they had exercised prior restraint more than 10 times per year. (See Figure 4.)

When asked for the average number of times per year an adviser had delayed publication through prior review, 83% of 175 respondents said they had delayed publication through prior review an average of less than once per year. Only 5% said they had delayed publication through prior review an average of once per year, and 4% said they had delayed publication through prior review twice per year. Just over 5% indicated they had delayed publication through prior review more than twice per year. (See Figure 4.)

Advisers were asked for the average number of times per year their current administrators had exercised prior restraint. Sixty-six percent of 182 respondents said their administrators had exercised prior restraint an average of less than one time per year. Nineteen percent said once per year and 4% said twice. Six percent said three to five times per year, and 2% said six to nine times. Only 1% said their administrators had exercised prior restraint an average of ten or more times per year. (See Figure 4.)

Advisers were asked in an open-ended question for the average number of times per year their current administrator had delayed publication through prior review. Eightyseven percent of 177 respondents indicated their administrators had delayed publication through prior review an average of less than one time per year. Six percent said once per year and 2% said twice. Two percent said their administrators had delayed publication through prior review an average of three to five times per year and 1% said six to nine times per year. (See Figure 4.)

Advisers rated the frequency with which their administrators exercised the right of prior review and/or restraint using a Likert scale of 1=frequently to 5=never. Advisers were also offered the option of marking "other" and describing the frequency. Nine percent said their administrators exercised the right "frequently;" 5% said "often;" 15% said "occasionally;" 30% said "rarely;" and 40% said "never." Only 1% marked "other." (See Figure 5.)

Advisers also rated how frequently they exercised the right of prior review and/or restraint. Thirty-five percent said "frequently;" 12% said "often;" 24% said "occasionally;" 21% said "rarely;" and 5% said "never." Three percent marked "other." (See Figure 5.)

Relationship between school size and censorship

Research question two asked, "Does size of school affect the amount of censorship, and if it does, what is the relationship and what are the given reasons?" Previous research has indicated that school size affects the frequency of censorship. One researcher said that administrators in smaller schools tended to be less tolerant of student expression than administrators in larger schools.[43] Another study found that advisers in small, rural areas were more likely to seek assistance from their administrators when making content decisions.[44]

T-test comparisons of adviser's exercise of prior review and/or restraint among the various classifications of schools tended toward significance between class A and class C schools. Comparisons of class A and class C schools gave a t-value of 1.89, d.f.=73.73, p=.063. (See Table 1.)

How favorably an adviser thought an administrator viewed prior review and MHSAA classification of school were associated negatively (Pearson's R = -.304, p<.001). Advisers from larger schools (class A) reported that administrators were less likely to view prior review as favorable, while advisers from smaller schools reported that administrators were more likely to favor prior review. T-test comparisons of class A and class B schools gave a t-value of 3.14, d.f.=74.69, p=.002. Comparisons of class A and class C schools gave a t-value of 4.23, d.f.=66.03, p<.001. Comparisons of class A and class D schools gave a t-value of 3.30, d.f.=67.71, p=.002. (See Table 2.)

Relationship between school size and editorial policy

Research question three asked, "Does size of school affect whether that school has an editorial policy regarding student publications?" Previous research has found that not having written policies on appropriate content affected the rate of censorship.[45] Another study found that only 48 percent of Florida high schools surveyed had a written editorial policy.[46]

In this study, respondents were asked if their publication had a stated editorial policy. Seventy percent of 185 respondents indicated their publication did *not* have a stated editorial policy (SE_{prop}=3.7). Of these 185 respondents, 49 were from class A schools, 44 from class B, 50 from class C and 42 from class D. Larger schools were significantly more likely to have stated editorial policies than smaller schools. Forty-nine percent of class A schools had stated policies, while only 39% of class B schools, 22% of class C schools and 10% of class D schools did (X^2=19.77, d.f.=3, p<.001).

Implications

Limits on freedom of speech and press for high school students may threaten the freedoms of us all. In Michigan, a majority of administrators and nearly half of advisers are not restricting students' press rights on a frequent basis, yet there appears to be the potential for increased censorship in schools of all sizes.

The majority of Michigan's student publications advisers agreed or strongly agreed their administrators' previous experiences with student publications had been positive, yet nearly half said they perceived that their administrators viewed prior review as highly or slightly favorable. Advisers who felt their administrators' previous experiences with student publications had been negative exercised the rights of prior review and/or restraint more frequently. The more favorably an adviser thought an administrator viewed the act of prior review and/or restraint, the more likely an adviser was to exercise prior review and/or restraint.

The majority of Michigan advisers said their administrators exercise prior restraint or prior review one or fewer times per year and nearly half (47%) of advisers exercise prior restraint one or fewer times per year. Only 18% of advisers said they delay publication through prior review in an average year, yet 35% said they exercised the right of prior review and/or restraint frequently. Twelve percent said they exercised the right often and 24% said occasionally. Only 21% said rarely and a meager 5% said never. This means that 95% of advisers said they are exercising prior review and/or restraint over student publications.

School size affected not only how favorably advisers thought administrators viewed prior review, but also whether a student publication was likely to have a stated editorial policy. How favorably advisers in larger schools (class A) thought administrators viewed prior review differed significantly from how favorably advisers in smaller schools (classes B, C, and D) thought administrators viewed prior review. Only 30% of advisers indicated their school had a stated editorial policy for student publications.

Is removing items from student publications good teaching practice? Is removing items prior to publication a method of teaching, or does it just solve the immediate problem of inappropriate or inaccurate material existing in a publication? How do editorial policies enhance or hinder attempts to restrict content in student publications?

This study found that of 185 respondents, 30% said their school did have a stated editorial policy, while 70% said their school did not have such a policy. Additionally, larger schools were more likely to have stated policies than smaller schools. While the Dodd and Mays study on Florida high school editorial policies, which found that 48% of schools surveyed had an editorial policy, was done over four years ago, perhaps Michigan high schools have not had an impetus to draft and enact policies on student publications. In fact, one respondent indicated that s/he would like to have a policy but needed a model.

Although correlations were not statistically significant with these research findings, future research might address the correlation between existence of a written editorial policy and incidence of censorship by administrators and advisers.

Without surveying administrators about their attitudes toward prior review and/or restraint and their past experiences with student publications, one cannot be sure of the accuracy of advisers' perceptions of these attitudes and experiences. Conceivably, a pattern of miscommunication could have led to advisers believing one thing while administrators believe another. Instituting editorial policies could open the lines of communication between advisers and their administrators and decrease misperceptions, if they exist. In turn, this could lead to fewer incidences of prior review and/or restraint, as advisers may not fear adminstrative censure or employment repercussions.

Drafting editorial policies might help advisers, principals and students come to agreement on when and how student publications should address sensitive or mature topics. Additionally, working together on an editorial board to enforce editorial policies would cultivate a continued sense of community and shared responsibility within the school. Perhaps this sense of cooperation would help diminish adversarial relationships among students and advisers and principals.

Although this research did not produce statistically significant correlations, future research might look at the relationship between membership in state and national associations and incidence of censorship by administrators and advisers.

The seeming contradictions in these findings suggest that additional studies along the lines of those done by Click and Kopenhaver and Dickson need to be done to determine how Michigan's advisers define censorship, including prior review and prior restraint. Additionally, state and national press associations must continue to address these topics in light of legal developments through conferences and workshops. Universities offering undergraduate preparation for advising scholastic publications should also offer coursework which addresses these topics and appropriate teaching methods.

So, what does this study mean for state and national press associations? Because the bulk of advisers indicate that they are getting their information and training from conferences and workshops, it is imperative that press associations continue to offer workshops and conference sessions that relate to scholastic press laws. Additionally, based on the findings that fewer than half of Florida high schools and only 30% of Michigan high schools have written editorial policies, perhaps state and national press associations should consider offering workshops and/or conference sessions that address the importance of having written editorial policies as well as how to draft them.

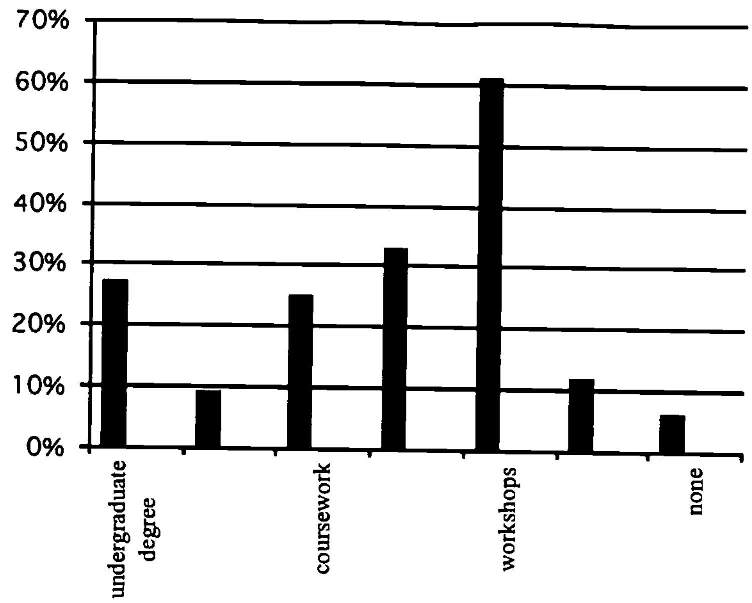

Figure 1: Sources of respondents' continuing education and training in journalism (n=175)

*Percentages total more than 100% because respondents were asked to mark all sources that applied to them.

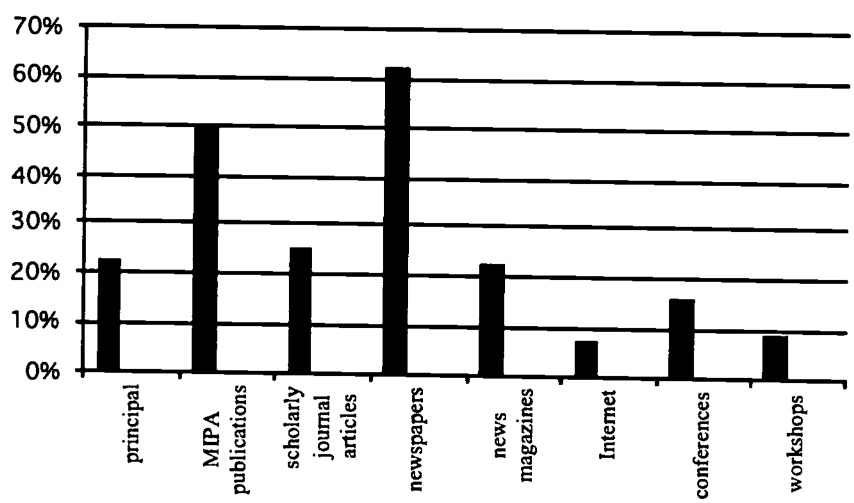

Figure 2: Sources of respondents' information about court decisions affecting student publications (n=183)

*Percentages total more than 100% because respondents were asked to mark all sources that applied to them.

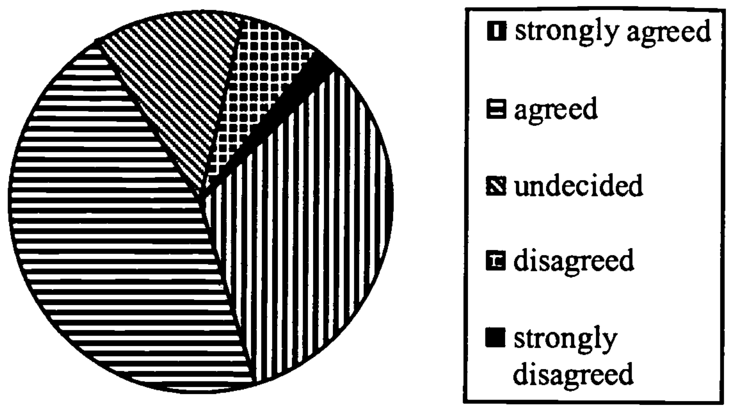

Figure 3: Adviser perceives that administrator's previous experiences with student publications have been positive (n=181)

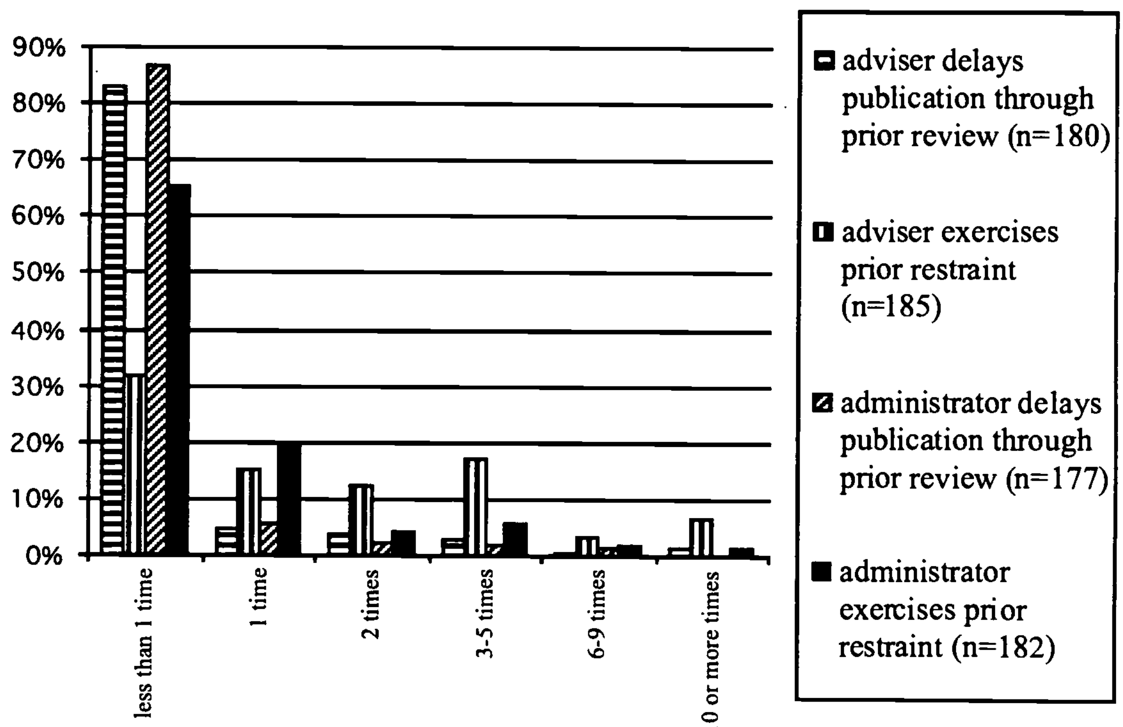

Figure 4: Average incidences of censorship in an average year

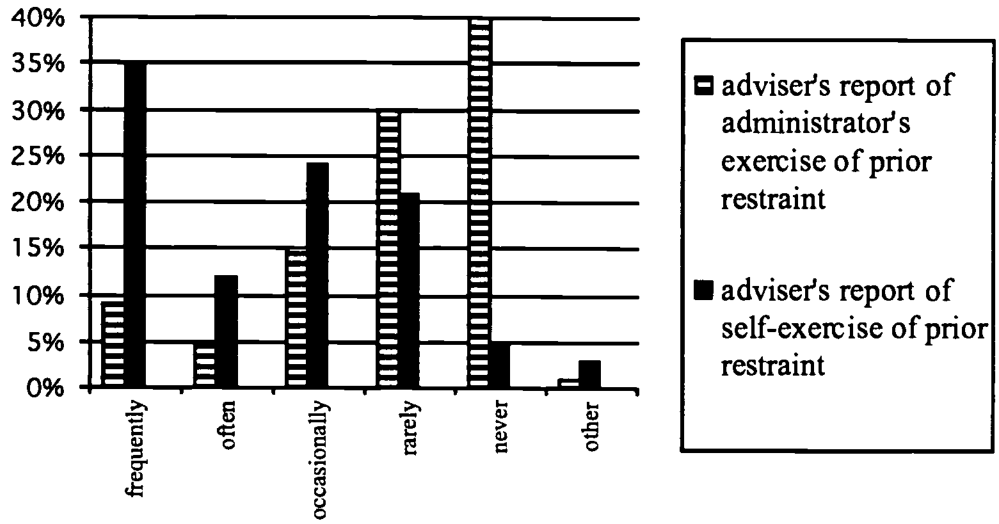

Figure 5: Adviser's report of exercise of prior restraint (n=183)

Table 1: T-test comparisons of advisers' self-reports of exercise of prior review/restraint by MHSAA classification (two-tailed tests of significance)

	t-value	degrees of freedom (d.f.)	p-value	SE-diff
AB	1.05	74.85	.297	.322
AC	1.89	73.73	.063	.298
AD	1.05	74.85	.297	.322
BC	.79	72.42	.430	.283
BD	.00	72.0	1.00	.308
CD	.79	72.42	.430	.283

(A=40, B=37, C=42, D=37; A-mean=2.83, B-mean=2.49, C-mean=2.26, D-mean=2.49)

Table 2: T-test comparisons of advisers' reports of administrators' view of prior review and MHSAA classification (two-tailed test of significance)

	t-value	degrees of freedom (d.f.)	p-value	SE-diff
AB	3.14	74.69	.002	.308
AC	4.23	66.03	<.001	.271
AD	3.30	67.71	.002	.277
BC	.70	65.82	.486	.252
BD	-.21	66.96	.835	.259
CD	-1.09	75.42	.281	.212

(A=40, B=37, C=42, D=37; A-mean=3.05, B-mean=2.08, C-mean=1.90, D-mean=2.14)

Table 3: Chi-square table of existence of stated editorial policy by MHSAA classification (n=185)

	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Total for all schools
had editorial policy	49%	39%	22%	10%	30%
did not have editorial policy	51%	61%	78%	90%	70%

ENDNOTES

1 *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* 393 U.S. 503 (1969).

2 *Ibid.*, 506.

3 *Bethel School District No. 403 v. Fraser* 478 U.S. 675 (1986).

4 *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico* 457 U.S. 853 (1982).

5 *Ibid.*, 871.

6 *Ibid.*

7 478 U.S. 675, 685.

8 *Hazelwood School District b. Kuhlmeier* 108 S.Ct. 562 (1988).

9 *Ibid.*, 563, 570.

10 Hafen, Bruce C., "*Hazelwood School District* and the Role of First Amendment Institutions," *Duke Law Journal*, 1988, 690, 691 (citing 478 U.S. 675, 685).

11 Hafen, 693.

12 *Ibid.*, 694.

13 108 S.Ct. 562.

14 *Ibid.*, 694.

15 *Ibid.*, 685.

16 108 S.Ct. 562, 573.

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Incorporating Media Studies in the High School Social Science Curriculum: Perspectives of South Florida Teachers

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Incorporating Media Studies in the High School Social Science Curriculum: Perspectives of South Florida Teachers

Although the media have become virtually ubiquitous in our information society, American high schools generally devote little attention to systematic study of the media. The United States lags behind several other countries in this regard. France has experimented with a form of media studies for more than 20 years (LaBorderie, 1984). In a reform of the British school curriculum, media studies occupies a prominent place on the agenda (Fuller, 1987). In addition, Australia is recognized as a world leader in its media literacy programs; Canada is seen as being close behind (Tyner, 1988). For example, Ontario requires media studies in all schools for grades 7-12. Other countries have made significant inroads in the area of media literacy, including Scotland, Chile, India, and Jordan (Silverblatt, 1995). Except for programs in New Mexico, North Carolina, and a few scattered school districts, media education is not required in the United States.

Megee (1997) wrote: "Unlike other developed nations, the United States has not yet established media education as a priority for everyday schooling." She argues cogently that although television has played a major role in American life for almost half a century, and although residents of the United States produce and consume more TV that people in any other country, "we teach less about who is communicating, for what purpose, with what effect, and on behalf of which individuals" than do many other countries. Similar concerns have been voiced for more than a decade. Considine (1987) noted that young people are given no guidance as to how to read, interpret, and critically evaluate the images and information they are exposed to even though they are exposed to more media messages than ever before, thus leaving students "visually vulnerable and potential victims of a language that can influence and manipulate them."

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the opinions of social science teachers in one of the nation's largest school districts regarding whether they sense a need for systematic study of the media at the high school level. A second concern was determining whether the social science curriculum is the most appropriate place for such study. The researchers also attempted to determine which elements or topics the surveyed teachers think would be most useful to include in a study of the media.

In their study, Sneed, Wulfemeyer, Van Ommeren, and Riffe (1990) concluded that American high schools, like many of their counterparts around the world, need to ensure that literacy is achieved in three areas: print, computer, and media. They argued that schools can no longer afford to design the curriculum as if print were still the primary form of communication. Instructors and school administrators must recognize that the advent of new information technologies means that visual, computer, and mass media literacy are necessary partners to print mastery.

One way to begin this media literacy effort is through offering media studies in the high school social science curriculum -- engaging students in the learning process by taking advantage of their natural interest in the media forms that saturate their very existence: VCRs, cable television, compact discs, radio, television, newspapers, movies, and the internet. One of the most accessible resources for educators interested in media literacy is an internet site titled "The Media Literacy On-line Project." The site includes information on such things as the influence of the media on body image, children and media violence, and youth and advertising. Another new resource is Potter's (1998) Media Literacy, a text that cuts through the sometimes byzantine world of media ownership, commercial advertising, the effects of media on consumers, and other topics to put the study of the media into more comprehensible form. Additionally, Robinson (1996) has compiled an introduction to media literacy education, guiding students as they gain the ability to access, decode, analyze, evaluate and produce communication in a variety of forms. Her work includes an annotated listing of books, handbooks, and newsletters pertinent to media literacy education.

Media literacy is defined as the ability to communicate competently in all media forms, as well as to understand, interpret, analyze, and evaluate media messages (Aufderheide and Firestone, 1993). It has been suggested that there are five core concepts that individuals should understand about the media.

1. All media are constructed representations based on the perspectives of those generating the messages.
2. All media use language constructions, using terms specific to the medium.
3. Audiences actively negotiate meaning and are not the passive receivers some have suggested they are.
4. Most media outlets are commercial businesses and economic concerns affect their decisions.
5. Media have embedded values and points of view based on how the medium is structured (Ferrington and Anderson-Inman, 1996).

How important is it for American high school students to become confident media consumers and users who perform confidently within, and decipher intelligently, the vast media culture that surrounds them? Toffler (1970) asserted nearly 30 years ago that the knowledge we teach should be directly related to the future: "Nothing should be included in the required curriculum unless it can be strongly justified in terms of the future. If this means scrapping a substantial part of the formal curriculum, so be it." Changes in the media industry in the time since Toffler penned those words make it even more imperative that schools take a more forward-looking approach to media literacy. However, rather than advocating scrapping part of the curriculum, we suggest including media studies within the already existing framework of the social sciences.

Time is of the essence, of course. Ziegler (1981) maintains that half of what a graduate engineer studies today will be obsolete within 10 years and Ornstein (1987) believes that half of what we will need to know to function is a scientific or technical job in the 21st century is not known today by anyone or has only recently been learned. This incredible explosion of knowledge and information not only affects the "hard" sciences but also impacts heavily upon the social sciences. Just as we teach students who it was who invented the cotton gin, we should also teach something of the development of radio, television, computers, and related industries.

The key component in media literacy, however, rather than an understanding and appreciation of the history of various media forms, is an understanding of the symbols, information, values, ideas, and messages that emerge from the media. The critical analysis dimension of media studies is at least as important as understanding the printed word. For high school students to critically think about elements of their culture -- popular music, soap operas, movies, radio, newspapers, magazines, on-line chat rooms, television news programs -- will allow them to know who constructs the images, why those images are constructed the way they are, and what effects those images have on them as individuals. This study attempted to determine what role, if any, social science teachers think they should play in helping students develop these abilities.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Should media studies be included in the high school curriculum, specifically within the social sciences?
2. How are high school students affected by the media and how might instruction in how to critically analyze and interpret mass media messages impact their understanding of events, issues, and concepts?
3. How prepared are high school social science teachers to instruct students about the media and help them become informed media consumers?
4. Which topics should be emphasized in the study of the mass media?

METHOD

In late 1997 and early 1998, researchers constructed and distributed a 58-question survey instrument. The survey addressed various aspects of the research questions listed above, and provided a means for respondents to indicate their opinions regarding the importance of various media and the aspects of media study that they thought would be most helpful to students. Many of the questions were on a five-point Likert scale with possible responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Several open-ended questions were also included, as were questions designed to ascertain demographic characteristics of the respondents.

After receiving approval from the school district and the principals of the individual schools, the researchers mailed questionnaires to each of 22 public senior high schools in Broward County, Florida, the nation's fifth largest school district. A total of 291 questionnaires were mailed, along with letters explaining the nature of the research and return mail envelopes. Packets were sent to the principals for distribution to the social sciences faculty members. Questionnaires were returned by 166 educators, for a response rate of 57 percent. Once received, data were subjected to frequency and ANOVA analysis using SPSS for Windows.

FINDINGS

Demographics

The majority of the respondents who reported their sex were males (57 percent) and a large majority were Caucasian (82.2 percent). Eleven percent were African-American and seven percent were Hispanic-American. Fifteen respondents did not indicate their race. The respondents ranged in age from 22 to 62 and had been teaching for as little as six months or as long as 36 years. Nearly half of the respondents held bachelor's degrees (45 percent), though others reported more advanced degrees, including 49.4 percent with master's degrees and eight respondents with either Ph.D.s or Ed.D.s.

History, social studies, and education were the most common college majors of the respondents. Only one majored in communications. Two others took their undergraduate minors in communications. The educators taught between one and four classes per term and most reported at least one section of one of their classes contained an element of media studies. However, nearly as many (46.5 percent) noted that none of their classes contained sections relating to analysis or study of the media.

Including Media Studies

Most of the respondents indicated that it is important to include media studies in high school (84.4 percent) and many also agree that social sciences is the most appropriate home for such study (63.8 percent). Only 4.2 percent of the respondents thought media studies should not be offered and 11 percent thought that media studies is important but should be positioned elsewhere in the curriculum. A sizable minority (36.8 percent) indicated that the social sciences curriculum is so filled already that it would be cumbersome for them to add sections about the mass media.

Several noted that they already include some degree of media studies in their classes, including discussion about current events, television, film and videos, newspapers, advertising techniques, bias, propaganda, media effects on society, media history, and political coverage. In addition to the media's effect on students, other reasons teachers listed for including media studies ranged from "it's important for cultural awareness" to "it's important for students to analyze and understand varying points of view." Most of those who indicated that they do not include media studies said there simply is not enough time to do so. Half a dozen wrote that the mass media are not relevant to their areas of teaching. Responses to open-ended questions regarding what might be de-emphasized to "make room" for media studies included women's history, multiculturalism, and world history. Several respondents suggested eliminating "early historical events" and several others advocated not eliminating anything from the current curriculum but rather changing the existing format in order to incorporate more media studies.

In addition to making their students informed media consumers, most of the teachers who responded to this survey indicated that there are other benefits to be derived from incorporating media studies into the curriculum. Most see using examples from the media as ways to make learning more enjoyable (90.3 percent) and a means toward helping students grasp complex concepts and develop a greater understanding of issues and events (89.1 percent). One respondent noted that one cannot do an adequate job of teaching any social science subjects without addressing the mass media. Another wrote that the study of the media and the study of government in a free society are inseparably linked.

Critical Thinking Skills

Nearly all (99.4 percent, 75.5 percent strongly agree) of the teachers indicated that they think it is important to help students develop critical thinking skills and a similar number believe it is important to teach students how to analyze media messages (97.5 percent), to detect bias in the media (97.6 percent), and to recognize examples of propaganda in the media (98.8 percent). Further, respondents sense that students are heavily influenced by messages in television and movies to which they are exposed on a daily basis (90.3 percent) and believe visual images have more impact on students than does the printed word (90.9 percent). Agreement with a statement regarding the heightened influence of visual messages was moderated by the respondent's age. Younger teachers were significantly more likely than older instructors to agree that visual messages impact students more than the written word does $F(4, 36) = 2.293$, $p<.002$. The answers to all other questions about the media or teaching media studies were not significantly affected by demographic variables.

Preparation for Teaching About the Media

Nearly three-fourths (72.4 percent) of the respondents indicated that they feel qualified to teach media studies within their existing classes, though nearly half (45.6 percent) indicated that the textbook(s) they use do not address media studies. Many (72.2 percent) agreed that textbooks should contain more chapters about the mass media. Additionally, fewer than half (44.5 percent) believe that their undergraduate training prepared them to teach about the media and their effect on society. Most (82.1 percent) indicated the belief that in the future undergraduate training for social science teachers should include more on media analysis. Table 1 summarizes the respondents responses to questions about the place of media studies in the social science curriculum.

insert table one about here

Respondents were asked to assign a level of importance to various aspects of mass media studies. They indicated that the five most important things to be incorporated would be: Issues involving freedom of the press and/or censorship, the potential effects of mass media messages on people, ethics in the mass media, legal rights and restrictions related to the mass media, and the roles and responsibilities of the mass media in society. Although the Internet and computer-mediated communication are still relatively new, the teachers responding to this survey see the reach and influence of the Internet as only slightly less important as an area of study. Other areas rated somewhat important to include were: Issues involving a trend toward group ownership of media outlets, general problems associated with news reporting, and issues regarding "blocking" children's access to certain content. Likely future developments in the media, economic concerns, technological aspects, and how the media operate were judged to be of moderate importance. Characteristics of those employed in the mass media, public perceptions of media employees, and media history were judged to be the three least important elements of the 16 listed. Table 2 summarizes the respondents' responses to questions about the importance of certain elements of media studies.

insert Table 2 about here

Respondents were also asked to rank-order various media and media-related industries in terms of their importance in a program of study of the media. Not surprisingly, the three primary sources of daily news and information, television, newspapers, and radio, were rated as the most important elements to include, with television and newspapers clearly the most important. Radio was a somewhat distant third and motion pictures and magazines were not far behind radio. Advertising, the Internet, and the recording industry were also seen as moderately important, with books and public relations ranked as the least important elements to include. Table 3 summarizes the respondents rank-ordering of various media and media-related elements in the study of the media.

insert table 3 about here

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

A large majority of the high school social science teachers who responded to this survey believe that students in the U.S. should be taught how to be informed media consumers. Most also indicate that they think the social science curriculum is the place for that instruction to take place. Most also indicated, however, that although they feel qualified to teach about the media, they have received little if any training in how to do so and also noted that most of the texts they use are of little help in this regard. They agree that future training of high school social science teachers should include more on teaching students how to critically analyze media messages and systematically study the media in general. In addition, these educators see using current examples from the media as a way to make learning more enjoyable and as a means to explain difficult concepts through "real world" examples.

The teachers in this group indicate that students need to know how to critically analyze the media and be equipped to spot bias or propaganda. They believe students are heavily influenced by the messages in television programs and motion pictures that bombard them every day and are more susceptible to visual messages than to those that incorporate the written word alone.

It is not surprising in the age of instant communication that books are rated as relatively unimportant in the study of mass media. However, it is a bit surprising that public relations is rated the lowest of the elements listed. Public relations practitioners are often portrayed as people interested in using all available media to put the best possible "spin" on an event or issue. Such a portrayal was most recently seen in the 1998 film Wag the Dog. Although that film depiction and other common beliefs about public relations might be unfair generalizations, it would seem important that instructors help students understand that agencies, institutions, and advocacy groups have a vested interest in having their messages heard by the public.

It is also somewhat surprising that the Internet was ranked as relatively unimportant although in response to another question the respondents indicated that the reach and influence of the Internet is one of the most important elements to include in the study of the media. This apparent contradiction might indicate that the respondents see the Internet as something worthy of study as it continues to diffuse into society but that the level of diffusion has not yet reached a stage sufficient to rank the Internet as more important that some of the long-standing media forms. Also, although the average ranking for the Internet was low, more respondents placed it second in the rank-ordering than in any other slot, indicating, it seems, a wide difference in opinion regarding the importance of computer-mediated communication.

The respondents also indicate that the role of the media in our society and their possible effects on our daily lives are among the most important aspects of the media to include in classes or sections designed to develop informed media consumers. It appears to be no coincidence that freedom of the press and ethical concerns in decisions made by media practitioners are both rated as quite important by the members of this group. By their responses, these teachers seem to indicate that the media have rights and responsibilities and that high school students should be taught to respect the former and expect the latter.

This study demonstrates that many teachers are concerned about helping students learn more about the media. Even though most realized that something might have to be deleted from the curriculum in order to "make room" for media studies, most indicated that an effort should be made to help students understand how the media operate, how they should operate, the role they have played in our history, and the power they have to influence our lives both now and in the future.

Because some social science teachers feel less than adequately trained to offer such instruction, it might be fruitful to take a team-teaching approach, devising ways to facilitate the entree of scholastic journalism teachers into social science sections devoted to helping students become informed consumers of the media. In addition to teaching some students "the hows," it seems scholastic journalism teachers are uniquely qualified to teach ever more students "the whys." Those interested in media careers should be taught how to produce media messages that can be understood and that fulfill the goals of various media -- to inform, entertain, or influence. All students should be taught how to decipher and critically analyze those messages.

Limitations

Some caution should be exercised regarding attempts to generalize the findings of this study to broader populations. Although the findings are relatively consistent with earlier research, it could be that the teachers responding to this study are not representative of teachers in other parts of the country. Also, it is possible that teachers who returned questionnaires are more concerned about this topic than are those who chose not to indicate their opinions. Teachers from other parts of the country and those less concerned about including media studies in the social science curriculum might have different views from those expressed by the participants in this study.

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Table 1
Percentage of agreement with statements about media studies

STATEMENT	PERCENT AGREEING
Media Studies in Social Science Classes	
social science classes should include study of the media	84.4%
high schools should not offer instruction about the media	4.2%
students should study the media, but not in social science classes	11.4%
the social sciences curriculum is so filled, adding media studies would be burdensome	36.8%
using media examples makes learning more enjoyable	90.3%
using media examples makes understanding complex concepts easier	89.1%
Critical Thinking Skills	
students should be taught how to think critically	99.4%
students should be taught how to analyze media messages	97.5%
students should be taught how to detect bias in the media	97.6%
students should be taught how to recognize propaganda in the media	98.8%
students are heavily influenced by visual messages in the media	90.3%
students are more influenced by TV/movies than by the printed word	90.9%
Preparation for Teaching About the Media	
I feel qualified to teach about the mass media in social science classes	72.4%
social science textbooks contain information about the media	22.8%
social science textbooks should contain more media information	72.2%
the college training I received included information related to analysis of media messages	44.5%
college training for future social science teachers should include information related to analysis of media messages	82.1%

Percentages reflect the combination of those who agree and those who strongly agree.

Table 2
Perceived Importance of Media Elements/Information

ELEMENT	MEAN	S.D.
issues involving freedom of the press and/or censorship	8.66	1.82
the potential effects of media messages on people	8.61	1.83
ethics in the media	8.56	2.14
media rights and legal restrictions	8.11	2.14
roles and responsibilities of media in society	8.03	2.16
the reach and influence of the Internet	7.90	2.28
trend toward group ownership of media outlets	7.05	2.52
general problems associated with news reporting	6.96	2.38
blocking children's access to certain content	6.86	2.66
technological aspects of the media	6.70	2.73
economics of the media	6.60	2.62
likely future developments in the media	6.58	2.43
how the media operate	6.35	2.65
public perceptions of media staffers	6.22	2.54
history of the media	5.89	2.71
characteristics of media staffers	5.61	2.69

Respondents rated each element on a scale of 1-10 with "10" indicating "very important."

Table 3
Rank-Ordering of Selected Media/Media-Related Industries

MEDIUM/INDUSTRY	MEAN	S.D.	MEDIAN	MODE
Television	4.06	3.72	2	1
Newspapers	4.65	3.07	4	1
Radio	5.51	2.43	5	5
Motion Pictures	5.55	2.59	5	5
Magazines	5.59	2.29	6	8
Advertising	5.68	2.55	5	4
Internet	5.76	2.87	6	2
Records	5.88	2.77	6	10
Books	6.44	2.83	7	9
Public relations	6.99	2.98	8	10

Respondents were asked to rank-order the selections in regard to their importance in media studies with "1" being the most important and "10" being the least important.

Education for Scholastic Journalism Revisited: Are We Doing Enough?

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Abstract

The Journalism Education Association in 1987 said high school journalism programs were at risk. We surveyed all colleges and universities in the country with communications-related programs to try to determine to what extent they were preparing future and current scholastic journalism teachers. We concluded that few journalism and mass communication programs were involved in scholastic journalism education and that those that were involved weren't doing enough.

Education for Scholastic Journalism Revisited: Are We Doing Enough?

Almost a quarter of a century ago, Dick Johns and John Butler (1974) looked at teacher certification in journalism and concluded that "any real evidence of drastic change taking place is scarce" (p. 16) They recommended that members of what was then the Secondary Education Division of the Association for Education in Journalism (AEJ) "take a long hard look at teaching methodology in the area of secondary school journalism – a look to find out what is currently being offered and what deficiencies exist" (p. 17). Johns and Butler suggested that the AEJ "provide a coordinating effort for journalism education – a clearing house (a central force united to help put more teeth into standards, directions of journalism education)" (ibid.).

More than a decade later, the Journalism Education Association in a report titled *High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadlines* (JEA, 1987) concluded that high school journalism programs were at risk. The JEA cited such things as declining academic status, lack of training and certification, censorship, financial difficulties, declining student enrollments, and insufficient support from professional media, colleges, counselors and colleagues (p. 106).

Concerning the lack of support from colleges and universities, the report stated: "Higher education has not assumed a sufficiently aggressive role in nurturing scholastic journalism" (p. 107). It specifically criticized higher education for not accepting academic-based secondary school journalism courses for academic credit for incoming students, not identifying prospective journalism teachers and not providing "a curriculum to prepare them for the profession" (p. 107).

Death by Cheeseburger: High School Journalism in the 1990s and Beyond (Freedom Forum, 1994) charged that college journalism programs still weren't adequately addressing scholastic journalism education. It stated: "Some experts attribute the shortage of college-trained high school journalism teachers to the small number of colleges offering majors in journalism education" (p. 13). It noted that some journalism programs had dropped their majors in journalism education over the previous 10 years. Mary Sparks, a past president of the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication, was quoted as saying that scholastic journalism education isn't a priority for most journalism programs, who "feel their main job is to train people to be professional journalists, and they are also driven by the numbers" (p. 14).

On the 10th anniversary of the JEA's call for higher education to improve secondary education, we undertook a survey of journalism programs at colleges and universities to determine what they were doing in the area of scholastic journalism education. We wanted to find out whether they were offering coursework that matched recommendations by the JEA Commission on the Role of Journalism in Secondary Education and to determine the characteristics of college and university journalism programs were most involved in scholastic journalism education..

Studies of Education for Scholastic Journalism

Studies from 1970s onward have found that few advisers were adequately trained. J William Click (1977), for example found that 57 percent of advisers he surveyed in 14 states had never taken a college journalism course. Only 18 percent held state certification in journalism and just 13 percent had minored in journalism (p. 2). In a study 15 years later, Dvorak (1992) found that 28 percent of journalism teachers/advisers held state certification in journalism, second behind English (78 percent) and only somewhat ahead of social studies as a certification area (18 percent). Only 8 percent of journalism teachers/advisers had majored in journalism. Dickson and Paxton (1997) found that 20 percent of high school newspaper advisers had more than 24 college hours in journalism but just over half had six hours or less.

Education for scholastic journalism is driven by state certification requirements, and many states had minimal or no requirements for teaching high school journalism beyond certification in some other teaching area. A 1965 survey by Robert J. Cranford reported by Windhauser and Click (1972) found that two-thirds of the 45 states responding had journalism certification policies requiring fewer than 15 hours of journalism. Windhauser and Click found only 40 percent of the states in 1971 required publications advisers to have the equivalent of a minor in journalism (15-24 hours), and only two states required more than 24 hours (Yagle, 1975, p. 9). They found that 25 of the 50 states and the District of Columbia did not require a journalism major or minor for certification in journalism. Comparing their study to Cranford's in 1965, they noted few improvements (Yagle, 1975, p. 10).

Several researchers have made recommendations about education for scholastic journalism. For example, Click and Windhauser (1971) developed a proposed curriculum for teacher certification. Dean (1973) surveyed high school journalism teachers, high school principals, journalism deans and department chairs, and newspaper editors in order to devise proposals for pre-service training programs for high school journalism teachers. He found that most respondents thought students wanting journalism certification should have 24-30 hours in journalism and that minors should take 12 to 18 hours of journalism. He suggested both a college methods course for teaching journalism and one for advising publications.

John Knowles (1974) surveyed 138 colleges and universities identified by publications produced by The Newspaper Fund and Paul Peterson (1970) as providing a course for high school journalism teachers and publications advisers. Of 100 programs responding, he found that 84 offered a publications course. Only 38 offered a methods course in teaching journalism, though 48 included a unit on methods in the publications course.

Pamela D. Yagle (1975) surveyed 117 colleges and universities, though she does not state how those programs were selected. A total of 104 schools responded. Just under a third of programs responding offered summer workshops (p. 46). Fifty-eight programs either had or were planning scholastic journalism courses, and 50 offered a journalism education sequence. (p. 49). Of the 48 schools providing the number of hours in their journalism education program, 25 provided a 21-hour to 30-hour sequence and 13 required 31 or more hours. The rest had fewer than 21 hours. (p. 50).

In order to determine the skills for which advisers had the greatest need, John William Click (1977) surveyed 300 newspaper and yearbook advisers in 14 states and the District of Columbia and 51 college professors who were known to teach publications courses for high school publications. He compared rankings of college and high school educators to 53 statements of needs and found significant differences.

Stephen Shenton and Anne Smith (1982) undertook to determine how many colleges and universities offered a scholastic journalism program. (Although they say they looked through catalogues of all accredited schools, apparently they used the AEJMC Directory listing, as they noted in a subsequent paper.) They determined that 38 journalism and mass communications programs listed offered some sort of journalism education program.

Doug D. Whittle (1983) also studied the needs of advisers in one state for workshops. He determined that newspaper advising and teaching, photography and journalism teaching methods were the top areas of greatest need (p. 49).

Julie Dodd (1984) surveyed high school principals and newspaper advisers in Kentucky about their opinion of important characteristics for newspaper advisers. She concluded that colleges and universities with journalism certification should include journalistic writing, editing, design, advertising and press law as well as methods of teaching journalism and advising publications in the secondary school (p. 21).

The report of Journalism Education Association's Commission on the Role of Journalism in Secondary Education (JEA, 1987) called upon colleges and universities to do several things: 1. examine course offerings and make adjustments to meet teacher and secondary needs; 2. re-examine admission standards to define components of secondary journalism courses that would be accepted for academic credit; 3. offer master's degree programs and continuing education programs that focus on journalism teacher/adviser preparation as a career option; 4. offer in-school and/or off-campus assistance for scholastic journalism programs; and 5. lobby for development of a performance-oriented Advanced Placement journalism education. It also called on colleges and universities that sponsor state scholastic press associations to hire adequately prepared personnel and provide adequate time and financial support for the program (p. 113).

As part of the JEA report, John Butler reported on a study of JMC programs listed in the 1985-86 AEJMC Directory about their scholastic journalism program. Of the 186 institutions surveyed, 129 responded. Of the 39 accredited institutions with graduate programs that responded, 22 offered workshops or short summer classes. Ten of them reported they provided no encouragement to teachers and two had "no interest or participation from high school teachers" (JEA, p 102). Fifty-six of 61 non-accredited programs responding said they offered no encouragement for teachers to continue their journalism training and 37 of them reported no teachers taking classes in 1985. Twenty of the 61 schools reported offering no regular or summer courses of interest to journalism teachers. Six of 18 schools with a graduate program that were not accredited reported teachers took courses in 1985, and four offered short summer courses or workshop.

Butler concluded that schools with graduate programs, whether accredited or not accredited, appeared to be "more sensitive to the needs of teachers" and that many journalism programs did not seem to attract enough teachers to continue teacher training programs. He also called for studies to see why programs that house scholastic associations "falter in promoting strong programs" (p. 103).

The Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication and the American Newspaper Publishers Association sponsored a High School Journalism Summit on May 3, 1987, in New York City. Its report, *The Status of Scholastic*

Journalism: An Action Agenda ("The Status," 1988) noted that the problem of having adequate college programs for scholastic journalism was "a vicious circle" because universities in states that don't require certification of high school journalism teachers may not allow scholastic journalism courses to be use for college entrance credit and they also may offer few courses or summer workshops for journalism teachers because of lack of demand (p. 3).

The ASJMC/ANPA study also reported a survey conducted by Mary Sparks of Texas Women's University as to what ASJMC member schools were doing in scholastic journalism education. Whereas 63 schools in 29 states reported having a course designed for high school journalism teachers, only 42 of them stated that they offered it at least once a year (p. 16).

The report recommended that ASJMC administrators "encourage faculty members to treat high school journalism as a first-class subject." It supported the JEA's call for minimum certification standards for journalism educators and called for member schools to hold workshops for beginning and experienced teachers and to encourage their scholastic journalism liaisons to join the AEJMC Scholastic Journalism Division (p. 17).

Sharon Hartin Iorio and R. Brooks Garner (1988) found that one-day skills workshops were the types of university-sponsored programs that were most desired by Oklahoma teachers, followed by summer workshops for teachers and advisers, individual student writing competition, one-day skills workshops for students and workshops conducted via teleconference (p. 992). The type of instruction at universities most desired was publication in the small school, followed by yearbook design, yearbook copy writing, photography, news writing and editing, and newspaper design (p. 993).

The ASJMC's Journalism Education in the High School Committee surveyed members schools in 1990 in an effort to obtain a list of high school liaisons and to compile a collection of activities and strategies to help in recruiting and retaining high school students in general and minority students in particular (Eveslage, T., & ASJMC, 1991, p. 21). The committee gave three reasons for the importance of strengthening the relationship between college and high school journalism programs: 1. to meet the ACEJMC's standard on public service; 2. to fulfill ACEJMC's Standard 12 requirements to "recruit, advise, and retain minority students"; and 3. to recruit better students. (p. 21). In a report on the preliminary findings of the committee, Tom Eveslage (1991) provided a related reason for trying to recruit more minority students – the under-representation of minorities in the media (p. 12).

The committee identified six types of activities. Listed from most common to least common, they were: 1. workshops, conferences and programs on campus; 2. personal outreach through speeches, visits, press association contacts, etc.; 3. indirect outreach through publications, mailings, admissions office; 4. scholarships and financial incentives; 5. follow-through, such as mentoring, alumni links, student organizations; and 6. miscellaneous opportunities (p. 22).

Ten years after his first study on the subject, Shenton (1992) surveyed the 38 institutions he had studied a decade earlier plus an additional institution that appeared to have a scholastic journalism education program. He determined that 10 of the institutions that had previously listed such a program in the AEJMC directory no longer did, though one other institution had added such a program. In the 1992 survey, only editing, reporting, and introduction to mass communication were required by at least half of the 29 institutions listing a program (p. 13).

William D. Downs Jr. (1996) conducted 70 interviews with recent recipients of Gold and Silver Crown awards from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association and with other successful publications advisers, workshop directors, college educators, and directors of state and national scholastic press organizations. The study produced a number of proposals for colleges to assist scholastic journalism programs and to more effectively train teachers and publications advisers. Downs made 13 recommendations for improving the training of teachers and publications advisers. He listed 44 classes, from advertising to yearbook production, that could be offered (p. 20).

Recent studies have shown the importance of scholastic journalism. For example, Dvorak (1988), Dvorak (1989), Dvorak (1990), Dvorak, Lain and Dickson (1994), Moran & Dvorak (1994), and Dvorak (1998) documented the academic benefits high school journalism courses were to students. Also, 30 percent of newspaper professional employees (editors, copy editors, reporters, photographers and artists) responding to a national survey reported that they first decided to choose a newspaper career while in high school, 38 percent had taken a high school journalism class, and 55 percent had worked on a junior or senior high newspaper (ASNE, 1989, pp. 108-109).

Methodology of the Present Study

Previous studies have used a variety of indicators of education for scholastic journalism, such as whether a teaching methods course was taught, whether a course in scholastic journalism was offered or whether a scholastic journalism liaison was in place.

In order to come up with a broader definition of a scholastic journalism education program, we determined that education for scholastic journalism for the purposes of this study could include: 1. instruction of students who planned to be high school journalism teachers; 2. instruction for students who wanted certification to teach high school journalism; or 3. outreach to current high school teachers or publications advisers. Thus, we defined involvement in education for scholastic journalism as offering a course, seminar or workshop for current or prospective high school journalism teachers or publications advisers. Though such things as student journalism competitions might be held by programs meeting our definition, those activities were not a factor in identifying a scholastic journalism program.

To obtain a more complete picture of which institutions offered education for scholastic journalism, we obtained a list from Patterson's Educational Directories Inc. of all 681 four-year colleges and universities in the country that provided instruction in communications-related fields. We assumed that any such institution might provide education in scholastic journalism. We sent a postcard to all 681 institutions addressed to "Head, Jrn/Mass Communication." All the recipient had to do was check one of three blanks on the back of a business reply postcard that was supplied. The options were: 1. that there was a program in the academic unit for instruction or certification of students wanting to be high school journalism teachers or for outreach to current high school teachers or publications advisers; 2. that there was such a program elsewhere on campus but not in that unit; or 3. that there was no such program on that campus. The back of the postcard was printed with a business reply postal permit; so recipients could simply check the appropriate blank and drop it in the mail. Respondents also were asked the name and phone number of a contact person if there was a scholastic journalism program.

We received 195 reply postcards from that mailing: 67 from administrators indicating their unit had such a program, 11 from administrators indicating that such a program resided elsewhere in the institution, and 117 from administrators indicating that the institution had no such program. We sent a survey to the 67 programs that self-identified as having a scholastic journalism program or that reported such a program was located in a school or college of education. We also sent a follow-up notice to 133 units that had not responded to the postcard but that we thought might have a scholastic journalism program. That list consisted of units that fit one or more of the following criteria: 1. It had a listing in the current AEJMC Directory for a bachelor of arts in education or a bachelor of science in education or for a program in journalism education, teaching or secondary education or a similar title (13 institutions); 2. It was found by Yagle (1975) to offer a scholastic journalism course; or 3. It had a nationally known journalism department or school.

We received responses to the second mailing from 42 institutions that had not returned the postcard, with 20 of them reporting that they had a scholastic journalism program as described. Thus, after the second mailing we had a response of 237 of 681 institutions (35 percent).

The survey asked questions about the institution and such things as the types of activities the unit offered, the number of types of courses offered and number of faculty teaching scholastic journalism courses. The list of courses and topics offered was derived mainly from the Journalism Education Association's proposed Standards for Teacher

Education (JEA, 1987, pp 104-105). Other activities were suggested by previous studies. The completed survey was reviewed by three members of the AEJMC Scholastic Journalism Division, who provided suggestions. Surveys were mailed during the spring of 1997.

Of the 88 JMC units in the two mailings that identified themselves as having a program in scholastic journalism as described on the postcard, 53 returned a completed survey (60 percent). To underscore the uncertainty of some administrators about whether their unit had activities related to scholastic journalism education, three administrators that had responded on the postcard that they had a scholastic journalism program as described returned a survey stating that they did not have such a program. Thus, we had completed surveys from 50 units reporting a scholastic journalism program as defined in this study.

Demographic Information About Responding Programs

Seventy-two percent of the institutions reporting (N=50) were public and 28 percent private. Forty-five percent had an undergraduate enrollment of 10,000 or less, and 45 percent reported fewer than 200 undergraduate majors in journalism/mass communication. Just over half of the academic units in which the scholastic journalism education program was housed (52 percent) had graduate programs, and four of the units had doctoral programs. Forty-four percent of the programs reported offering only an undergraduate journalism-related major but no graduate program, and 4 percent offered no undergraduate journalism-related major.

Thirty-one of the 50 programs reported offering a certifiable undergraduate journalism major or minor. Four programs reported having a master's degree in scholastic journalism. Half of the programs reporting were accredited, and two-thirds belonged to the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Twenty-three programs reported having one or more full-time faculty members involved in teaching undergraduate courses primarily designed for students seeking secondary school journalism teacher certification. Two of those programs reported having two such full-time faculty, and two reported having four or more. Ten programs reported having part-time faculty normally teaching a scholastic journalism course. One of them reported two such part-time faculty, one reported three, and one reported four. Fourteen programs reported having full- or part-time faculty involved in teaching graduate-level courses designed primarily for journalism teachers. Five of them reported two such faculty, one reported three and one reported having at least four.

Seven of the 50 programs reported having a statewide scholastic press association headquartered at the institution, and six reported housing a local or area one. One program was headquarters for more than one such organization.

Responses to Survey Questions

Nineteen programs reported that they certified students in journalism as either a primary or secondary teaching area, 18 reported certifying students in journalism in a secondary area only, and one reported certifying in journalism only in a primary teaching area. Twenty-seven of those 38 programs (71 percent) reported certifying five or fewer students a year.

Three of the 38 certifying programs (8 percent) reported a journalism methods course was required for students wanting primary certification in journalism, and 17 (45 percent) reported one was required even for students wanting journalism as a secondary teaching area.

Of the 20 programs offering journalism certification as a primary certification area, 7 reported that between 24 and 29 hours were required, 7 reported that 30-32 hours were required, and 6 reported that 33 or more hours were required. Fourteen of the programs stated that a student could be certified in journalism as a secondary teaching area with fewer than 21 hours of journalism courses. Only seven of the 38 programs that reported certifying students (18 percent) actually oversaw their students' practice teaching experience.

Thirty of the programs (60 percent) reported a moderate amount of contact or quite a lot of contact with the state scholastic press association. Twenty-one programs (42 percent) reported offering courses or workshops for college credit for continuing education of secondary school teachers. Thirty-nine programs (78 percent) reported outreach to high school journalism teachers and advisers. Twenty percent of the 39 programs characterized the outreach to high school teachers and advisers as not very successful, 44 percent called it moderately successful and 36 percent termed it quite successful.

Respondents also were asked how successful their outreach efforts were in attracting high school students into their program. Thirty-eight programs reported such attempts at outreach. Five (13 percent) termed them not very successful, 22 (58 percent) called them moderately successful, and 11 (29 percent) stated they were quite successful.

Respondents were asked if their outreach efforts through writing competitions, workshops and camps were successful and, if so, why. The quality of instruction by their own faculty members was the reason most given for success. Instruction by top-notch high school advisers was rated second in importance and instruction by media professionals third.

Twenty-five of the 38 programs having teacher certification programs (66 percent) reported that they staffed courses primarily designed for journalism teacher or adviser training. Fourteen of them offered fewer than six hours of such courses, four reported 6-8 hours and seven reported 9 or more hours.

Twenty-six programs reported attempting to attract students to their journalism teacher certification program. Forty-two percent of them called the effort not very successful, 50 percent called it moderately successful and 8 percent termed it quite successful.

Table 1 reports the journalism courses required for students wanting state certification. News writing was most often required, followed closely by copy-editing, media law and reporting.

Table 2 reports journalism competencies taught in units or modules of courses required of students wanting state certification. Units or modules concerning writing various types of leads and news writing were required by the most programs, followed by media law topics, punctuation and grammar, and copy-editing. Other competencies most often taught were reporting, interviewing and journalistic ethics.

Table 3 reports teaching and advising competencies taught in units or modules of courses required of students wanting state certification. Knowledge of prior review and prior restraint of publications were taught most often, followed by duties of the adviser and advertising.

Table 4 reports the percent of programs offering workshops, competitions and other outreach. The types of outreach offered most were on-campus summer workshops for teachers and advisers and individual high school student writing competitions, followed closely by one-day on-campus skills workshops by faculty for high school students.

Table 5 reports subjects offered for high school journalism teachers and advisers during workshops and student publication days. Newspaper design was offered by the most programs, followed closely by news writing and editing, using a computer, and photography.

Summary and Conclusions

We drew two basic conclusions from the study: that few colleges and universities were involved in education for scholastic journalism and that many of those that were involved were not doing enough.

That only about 88 colleges in the country have programs for scholastic journalism education is likely close to the actual number. No more than 84 of the programs responding to earlier surveys offered an activity defined as scholastic journalism education, and we question whether very many administrators with a program in education for scholastic journalism would not have taken the time to place a check on the postcard we sent and returned it. Fewer than 100 educational institutions can hardly meet the needs of the country's secondary schools.

That the programs offering scholastic journalism education aren't meeting the needs of both high school journalism teachers and students wanting to be high school journalism teachers also is indicated by our survey results. The activity most wanted by journalism advisers and teachers in Oklahoma as determined by Iorio and Garner (1988), the publication in the small school, was taught at only 24 percent of the collegiate programs offering workshops. Yearbook design, ranked second by Oklahoma teachers, was taught by only 34 percent of the programs offering workshops, and yearbook copy writing, ranked third, was offered by only 24 percent of the programs. Photography, news writing and editing, and newspaper design – which were less desired – were offered by considerably more programs.

Programs responding did a better job in providing teaching competencies proposed by the Journalism Education Association. More than half of the certifying programs offered most of the competencies proposed by the JEA, and broadcast writing was offered by nearly half. Still a number of competencies were not taught by as many as 40 percent of the programs, particularly two non-skills topics: literary works of famous journalists and literary analysis and criticism. Interestingly, almost as many programs now teach about electronic publications as teach review writing. Also, only nine of the 21 teaching and advising competencies were offered by half of the certifying programs. Six of the competencies were offered by fewer than one-third of the certifying programs.

The results of the study question suggest that nearly 25 years after Johns and Butler's article, we can still say that "any real evidence of drastic change taking place is scarce." Further study needs to be done to determine why more journalism programs aren't offering education for scholastic journalism and why programs with a scholastic journalism component aren't teaching more of the recommended competencies. As suggested by the JEA study (1987) and others, it is hard for academic programs to justify special courses, such as a methods course, for only a handful of students. However, more might be done in the way of workshops and short courses.

This study has again shown not only that many collegiate journalism and mass communication programs are falling short in their service mission but also that defining education for scholastic journalism is not an easy job. Perhaps as Johns and Butler (1974) also suggested, members of the Scholastic Journalism Division can play an important role in meeting the needs of secondary schools in improving education for scholastic journalism.

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Table 1 (Question 24)

Journalism courses required of students wanting state certification

	Percent of Programs Granting Certification That Offer Course (N=35)
News writing	83%
Copy-editing	66%
Journalism or mass media law	66%
Reporting	60%
Publication advising	51%
Photography	49%
Publication layout and design	46%
Theory or philosophy of journalism	31%
Journalism or mass media history	29%
Combined course in copy-editing and layout	20%
Advertising	20%
Feature writing	17%
Journalism or mass media ethics	14%
Broadcasting	12%
Business and financial practices for publications advisers	9%
Basic yearbook techniques	9%
Editorial and column writing	6%

Table 2 (Question 25)

Journalism competencies taught in units or modules of courses required of students wanting state certification

	Percent of Certifying Programs Providing the Competency (N=32)
Writing various types of leads	88%
News writing	88%
Freedom of the press, censorship, libel	81%
Punctuation and grammar	81%
Copy-editing	81%
Reporting/covering beats	78%
Interviewing	75%
Journalistic ethics	75%
Feature writing	72%
Design for various types of publications	72%
Journalistic (wire service) style	68%
Writing headlines	68%
History of journalism	65%
Photography	61%
Writing photo cutlines	61%
Journalistic search techniques	58%

Table 2 Continued

Journalism competencies taught in units or modules of courses required of students wanting state certification

	Percent of Certifying Programs Providing the Competency
Writing depth stories	55%
Broadcasting	48%
Sports writing	39%
Opinion and column writing	39%
Review writing	29%
Electronic publications and web sites	26%
Semantics and/or proper usage of words for a particular audience	23%
News bureau organization	13%
Literary work of famous journalists or literary works	13%
Literary analysis and criticism	7%

Table 3 (Question 26)

Teaching and advising competencies taught in units or modules of courses required of students wanting state certification

	Percent of Certifying Programs Providing the Competency (N=30)
Prior review and prior restraint of publications	72%
Duties of the adviser	69%
Advertising	66%
Correcting student newspaper/yearbook copy for libel, privacy invasions	59%
General business practices for advisers	59%
Evaluating students' written work	59%
Yearbook publication and production	59%
Correcting student newspaper/yearbook copy for grammar, spelling, etc.	55%
Correcting student newspaper/yearbook copy for accuracy, fairness and balance	55%
The publications adviser's relationship with the principal	48%
Choosing a newspaper printer	41%
Selecting a yearbook company	41%
Publishing a newspaper (meeting deadlines, etc.)	38%
Selecting journalism text books, visual aids, and supplemental material	35%
Creating a publications staff and assigning duties	35%
Specific court cases pertaining to the high school student press	31%

Table 3 (Continued)

Teaching and advising competencies taught in units or modules of courses required of students wanting state certification

	Percent of Certifying Programs Providing the Competency
Staff motivation	28%
Publication budgeting	28%
Computer programs and word processing for student publications	28%
Arranging a school picture plan	21%
Organizing a subscription drive	10%

Table 4 (Question 12)

Outreach Activities Offered by Responding Programs

	Percent of Programs Offering the activity (N=50)
On-campus summer workshops for teachers and advisers	42%
Individual high school student writing competitions	42%
One-day on-campus workshops by faculty for high school students	40%
One-day on-campus programs with media speaker for high school students	32%
One-day skills workshops for area teachers and advisers	18%
Middle school outreach	16%
One-day skills workshops around the state	10%
Workshops/courses conducted via television	6%
Workshops/courses conducted via Internet	6%

Table 5 (Question13)

Subjects offered for high school journalism teachers and advisers during workshops and student publication days

	Percent of Programs Offering the Subject (N=50)
Newspaper design	54%
News writing and editing	52%
Computer uses	46%
Photography	42%
Journalism/mass communication law	36%
Yearbook design	34%
Ethics	30%
Broadcasting	28%
Staff management	24%
Publication in the small school	24%
Yearbook copy writing	24%
Career development	16%

1996-97 Scholastic Journalism Teacher Education Survey

This survey should be completed by the highest-level administrator or faculty member with knowledge of your institution's role in secondary school journalism and mass communication (JMC) education or outreach to high school journalism teachers and advisers. Please feel free to have pertinent faculty members assist as necessary.

<u>If such activities are the responsibility of an administrative unit other than yours</u>, please direct this questionnaire to the head of the unit that has the primary responsibility for such a program.

<u>If such activities are not offered at your institution</u>, please answer the first three questions, check the following blank and return this survey in the enclosed envelope:

___ There is no program for secondary school journalism instruction or outreach at this institution.

1. Type of institution:
___(a) public
___(b) private
2. State in which institution is located: ____________________
3. Total undergraduate enrollment on your campus:
___(a) less than 5,000
___(b) 5,001-10,000
___(c) 10,001-15,000
___(d) 15,001-20,000
___(e) more than 20,000
4. Which best describes your administrative unit?
___(a) a journalism department
___(b) a department of mass communication or mass media
___(c) a department of communication that includes non-JMC programs as well as JMC programs.
___(d) a journalism school
___(e) a college of journalism, communication or mass communication
___(f) other: ____
5. Total number of undergraduate majors in JMC components in your administrative unit:
___(a) less than 100
___(b) 100-199
___(c) 200-299
___(d) 300-399
___(e) 400 or above
6. Highest degree offered by your administrative unit in JMC-related fields:
___(a) no JMC degree offered
___(b) bachelor's
___(c) master's
___(d) doctorate

7. Does you institution offer an undergraduate degree in journalism education that is certifiable?
___(a) yes, a major only
___(b) yes, a minor only
___(c) yes, both a major and a minor
___(d) no
8. Does your unit offer a master's degree in scholastic journalism?
___(a) yes
___(b) no
9. Is your administrative unit accredited by the ACEJMC?
___(a) yes
___(b) no
10. Does your administrative unit belong to the ASJMC?
___(a) yes
___(b) no

<u>The following questions concern faculty, academic courses and outreach programs for high school journalism and mass communication teachers:</u>

11. To what extent does your unit interact with the state scholastic press association?
___(a) little or no contact
___(b) a moderate amount of contact
___(c) quite a lot of contact
12. Does your administrative unit offer any of the following? (Check all that apply)
___(a) individual high school student writing competitions
___(b) one-day skills workshops on campus by your faculty for high school students
___(c) one-day programs on campus with speakers from local media for high school students
___(d) one-day skills workshops located in your section of the state for teachers and advisers
___(e) one-day skills workshops located at locations around the state
___(f) summer workshops on campus for teachers and advisers
___(g) workshops/courses conducted via television
___(h) workshops/courses conducted via Internet
___(i) middle school outreach
13. Which of the following subjects does your unit offer <u>for high school journalism teachers and advisers</u> during workshops and student publication days? (Check all that apply)
___(a) publications in the small school
___(b) yearbook design
___(c) yearbook copy writing
___(d) photography
___(e) news writing and editing
___(f) newspaper design
___(g) computer uses
___(h) career development
___(i) broadcasting
___(j) journalism/mass communication law
___(k) ethics
___(l) staff management

14. Journalism education students at your institution can obtain which one of the following?
___(a) no journalism certification
___(b) certification in journalism as the primary teaching area only
___(c) certification in journalism as a secondary teaching area only
___(d) certification in journalism as either a primary or secondary teaching area
15. Approximately how many students are certified in journalism at your institution each year?
___(a) 5 or fewer
___(b) 6-10
___(c) 11-15
___(d) 16-20
___(e) more than 20
16. Students wishing journalism certification at your institution can obtain which of the following types of certification in JMC fields:
___(a) none
___(b) only journalism or print journalism certification
___(c) only broadcast journalism certification
___(d) both print and broadcast journalism certification
___(e) only general communication certification
17. Do your unit's faculty oversee practice teaching experiences of students working on journalism certification to teach at the high school level?
___(a) yes
___(b) no
18. Is there a specific journalism methods course required of students wanting journalism certification?
___(a) yes, but required only for students wanting primary certification in journalism
___(b) yes, required for students wanting secondary certification in journalism even though a methods course is also required in the primary certification area.
___(c) no journalism methods course is offered.
___(d) other ____.
19. Is the journalism methods course taught by JMC faculty or taught by faculty in the department or school of secondary education?
___(a) It is taught by journalism faculty.
___(b) It is taught by non-journalism faculty in the secondary education department or school.
___(c) No journalism methods course is offered.
20. How many hours of JMC courses are required of students wanting certification in journalism or mass communication as a primary teaching area? (Please convert quarter hours into the semester hour equivalent using a two-thirds ratio.)
___(a) Less than 24 hours
___(b) 24-26 hours
___(c) 27-29 hours
___(d) 30-32 hours
___(e) 33 hours or more
___(f) There is no state certification in journalism as a primary teaching area.

21. How many JMC hours does your state require of students wanting certification in journalism or mass communication as a secondary teaching area? (If requirements vary by degree, respond in regard to print journalism.)
___(a) Less than 12 hours
___(b) 12-14 hours
___(c) 15-17 hours
___(d) 18-20 hours
___(e) 21 hours or more
___(f) There is no state certification in journalism as a secondary teaching area.
22. How many hours does your JMC unit offer of undergraduate for-credit courses whose content is primarily designed for journalism teacher/adviser training (including a methods course)?
___(a) none
___(b) 1-2 hours
___(c) 3-5 hours
___(d) 6-8 hours
___(e) 9 or more hours
23. Are teachers in your state required to have certification in journalism to teach journalism courses?
___(a) Yes, to teach any journalism course.
___(b) Only if they teach journalism full time.
___(c) They can teach journalism courses with a waiver temporarily.
___(d) They can teach journalism without certification or a waiver.
___(e) Other ____
24. Which of the following specific JMC courses are required of students wanting state secondary school certification in journalism or mass communication? (The individual topics should be at least a majority of a single course's content to be counted.)
___(a) theory or philosophy of journalism
___(b) news writing
___(c) reporting
___(d) publication advising
___(e) copy-editing
___(f) publication layout and design
___(g) combined course in copy-editing and layout
___(h) journalism or mass media law
___(i) journalism or mass media ethics
___(j) journalism or mass media history
___(k) feature writing
___(l) editorial and column writing
___(m) photography
___(n) advertising
___(o) business and financial practices for publications advisers
___(p) basic yearbook techniques
___(q) broadcasting
___(r) others:____

25. Which of the following journalistic competencies are taught as units or modules of courses your unit offers that are required of students wanting state secondary school certification in journalism? (Check all that apply.)

___(a) punctuation and grammar
___(b) writing various types of leads
___(c) journalistic (wire service) style
___(d) news writing
___(e) feature writing
___(f) opinion and column writing
___(g) review writing
___(h) sports writing
___(i) writing depth stories
___(j) reporting/covering beats
___(k) interviewing
___(l) journalistic search techniques
___(m) copy-editing
___(n) writing headlines
___(o) photography
___(p) writing photo cutlines
___(q) design for various types of publications
___(r) news bureau organization
___(s) freedom of the press, censorship, libel
___(t) journalistic ethics
___(u) broadcasting
___(v) electronic publications and web sites
___(w) history of journalism
___(x) semantics and/or proper usage of words for a particular audience or political rhetoric
___(y) literary analysis and criticism
___(z) literary works of famous journalists or literary works with examples of good reporting

26. Which of these following competencies related to teaching and publication advising are taught as units or modules of courses your unit offers that are required of students wanting state secondary school certification in journalism? (Check all that apply.)

___(a) selecting journalism text books, visual aids, and supplementary references
___(b) evaluating students' written work (critiques, etc.)
___(c) duties of the adviser
___(d) prior review and prior restraint of publications
___(e) correcting student newspaper/yearbook copy for grammar, spelling, etc.
___(f) correcting student newspaper/yearbook copy for libel, privacy invasions
___(g) correcting student newspaper/yearbook copy for accuracy, fairness and balance
___(h) the publications adviser's relationship with the principal
___(i) advertising
___(j) general business practices for advisers
___(k) choosing a newspaper printer
___(i) selecting a yearbook company
___(m) a yearbook publication and production
___(n) arranging a school picture plan
___(o) organizing a subscription drive

___(p) creating a publications staff and assigning duties
___(q) staff motivation
___(r) publishing a newspaper (meeting deadlines, accomplishing tasks, etc.)
___(s) publication budgeting
___(t) computer programs and word processing for school publications
___(u) specific court cases pertaining to the high school student press

27. Does your unit offer courses or workshops that provide college credit for continuing education for secondary school journalism teachers?
___(a) yes
___(b) no

28. How successful have your outreach efforts to high school journalism teachers and advisers been?
___(a) no such efforts have been undertaken
___(b) not very successful
___(c) moderately successful
___(d) quite successful

29. How successful has your unit been in attracting students at your institution to your journalism teacher certification program?
___(a) not applicable
___(b) not very successful
___(c) moderately successful
___(d) quite successful

30. How successful do you feel your unit's outreach efforts have been in attracting high school students into your program through such recruitment efforts as writing competitions, workshops, camps, visits to schools, etc.?
___(a) no outreach efforts have been undertaken recently
___(b) attempted, but not very successful
___(c) moderately successful
___(d) quite successful

31. If your outreach efforts through writing competitions, workshops and camps have been moderately or quite successful, to what do you give the most credit? [Please rank from most important (1) to least important (5)].
___ (a) quality instruction by faculty members
___ (b) quality instruction by top-notch high school advisers
___ (c) quality instruction by media professionals.
___ (d) other: ______________________________
___ (e) other: ______________________________

32. How many full-time faculty members in your administrative unit are involved in teaching one or more undergraduate courses primarily designed for students seeking secondary school journalism teacher certification?

___(a) 0	___(c) 2	___(e) 4 or more
___(b) 1	___(d) 3	

33. How many part-time faculty members in your administrative unit in an average semester are involved in teaching undergraduate courses primarily designed for students seeking secondary school journalism teacher certification?

___(a) 0 ___(c) 2 ___(e) 4 or more
___(b) 1 ___(d) 3

34. How many full- or part-time faculty members in your administrative unit are involved in teaching graduate courses primarily designed for journalism teachers?

___(a) 0 ___(c) 2 ___(e) 4 or more
___(b) 1 ___(d) 3

35. Is a scholastic press association headquartered at your institution? (Check all that apply)

___(a) yes, a national one
___(b) yes, a statewide one
___(c) yes, a local or area one
___(d) yes, more than one
___(e) no

The following questions relate to individual faculty members who teach courses primarily designed for secondary school journalism teachers. We would appreciate your assistance in gaining the information requested.

36. How much **secondary school teaching experience** do your JMC faculty who teach a course that is primarily designed for secondary school journalism education have?

Faculty Member No. 1:
___(a) none
___(b) 1-5 years
___(c) 6-10 years
___(d) 11-15 years
___(e) 16 years or more

Faculty Member No. 2:
___(a) none
___(b) 1-5 years
___(c) 6-10 years
___(d) 11-15 years
___(e) 16 years or more

Faculty Member No. 3:
___(a) none
___(b) 1-5 years
___(c) 6-10 years
___(d) 11-15 years
___(e) 16 years or more

Faculty Member No. 4:
___(a) none
___(b) 1-5 years
___(c) 6-10 years
___(d) 11-15 years
___(e) 16 years or more

37. How many years of **experience teaching at a college or university** do JMC faculty members who teach courses primarily designed for secondary school journalism education have?

Faculty Member No. 1:
___(a) first year
___(b) 2nd through 5th year
___(c) 6th through 10th year
___(d) 11th through 15th year
___(e) 16th year or more
___(f) not applicable

Faculty Member No. 2:
___(a) first year
___(b) 2nd through 5th year
___(c) 6th through 10th year
___(d) 11th through 15th year
___(e) 16th year or more
___(f) not applicable

Faculty Member No. 3:
___(a) first year
___(b) 2nd through 5th year
___(c) 6th through 10th year
___(d) 11th through 15th year
___(e) 16th year or more
___(f) not applicable

Faculty Member No. 4:
___(a) first year
___(b) 2nd through 5th year
___(c) 6th through 10th year
___(d) 11th through 15th year
___(e) 16th year or more
___(f) not applicable

38. How many years of experience teaching a course that is primarily designed for secondary school journalism teachers do your JMC faculty members who teach such courses have?

Faculty Member No. 1:
___(a) first year
___(b) 2nd through 5th year
___(c) 6th through 10th year
___(d) 11th through 15th year
___(e) 16th year or more
___(f) not applicable

Faculty Member No. 2:
___(a) first year
___(b) 2nd through 5th year
___(c) 6th through 10th year
___(d) 11th through 15th year
___(e) 16th year or more
___(f) not applicable

Faculty Member No. 3:
___(a) first year
___(b) 2nd through 5th year
___(c) 6th through 10th year
___(d) 11th through 15th year
___(e) 16th year or more
___(f) not applicable

Faculty Member No. 4:
___(a) first year
___(b) 2nd through 5th year
___(c) 6th through 10th year
___(d) 11th through 15th year
___(e) 16th year or more
___(f) not applicable

Please use space below or on a separate sheet to provide us with information on the following:

- Any changes that have taken place in recent years in regard to how secondary school journalism teacher education is taught.
- Copies of syllabi of courses primarily designed for teacher certification.
- Methods used to recruit high school students into your journalism program.
- Methods used to keep in contact with advisers who have attended previous workshops at your institution.

Thank you for your assistance. Please place the completed survey in the enclosed envelope and return it as soon as possible to Dr.

LEARNING TO DO THE RIGHT THING: ASSESSING KNOWLEDGE OF MEDIA ETHICS OF LEADING HIGH SCHOOL JOURNALISM STUDENTS IN LOUISIANA

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Abstract of a paper presented at the annual national convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Scholastic Journalism Division, Baltimore, Md., August 1998.

The study is composed of an assessment of journalism students' knowledge of media ethics. Results of an achievement test administered to 116 of Louisiana's top-rated journalism students showed that students were able to recognize general moral concepts but demonstrated little sensitivity concerning issues of media ethics. School administrators and curriculum planners in school districts in Louisiana are urged to carefully study the results and re-evaluate state-mandated lesson plans on ethics.

LEARNING TO DO THE RIGHT THING: ASSESSING KNOWLEDGE OF MEDIA ETHICS OF LEADING HIGH SCHOOL JOURNALISM STUDENTS IN LOUISIANA

Introduction

Attention to questions of ethics has become a very important part of the field of journalism and mass communication today. For most of this century working journalists have had codes of ethics which they themselves created and revised through their professional organizations, but today working journalists often find that the company or organization that employs them is very likely to have its own in-house code of ethics (Christians, 1986/87) and a track record of disciplining employees who have violated the in-house code of ethics ("Newsroom Ethics," 1986). A body of literature on media ethics is growing rapidly with a range of trade magazines, scholarly journals, and general journalism textbooks frequently containing sections on ethics discussions, a scholarly journal published since 1986 that is dedicated exclusively to questions of media morality, the *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, and, since the 1970s, the appearance of dozens of textbooks devoted entirely to ethics. College courses in media ethics have mushroomed (Christians, 1978, 1985; Lambeth, Christians & Cole, 1994), and the leading organization for professors, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, has had interest groups devoted to ethics in the 1980s and 1990s which have discussed seeking status as a full-fledged division.

However, on the high school level, media ethics often takes a back seat. When scholastic journalism becomes the focus of discussion at a convention or in a professional publication, attention is most likely to be devoted to matters of censorship, prior restraint, student publication funding, technology, writing skills, and curricular offerings. When the AEJMC's Scholastic

Journalism Division surveyed the research interests of its members in 1995-96, only four of 48 respondents indicated that they were, are now, or will be engaged in studying ethical issues pertaining to student journalists (AEJMC Scholastic Journalism, 1996).

The purpose of this research is to study media ethics as practiced on the high school level and thus to expand media ethics' growing body of literature to include scholastic journalism. As argued by one of the few researchers on the topic, Tom Eveslage of Temple University, ethics issues have become so important in scholastic journalism that teachers can no longer afford not to teach ethics (1994).

Journalism is a prominent activity regularly engaged in at America's high schools. According to a study by Dvorak (1992), students at almost 95% of all secondary schools in the United States participate in at least one media-related activity sponsored by their schools, and at nearly 79% of the schools this media-related activity is a newspaper. In addition, almost 75% of the schools offer at least one journalism class, and more than a half million high school students nationwide are studying journalism or serving on student media staffs.

This study is composed of an assessment of journalism students' knowledge of media ethics. Utilizing a test administered to Louisiana students, the study is limited to generalizations on Louisiana's high school journalism programs. The research problem this study will address is the following:

How strong is Louisiana high school journalism students' knowledge of media ethics?

The intent of the assessment is to help Louisiana educators understand the strengths and weaknesses of their teachings and assist them in setting up their own codes of ethics for their school publication staffs as well as assessing the qualifications of journalism teachers applying for jobs in the state.

Scholastic Journalism in America

For about the past quarter of a century, school press associations, media foundations, college journalism educators, and concerned working journalists have mounted a determined campaign to alert the nation to what has been perceived as the generally "poor" state of high school journalism in America (Hernandez, 1994, p. 14). Backed by research describing grave problems ranging from inadequate knowledge of communication to outright censorship, a series of study groups and commissions has consistently recommended that the nation's secondary schools must devote more attention to creating and maintaining student newspapers and classes in journalism.

The roots of the current period of alarm at the direction scholastic journalism in America has taken are usually traced to the Commission of Inquiry into High School Journalism, known as the Kennedy Commission. In 1973-74 the commission conducted high-profile hearings and produced a report, *Captive Voices*, which was extremely critical of high school journalism. The Kennedy Commission found that censorship was rampant in America's high schools, that minorities had little access to the high school press, that little respect existed for journalism education, and that the U.S. news media did not consider the matter to be serious (Nelson, 1974). To rectify the situation, the Kennedy Commission issued a set of 47 recommendations to American high schools to mandate First Amendment education, to promote journalism education, and to encourage extensive involvement by minorities, the news media, and a variety of community, regional, and national agencies.

The Kennedy Commission's findings were controversial and continue to be debated to this day. Critics point out that the findings may not have been representative of all scholastic publications and journalism courses. The findings graphically illustrated a problem, but the emphasis was placed on legal concerns because the current wave of interest in media ethics was just getting started, the old legal doctrine of *in loco parentis* was coming under criticism, and the Supreme Court's decision in *Tinker v. Des Moines* had just become the leading legal precedent on questions involving student expression (*Tinker*, 1969).

In the 1980s high school journalism came under attack again, but this time the criticism originated from outside the field of journalism. In 1983 the president's National Commission on Excellence in Education issued its report, *A Nation at Risk*, that called for tougher graduation standards. The report supported a general "back to basics" movement in education, and school districts were hard-pressed to justify extensive attention to a subject like journalism, much less to curriculum units on media ethics, when the movement called for devoting more resources to traditional areas like reading and mathematics.

The very existence of high school journalism was now threatened, and another high-profile report attracting national interest like the Kennedy Commission's work was needed. The Journalism Education Association reached this conclusion at its 1983 convention and worked with the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication's Secondary Education Division to form the Commission on the Role of Journalism in Secondary Education. Like the Kennedy Commission, the JEA Commission conducted hearings over a two-year period. However, the JEA avoided the controversy associated with the Kennedy Commission by working with the American College Testing Program to collect scientific data on the benefits of high school journalism and not addressing politically-loaded issues such as censorship and minority participation.

The JEA Commission's report, *High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadline*, arrived at some of the same conclusions contained in *Captive Voices*, especially in regard to journalism's lack of support. But, in clear contrast to the Kennedy Commission, the JEA Commission placed more emphasis on systematic evidence showing that journalism courses and student newspapers did prove to be excellent all-around learning experiences and on descriptions of the high schools that featured superior journalism programs (Vahl, 1987). Among JEA's recommendations was clear support for journalism to be considered an essential part of the school curriculum and for the teaching of media ethics to be a primary responsibility of publications advisers, to be an obligation school boards must insist on, and to be a certification standard for journalism teachers.

The idea that offering journalism was strong pedagogical thinking was already gaining favor before the JEA Commission report (Hines & Nunamaker, 1985). Later studies by Dvorak (1988, 1989, 1995, 1998), who supervised the ACT's study for the JEA Commission, produced data that showed that students who served on high school publications staffs outperformed Advanced Placement English students on the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Examination and had a better chance of achieving success in college than other students. "Journalism is not merely a vocational area any more, and it hasn't been for decades," Dvorak wrote with Larry Lain and Tom Dickson (1994, p. 11). "Journalism is an important academic discipline that enhances the ability of students to do well throughout the curriculum."

Concern over censorship in high school journalism later rose to prominence again because of another major court decision and another high-profile report. In 1988 the Supreme

Court ruled that school officials could exercise control over any student expression if they had "legitimate pedagogical concerns" (*Hazelwood*, 1988) The event marked the first time that a student newspaper was at the heart of a First Amendment issue in a Supreme Court case. Six years later the Freedom Forum issued its report, *Death By Cheeseburger*, which drew many of the same conclusions that the Kennedy Commission had reached on the prevalence of censorship. However, the report also included twelve recommendations that generally call for school districts, communities, and the news media to provide more support for the teaching of journalism and the publishing of high school newspapers. Every high school, according to the Freedom Forum, must publish a student newspaper and provide adequate funding, satisfactory facilities, and qualified journalism teachers and advisers; in turn, the high schools must be supported by administrators, parents, and local news media dedicated to the idea that journalism offers strong educational value (Freedom Forum, 1994).

While the Kennedy, JEA and Freedom Forum commissions worked to upgrade high school journalism, interest in the development of principles of media ethics among journalism scholars and working journalists flourished. Strong attention to ethics issues first gained a foothold in the 1920s and 1930s when the American Society of Newspaper Editors' "Canons of Journalism" and the Society of Professional Journalists' SDX Code of Ethics became well-known standards. But starting during the Great Depression, interest in further development waned (Christians, 1977). After a 40-year period of little interest, the 1970s witnessed the start of a new era for the study of media ethics with the development of such trade magazines as *American Journalism Review* and the *Columbia Journalism Review* and the scholarship of professors including John Merrill, Cliff Christians, Jay Black, Ralph Barney, and Ed Lambeth, who produced textbooks for college classes in media ethics, appeared at seminars and conferences and served on ethics committees for proferssional associations. Though no end is in sight for this current period, Black and Barney (1992/1993) warn that further development may be wasted if media industry executives do not show a greater commitment to hiring and nurturing journalism students with strong ethics backgrounds.

Lessons on media ethics for high school journalism classes have developed in a way similar to the direction journalism ethics literature has taken. Before the 1970s a high school teacher would have been hard-pressed to find substantial material in any available scholastic journalism textbooks for class discussions on media ethics. Such leading textbooks of 1963, for example, were *Journalism and the School Paper* by DeWitt Reddick (5th ed.) and *Press Time* by Julian Adams and Kenneth Stratton; both contain barely half of a single page on the matter (Reddick, p.7; Adams & Stratton, p. 11). However, during this current flourishing of media ethics, it is commonplace for high school journalism textbooks to contain substantial treatments of ethics topics. For the ninth edition of their leading textbook, *Scholastic Journalism*, Earl English, Clarence Hach, and Tom Rolnicki (1996) revised the chapter they had on ethics in the previous edition (1990) and expanded it into a major division of the book.

Teachers who belong to the national Journalism Education Association are supplied with model lesson plans for classes in journalism that contain a portion of a unit on responsibility of the press (JEA, n.d.) and a supplement jointly produced by the Journalism Education Association of North California (1993) and the Southern California Journalism Education Association which features part of a component on ethics.

Louisiana High School Journalism and the High School Rally

In Louisiana, curriculum planners have a unique opportunity to conduct research through student assessment by analyzing the results of an academic competition held each year in the state known as the high school rally.

The Louisiana High School Rally Association has been in operation since 1909, and more than a quarter of a million Louisiana high school students have participated in the annual event (Louisiana High School Rally Association, 1996). Each year all of the state's approximately 500 junior and senior high schools are invited to select their best students to compete in 77 academic events that represent a broad range of subjects in the typical secondary school curriculum. Using curriculum guides approved by the state department of education, college faculty members from all over Louisiana create the 77 competitions in the form of tests, examinations, and performances set up to evaluate students' knowledge.

Schools can enter up to two students in each event, and no student is allowed to compete in more than one category. After determining which students are the best in each individual event, the schools enter the students in the district rally competition, which is usually held in March of each year. Ten colleges within the state serve as the host sites for the district competitions, and each college assigns a faculty or staff member to each event to conduct the competition, evaluate the results, and rank the competing students. Rankings of students are broken down by school enrollment, with separate rankings tabulated for students who attend schools in Division I, which have an enrollment of 1,000 or more; Division II, for enrollments of 400-999 ; Division III, 200-399; and Division IV, below 200 (Southeast Louisiana District Rally Association, 1997).

One of the 77 rally events is for students of journalism. To compete in this event, entitled Journalism I, students must be currently enrolled in a journalism course offered by their high school or must have been enrolled in their school's journalism course in the prior fall semester if journalism is offered as a half-unit course. Each student entered in the district competition is required to complete a one-hour exam that consists of 100 objective questions and two essay questions. The rally tests are designed to cover lessons that are mandated in the state's curriculum guides for public schools.

The curriculum guides are required to be followed in public schools offering courses called "Journalism" or "Publications." (State of Louisiana 1989, 1987). These mandated lessons consist of a variety of scholastic journalism topics, such as news writing, editing, editorial concepts, and the role of journalism in society. Included in the guides are teaching objectives that require an understanding of ethical principles (1989, pp. 1, 10) and classroom procedures for how ethical and legal responsibilities are to be taught (1989, pp. 25-41).

The State of Louisiana requires all journalism courses offered in public schools to be taught by teachers certified in journalism. Fifteen credit hours of undergraduate work in any college journalism courses earned as part of any major curriculum in education is the requirement for teachers in Louisiana to receive certification in journalism. Provisional or temporary certification in journalism can be awarded to teachers who have certification in other areas and have completed at least six credit hours of any college journalism courses. Schools are also allowed to proceed with journalism instruction without teachers certified in journalism if their courses are clearly labeled "Publications" or if the instruction is offered on a non-credit basis or extracurricular activity.

The rally exam is open to all high school journalism students in the state, and the students taking the exam are the ones designated by their schools as having the best possibility of winning the competition; thus, the answers the students provide amount to a base of data on the top-rated high school journalism students in Louisiana. Analyzing the results of the

Journalism I test would provide an assessment Louisiana educators could use to evaluate their curricular needs in journalism and to guide the implementation of recommendations national commissions have made over the past quarter century.

Method

The author received a copy of the Journalism I exam used in the district rally competition on March 8, 1997, which was the day the exam was given to all students competing in the district rally. Ten college campuses in Louisiana served as the sites for the district rally competition:

- Louisiana College
- Louisiana State University at Eunice
- Louisiana Tech University
- McNeese State University
- Nicholls State University
- Northwestern State U. of Louisiana
- Southeastern Louisiana University
- Southern University
- University of New Orleans
- University of Southwestern Louisiana

To ensure the security of the questions and answers, the district rally exam was not made available before March 8. (Note: A copy of the rally exam was not included with this paper to discourage wide dissemination of questions that would harm the integrity of the test. Interested parties wishing to view a copy of the exam should contact Archie L. LeJeune, Executive Secretary of the Louisiana High School Rally Association, P.O. Box 16003, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70893.)

During the week of March 9-15, 1997 the author contacted the Louisiana High School Rally Association's chief representative at each site by telephone to ask for a copy of the answer sheet for each student who was entered in the Journalism I district competition. In this way every journalism student who competed in the 1997 district rally had an equal chance to be included in the study. Each district representative was asked to make a copy of the answer sheet that every Journalism I student completed at the district site and to mail the copies to the author.

By April 30, 1997, the author received answer sheets from 7 of the 10 sites for a 70% return rate. Followup phone calls to other sites that had not submitted answer sheets did not produce any more returns.

A total of 116 students took the Journalism I exam at the seven sites for which answer sheets were received. Five of the sites identified the students' schools on the answer sheets, and two schools used answer sheets coded by number to keep the identity of students and schools a secret. Because of this factor, it was impossible to determine the exact number of schools that were involved because each school could enter one or two students in the contest. The best estimate possible is that 74-104 schools or about 90 schools overall entered students in the competition at the five sites. (Note: This estimate was arrived at by counting all schools that were identified at the five sites that named schools and then counting the number of answer sheets submitted at the other two sites; 74 is the lowest possible number of schools and 104 is the highest possible.)

The analysis was confined to students' responses to 12 of the total 102 questions that implied or explicitly referred to a concern which would require students to demonstrate some level of reasoning directly or indirectly related to ethics. To protect individual privacy, no attempt was made to identify individual students and the schools involved.

<u>Results</u>

The first 50 questions on the test were composed of a variety of statements which students were to respond to by marking true or false. Most of the questions dealt with strict writing and editing rules and technical terminology, but Questions 5, 12, 28, 29, and 39 contained information implying at least some clear ethical considerations. The questions and the students' answers:

"5. Facts are just as important in sports stories as they are in news stories."

Responses: True=113 (97%) False=3 (3%) Total=116 (100%)

The colorful writing and critical commentary that dominate most modern-day sports pages can often serve to blur the distinction between news and entertainment, and television commentators frequently blur the distinction even more when they call themselves reporters and interview players and coaches even though they are employed by the teams. Student sports writers often find themselves in a similar ethical dilemma when they have to choose between taking a role as an unbiased reporter or as a cheerleader for the school's team.

The correct response to the question was true, and the students as a group showed strong understanding of the need to report information truthfully and take their work seriously, regardless of whether the topic is not as serious as straight news.

"12. One of the handicaps of mass communication is that there is no opportunity for feedback (response)."

Responses: True=41 (35%) False=75 (65%) Total=116 (100%)

The answer key lists the correct response as true, but the question is poorly worded; most modern news media have reader forums, letters to the editor, and audience surveys, and the Internet has provided fast and convenient opportunities to react and discuss issues with news gatekeepers. A more effective question would have probably replaced the "no opportunity for feedback" phrase with "few opportunities for immediate feedback." However, the question is an appropriate one from an ethical standpoint because journalists must keep this consideration in mind when reporting information of a negative character about individuals in a community.

The best answer under the circumstances of the test was probably false because it is not true that there are absolutely no opportunities for feedback. A majority of the students marked this response.

"28. Reporters must strive for accuracy in news stories, but advertisements may exaggerate ("puff") the value of a product.

Responses: True=97 (84%) False=19 (16%) Total=116 (100%)

This question also could have benefited from rewording that could have asked students specifically if a standard of truth was required in advertising. According to *The American Heritage Dictionary* (1992), to exaggerate can be interpreted to mean a falsehood—"To represent as greater than is actually the case; . . . . To enlarge or increase to abnormal degree"(p. 637). However, the term "puff" helps to clarify that at least truth can be an element; according to *The Language of Journalism* (Kent, 1970) the term "puff" means "praising an individual, organization, etc., usually of little or no news value" (n.p.).

Like No. 12, the best possible answer accounting for all possibilities would have been true, in agreement with the answer key. A strong majority marked this correctly.

"29. A reporter must get permission from a person before that person's name can be published in the newspaper."

Responses: True=49 (42%) False=67 (58%) Total=116 (100%)

Only a small majority of students marked this answer correctly, which was false.

Publishing the names of sources becomes an ethical concern when the sources make it clear that they do not want to be identified in a story or want anonymity in exchange for information. In this dilemma reporters must weigh such matters as the importance of the story, the credibility of the source, and the credibility of the story if the source is not identified.

However, in this situation in which no special conditions are attached, no special ethical problem is apparent, and the students who marked true here might need to be taught to consider whether they are allowing their sources to manipulate them.

"39. A person must have a college degree majoring in Journalism in order to become a reporter for a newspaper."

Responses: True=38 (33%) False=78 (67%) Total=116 (100%)

The implied ethical question here concerns the need for a diversity of views. From a legal standpoint the answer comes down to simply whether or not journalists must have a license to practice a profession, like a physician. But from a business or a fraternal point of view, a person answering true to this question could be using the reasoning that it would be more advantageous to allow only journalism majors to work as reporters. And marking false on this question implies that the student understands that journalism training they may go on to receive in college may not necessarily secure for them employment when competing for a job against a non-journalism major.

More than two-thirds of the students demonstrated this knowledge by correctly answering false.

The final 50 questions on the test involved multiple-choice answers. Like the first part of the test most of the questions required technical knowledge, but questions 64 and 70 did imply limited ethical challenges, and questions 86, 99, and 100 posed explicit concerns most likely to have been directly based on an ethics lesson from a scholastic journalism textbook. The questions and the students' responses:

"64. When using a tape recorder in a feature or news interview, it is best to: (1) keep the recorder turned off, (2) let the interviewee hold the microphone, (3) take notes anyway, (4) hide the recorder so it won't bother the interviewee, (5) none

of the above.

Responses: 1=0 (0%), 2=3 (3%), 3=73 (63%), 4=13 (11%), 5=27 (23%) Total=116(100%)

The answer key lists the correct response as No. 3 probably based on routine reporting practice and traditional mistrust of gadgetry. Response No. 2 is out of date unless the interview is taking place at a radio station. No. 4 is also a routine reporting practice that could be an attempt to help a source feel at ease, but it can create an ethical dilemma involving the manipulation of a source into feeling too much at ease and not realizing the interview is being recorded. A small minority chose this response.

"70. The right of privacy protects an individual against which of the following injuries: (1) Taking his name or image for use in an advertisement [e.g. using his picture in a testimonial], (2) Publishing personal facts he wishes to remain private [e.g. his health condition], (3) Portraying him in a false light [e.g. misrepresenting his relationship with another person], (4) intruding on his right to be left alone [e.g. opening his locker], (5) All of the above.

Responses: 1=6 (5.2%), 2=9 (7.8%), 3=3 (2.6%), 4=6 (5.2%), 5=90 (77.6%) Total=116(100%)

Four of the categories of invasion of privacy are identified in the responses to No. 70, and the correct answer based on a legal interpretation would be all of the above, No. 5. All four responses also involve unethical behavior. A strong majority marked the correct answer.

"86. An editor usually associated with "Yellow Journalism" was: (1) William Randolph Hearst, (b) Horace Greeley, (c) William Allen White, (d) Philip Freneau (e) Abe Rosenthal.
Responses: 1=53 (45.7%), 2=32 (27.6%), 3=19 (16.4%), 4=7 (6%), 5=5 (4.3%) Total=116(100%)

Sensationalism has long been considered unethical behavior, and question no. 86 required students to be familiar with a well-known term associated with it as well as a historical personality. The correct answer, William Randolph Hearst, No. 1, did receive the highest number of responses, but the students with the correct responses were still a minority overall. The result is somewhat surprising considering that students would have come across Hearst during a state-mandated lesson on journalism history as well as on ethics.

> **"99. What is the term used to describe an ethical problem in which a person or institution never has negative news printed about it."** [sic] **(1) freebie, (2) junket, (3) sacred cow, (4) hoax, (5) none of the above.**
>
> **Responses: 1=5 (4.3%), 2=15 (12.9%), 3=51 (44%), 4=17(14.7%), 5=28 (24.1%) Total=116(100%)**

Like the yellow journalism question, the correct answer, sacred cow, No. 3, received the highest number of responses but was still in the minority overall. A term such as this could come up in a classroom context only during an ethics lesson, but in practical situations student newspapers are often confronted with the ethical challenge posed by sacred cows because of constant pressure to demonstrate school pride. Little evidence of a firm understanding of this term could imply little understanding of the deep ethical problems sacred cows can cause for the students' newspapers.

> **"100. What is the term used to describe an ethical problem when a reporter accepts an expenses-paid trip from a news source? (1) freebie, (2) junket, (3) sacred cow, (4) hoax, (5) none of the above.**
>
> **Responses: 1=62 (53.4%), 2=21 (18.1%), 3=7 (6%), 4=9 (7.8%), 5=17 (14.7%) Total=116(100%)**

This term recognition question was also connected to a specific classroom ethics lesson, and students showed very little familiarity with it. Junkets and the conflicts of interest they can create also stack up as a frequent challenge facing student journalists. Limited budgets, close friendships with classmates, and teachers trying to make the best use of available resources may cause ethical problems when student sports writers are invited to ride on team buses and editors go to events using official school transportation when others in the student body are not provided with the same opportunity.

The final page of the exam consisted of two tie-breaker questions that asked students to write their answers in essay form in the space provided below the questions.

Both questions ask students to make judgments requiring legal knowledge, but the scenarios the questions are based on involve serious ethical problems as well. Both consist of student newspapers publishing editorials that urge students to engage in unlawful activity and the school principal reacts by temporarily suspending students' First Amendment rights. Students responding in strict legal terms would find their strongest answers in the *Tinker* and *Hazelwood* court decisions and in constitutional law. But the students' actions were not just unsound legally, they were clearly irresponsible because they encouraged unacceptable behavior, and the principal would probably have to present this information to the school board. It is also conceivable that students involved could argue that their actions amounted to a prank, a sort of "April Fool's" joke not to be taken seriously; in this case ethics lessons would become even more important.

The first tie-breaker essay question and a summary of responses to it:

> **"St. Mary's Catholic High School (a private school) and Lincoln High School (a public school) are crosstown rivals in basketball. St. Mary's and Lincoln are slated to play for the district title tomorrow night. In today's "St. Mary's Saint" (the school newspaper), an editorial urges students to play a prank on Lincoln--namely, to toss a smoke bomb into a hallway during classes. The deed is done and the Principal suspends publication of the "Saint" for six weeks.**
>
> **"1. Has the Principal infringed upon the students' constitutional right of free press? Explain."**

Of the 116 students taking the test, 53 wrote answers for tie-breaker No. 1. According to the answer key, no infringement took place because St. Mary's is a private school and the students agree to adhere to the school's policies as a part of choosing to attend the school.

Thirteen of the students responding confined their answers to legal reasoning. None of these students used the private school argument. Six students referred generally to the Constitution, one argued that the scenario involved a disruption at the school without naming the *Tinker* decision, three cited the *Hazelwood* decision by name, and three based an answer on the *Hazelwood* legal standard requiring a valid educational reason for censorship.

The remaining 40 responses may have contained yes or no answers to the main question, but in the course of discussing the scenario the students provided judgments not on what was a legal right, but instead on what they felt was right or wrong personal or journalistic behavior. On this basis, 24, or 60%, of the 40 responses argued that the newspaper's action was inappropriate or that the principal's action was justified, and 16, or 40%, found fault with the principal's action or argued that the newspaper had done nothing wrong.

Seven students criticized the students' action by citing principles and terms contained in ethics lesson plans and journalism textbooks. A sampling of these:

". . . They violated the Code of Ethics . . . ."
". . . Student went beyond . . . a right to know."
"Responsible journalism at that age level should never promote . . . destructive behavior."

Most of the 24 students critical of the newspaper's action tended to focus on the harm the newspaper was encouraging. A sampling of these:

"No publication should ever encourage breaking a law."
"At no time should the paper be used to influence the people to do ill deeds."
"That prank could have done damage to someones(sic) lungs."
"It is not the job of the newspaper to tell students to, in a way, vandalize another school."
". . . Principal's responsibility to protect the safety(sic) of his students comes first."
". . . He (the principal) tried to keep harm from being done . . . ."
". . . (must) not allow material to be printed that would encourage violence."
". . . It puts the safety and well-being of any innocent party . . . in jeopardy."

The 16 other respondents who disagreed with these assessments tended to emphasize that the newspaper was suggesting a prank or it was not clear that harm was done. A sampling:

". . . they were simply give(sic) or stateing(sic) and(sic) idea."
"The newspaper never stated that they should(sic) they just urged them to."
". . . Each child should have the right to stand up for themselves.(sic)"
". . . Students should have the right to say what they feel."
"It might have been said to do that, but it gives someone no reasons to go and do it . . . ."
". . . It is an editorial . . . ."

The second tie-breaker question and a summary of responses to it:

"Following that smoke bomb incident, the "Lincoln Emancipator" (the school newspaper), publishes an editorial urging students to retaliate by breaking into the St. Mary's High School chemistry lab and exposing the asafetida (an extremely foul-smelling plant resin). The deed is done and the Principal suspends the editorial writer for three days.

"2. Has the Principal infringed the writer's constitutional right of free speech? Explain."

Of the 116 students taking the test, 49 provided essay answers to tie-breaker No. 2. According to the answer key, the principal has not infringed upon the writer's constitutional rights because the situation involves a public school and the writer's action constitutes a disruption of the educational process. The implied legal logic is based on the disruption standard in *Tinker* and the educational value standard in *Hazelwood.*

However, examining the ethical character of the responses becomes very important when considering that the disruption did not take place at the school where the student writer was suspended. In this case the principal would probably be required to have a statement from the persons who exposed the asafetida that the editorial was the reason why they took this action and that the suspension was a disciplinary action not related to First Amendment concerns.

Nine students restricted their answers to legal explanations. One used *Hazelwood* reasoning, and all others argued on general constitutional terms.

Of the remaining 40 students, 28, or 70%, indicated that the actions of the editorial writer were wrong, but none cited codes of ethics or made explicit statements about journalistic integrity based on class lessons or curriculum guides. Like the first tie-breaker answers, nearly all of the respondents displayed a simple concern that harm or illegal behavior was being encouraged. A sampling of these:

". . . should not encourage students to perform illegal acts."

". . . This is a consequence for(sic) disobeying the rules of the school. . . ."

". . . An editorial should . . . not(sic) an urging to vandalize."

". . . It is not right to influence someone into(sic) doing something wrong."

". . . Writer could have been endangering someone."

". . . It doesn't matter . . . because breaking & entering is against the law."

". . . They sank down to the means of revenge to make a point."

". . . Editorialist's article qualifies as harmful."

". . . Student journalist(sic) cannot use school materials to publish anything that could harm the reputation of the school."

". . . The writer should not have written an editorial urging other students to do a wrongdoing(sic) against someone else."

Twelve (30%) of the 40 students not using legal arguments disagreed with the principal or defended the editorial. Like the first tie-breaker, most respondents tended to argue that the editorial writer could not be clearly blamed for the disruption at the other school. A sampling:

". . . Just because he wrote it in the newspaper does not mean that he did it."

". . . He is defending his school."

". . . We really don't know if the break-in had anything to do with the story."

". . . He/she didn't commit the crime(sic) they just urged it."

". . . Lincoln should have . . . gotten even . . . ."

". . . In an editorial one can say anything he or she wishes . . . ."

"That editorial was just something to write about. The students took it upon themselves to do the deed."

Conclusion

In general, the most appropriate conclusion that can be reached about Louisiana's best high school journalism students based on the results of this study is a mixed one. The evidence shows that the students have neither a firm understanding of ethical lessons nor a weak background in media ethics.

When the students were asked questions requiring familiarity with ethical dilemmas stated explicitly in textbooks and curriculum guides, the students fared poorly. Only a minority of students could correctly identify answers associated with basic topics in ethics such as sensationalism, sacred cows, and junkets. These questions were posed in such a way that did not require rigorous critical thinking skills, and their poor performance thus casts doubt on whether they are familiar with the grave conflicts of interest these can entail for journalists.

On the other hand, the highest level of understanding of the principles of ethics is the ability to demonstrate responsible judgment when the conditions of a dilemma call for it. In this respect the students responded well. A very clear majority recognized the importance of facts regardless of their placement in a newspaper, the importance of source identification regardless of permission, and the importance of ability regardless of academic credientials.

In fairness to the students taking the rally test, three of the other questions were poorly worded, regardless of what type of lesson they were intended to measure, and three of the questions stressed lessons on media law to such an extent that a student could have perceived a need to choose between what was right legally and what was right ethically. However, two of the law-emphasized questions, which were the two tie-breaker essays, provided more evidence of a difference between students' ability to demonstrate knowledge of media ethics lessons and students' ability to apply moral judgment. In both cases when students chose to base their responses on non-legal standards, they exhibited little media ethics training, but a majority of responses contained endorsement of a responsible course of action that placed value on personal safety and non-violent behavior.

Based on this evidence, Louisiana's scholastic journalism educators do have reason to be concerned about the effectiveness of their lessons on media ethics.

As advisers of school newspapers, journalism teachers in the state can be pleased about their students' overall performance because it did exhibit a deep regard for facts and opposition to violence. However, such results did not reflect a level of understanding of ethical principles called for by the JEA Commission as well as in scholastic journalism lesson plans. A reliance on facts could merely be the result of strong reporting technique that is constantly taught almost as a matter of tradition. Finding non-violent solutions to problems is a part of cultural upbringing as well as the leadership training the best students receive as they take on positions of responsibility as editors of student publications.

But ethics training requires a level of sensitivity that goes beyond reporting and editing functions. Lessons on ethics teach students that morality is a good starting point—a system for conducting our lives that is often associated with personal behavior. Ethics, on the other hand, involves a logical process which demands using principles and established priorities when two or more moral obligations are in conflict. This is why it is essential that a textbook like *Scholastic Journalism*, for example, will not just make it clear that facts are important, but that when a news story does contain any fictional information, some device is needed to make sure the reader can understand that the information is fictional (p. 336). And it is why the State of Louisiana Board of Education's curriculum guide stresses that before student staffers make editorial decisions, they should be able to rely on their journalism teacher/adviser to challenge their way of thinking and to help them consider their options no matter what is tradition (1989, p. 27).

A firm knowledge of ethical principles is highly important to all high school students who are studying journalism, regardless of whether they intend to pursue a major in journalism in college or to become a journalist. Their understanding of the responsibilities of journalists will continue to be important in their lives as American citizens. Press freedom and legal considerations are, of course, very important, too. But very often, judgments of what is good journalism and good journalistic performance boils down to adherence to sound ethical principles, especially in the absence of legal restraints and especially in the presence of profit motives and public pressure.

Last year in high school journalism classes all over America the media's performance during the tragic death of England's Princess Diana no doubt became the subject of hot debate. Those teachers who used this occasion as an opportunity to examine media ethics probably gave their students interesting, worthwhile lessons they could take with them after they graduate and use regardless of their career plans. At the same time plenty of schools probably had to deal with tough calls closer to home with classmates dying after incidents of drunk driving, drug abuse, or gang violence. In these situations there may have been a fight over the freedom to report on such events, but just how ethical students' performance would be in the reporting of such events was every bit as important.

School administrators and curriculum planners in school districts in Louisiana would do well to carefully study the results of the state high school district rally exam. Their scholastic journalism students must perform better. The same standard of ethical knowledge would be properly expected of any scholastic journalism student in America.

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Job Descriptions and Responsibilities of Scholastic Press Association Directors

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Abstract

Job Descriptions and Responsibilities

of Scholastic Press Association Directors

A 25-item questionnaire was e-mailed to directors or presidents of 44 state, regional and national scholastic press associations, with 26 (65% responding). Of the 16 state SPA directors who were university employees, five were in tenure-track positions, and only two said they were expected to conduct scholarly research. The SPA directors reported the most enjoyable and most difficult part of their SPA work was working with the teachers in the association. The second most difficult part of the job was their overall workload.

Job Descriptions and Responsibilities of Scholastic Press Association Directors

The prevalence and value of scholastic journalism programs in the country's high schools were documented in *Death by Cheeseburger: Scholastic Journalism in the 1990s and Beyond* (1994) and *Journalism Kids Do Better: What Research Tells Us about High School Journalism* (1994). These two national research projects stressed the importance of scholastic journalism programs in helping students learn an array of competencies -- from learning to be more effective writers to developing an understanding of the media's role in a democracy.

Crucial to building strong high school journalism programs are scholastic press associations (*Death by Cheeseburger*, 1994; Siver & Sullivan, 1989). Scholastic press associations (SPAs) provide a range of services -- educational meetings and workshops; national, regional and state conventions; evaluation of publications; publication of newsletters, magazines and monographs. In addition SPAs recognize excellence through awards for student achievement and provide other services, including teaching materials and telephone helplines (Johnston, 1989; Ortman, 1989; Siver & Sullivan, 1989).

In spite of the major role SPAs play in promoting scholastic journalism, research on scholastic press associations as organizations and research on SPA directors is limited (Butler, 1989). To provide the strong scholastic press associations advocated by *Death by Cheeseburger* (1994) more must be known about the structure of effective SPAs and the role of SPA directors. This study was designed to provide that information by asking:

- How are SPAs organized? Do they have sponsorship and, if so, what is the level of support? Do they have boards of directors and, if so, what is the composition and level of control of the board?
- How are SPA directors' jobs structured -- by whom are they employed; what duties do they perform for the scholastic press association; what other duties do they have?

- What do SPA directors consider to be the most rewarding and least rewarding aspects of their work?

Answers to these questions may lead to understanding of how scholastic press association directors can be best supported and how scholastic press associations can be strengthened.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The exact number of SPAs is not clear (CSPAA, 1997; Nilson, 1989b). The number depends on whether city and county SPAs are included in the count or if only state, regional and national SPAs are included. The strength and even fate of scholastic press associations depend on a variety of factors, including the leadership of the SPA director and SPA board, state legislative politics, and curriculum decisions made by departments of education (Robinson, 1996; Hines, 1982).

Nilson (1989b) sent a survey to 105 scholastic press associations, including not only state, regional and national scholastic press associations but SPAs for cities and counties. Only 28 SPAs responded. For the survey of scholastic press associations conducted by the Columbia Scholastic Press Advisers Association (1997), 46 state and regional SPAs were identified, and 18 responses were received. Such results make it unclear if a SPA director has decided not to respond to the survey or if the SPA no longer is active.

The scholastic press associations that are active do have an impact on the quality of high school and middle school journalism programs (*Death by Cheeseburger*, 1994). *Death by Cheeseburger's* chapter on the overall status of scholastic journalism in the country stated:

> If all state, regional and national scholastic press associations were equally well organized and funded, and if there was enough money to allow every newspaper staffer and adviser to take advantage of the services they offer, then high school newspapers in the United States would soar (p. 26).

The book concluded with 12 steps for improving high school journalism programs." Step 12 was:

> Students and teachers should have opportunities to use the services and attend meetings of state and national scholastic press organizations. Scholastic press organizations should develop aggressive membership campaigns to convince media, educational and civic leaders that student news media are essential to a high school education (p. 148).

Siver & Sullivan (1989) wrote of the importance of strong scholastic journalism programs, noting that "the focus of the associations is to help teachers become better at advising and teaching and to help students improve their journalistic skills" (p. 21). Siver, Journalism Education Association president and an assistant principal, and Sullivan, executive director of the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, recognized that school administrators may need to be convinced that publication programs are of value to the school program.

> It stands to reason that students and teachers who have been trained in press responsibility and ethics, news judgment, eye-catching design, clear writing and numerous other facets of effective publications will produce newspapers, yearbooks and magazines that are more than likely to be a credit to the school and a source of pride for school administrators. Beside the benefits to teachers and students, school communities reap the rewards of an effective student press and positive public relations (p. 23).

Siver and Sullivan stated that student media programs could be improved by involvement in scholastic press organizations. Their article stressed the benefits of membership in scholastic press organizations but did not discuss the SPA director.

In spite of the potential value of SPAs for helping build strong high school journalism programs, the SPAs themselves often are not effective in long-term planning, may not develop an effective working relationship with university sponsors, and may have difficult work situations for their directors (Butler, 1989; Dodd, 1989).

Butler (1989) said that each scholastic press association could benefit from knowing its own organization's history and from knowing the history of other associations.

> The history of scholastic press associations needs to be written so the wheel is no

> longer rediscovered every few years by a new director, board or advisers in a press association. Too much time and effort is misdirected in trying to rediscover the past, rather than building for the future. Such a history will give SPAs perspective as to what has occurred in scholastic press associations (p. 19).

As of 1998, few SPAs had a detailed recorded history. The Florida Scholastic Press Association had the most comprehensive history, a 65-page book, *Scholastic Journalism in the Sunshine State: The History of the Florida Scholastic Press Association, 1946-1996* (Robinson, 1996). The book, an abridged version of Judy L. Robinson's master's thesis, was published by *The Tampa Tribune* as part of FSPA's 50th anniversary celebration. The 75th anniversary of the Indiana High School Press Association led to the publication of *Indiana High School Press Association: 75 Years of Service to Scholastic Journalism* (1997), a 16-page magazine. A 57-year portion of the Columbia Scholastic Press Association's history was chronicled in Barbara Hines's doctoral dissertation. The dissertation was abridged into an issue of the *School Press Review* (Spring 1982). But comprehensive written histories are the exception. In some cases, little formal record is kept by the association, as demonstrated by the results of CSPAA's survey of scholastic press associations (1997). Four of the 18 SPA directors (22%) who responded to the survey could not provide the basic information of an exact date for the origination of their association, saying no record of that date existed in their files.

In interviews with five SPA directors, Dodd (1989) found that directors faced a number of challenges in their work. One set of challenges came from working with advisers. Examples included advisers who missed the organization's deadlines or who incorrectly filled out forms. Another set of challenges came from job duties as SPA director, such as developing budgets for workshops and conventions. A third set of challenges came from the directors' overall job descriptions. All five directors were university faculty members, with one-fourth to one-half of their time allocated to association work. So the majority of their overall job assignment was teaching, serving on committees, conducting research and publishing. The directors said their association members often did not acknowledge that they had any job responsibilities other than to their press association work. The directors reported their university colleagues often considered working with scholastic journalism to have low status, as it involved service, whereas more respect was given to teaching and research.

Butler (1989) encouraged scholastic press associations to make as a goal for the future improving relationships between SPAs and journalism education in higher education.

> Most press associations are located on university and college campuses. Yet in many instances, such organizations don't relate well with the host institution. Even some faculty members at those institutions question the validity of effort and money spent on scholastic journalism (p. 20).

Butler said teamwork among the SPAs can strengthen them by enabling directors to develop a network (and just to know who other SPA directors are) and share information -- on activities, recruitment and retention of members, etc.

In 1986, Journalism Education Association President Dorothy McPhillips took a major step in improving the teamwork of SPAs by asking Barbara Nilson, JEA Northwest Regional Director, to be the SPA liaison for JEA. Nilson sent a letter to directors stating:

> The national Journalism Education Association recognizes your organizations are working for the same goals we strive to achieve each year, i.e. solving the lack of state journalism certification requirements, keeping journalism a viable part of the curriculum for credit, solving the high turnover rate of advisers, training advisers in workshops, etc. We feel if we could combine our efforts, we could become a great force for solving some of these problems (Nilson, 1989a).

The first JEA SPA directors' meeting was held at the JEA national convention in November 1986 and was attended by representatives of 16 SPAs. Following that meeting, the JEA board voted to continue the SPA project, having the SPA liaison serve as a non-voting member of the JEA board (Nilson, 1989a). From 1986 to 1998, SPA directors met twice a year at

JEA conventions.

The Spring 1989 issue of *Communication: Journalism Education Today*, JEA's quarterly journal, was dedicated to information about SPAs. The issue, titled "Scholastic press associations: We're here for you," included 11 articles on aspects dealing with scholastic press associations, written by SPA directors.

This special edition *C:JET* included the results of a survey Nilson (1989b) conducted of SPA directors. Nilson mailed a survey to the 105 SPAs on her mailing list in 1988. That list included city-wide, state, regional and national SPAs, noting several were questionable as they possible were no longer is existence. She received 28 responses. As mentioned previously, the number of respondents may indicate that Nilson's list of 105 SPAs was outdated, including numerous inactive SPAs.

"Scholastic press associations respond to JEA survey" listed the information provided by the 28 SPA directors or presidents. Information included director's salary, membership fees, services provided, support staff, and purpose of the organization. Nilson said the sampling reflected the diversity of SPAs. Of the SPA directors or presidents who reported their salaries, the salaries ranged from nothing for those who were full-time high school teachers and SPA presidents to college faculty who earned $600 to $28,500 for their SPA work. Of college faculty, their job assignment for SPA work ranged from one-eighth time to full-time.

Nine years later, as part of a project to examine the state of scholastic journalism and make recommendations for the future of scholastic journalism, the CSPAA 21st Century Committee conducted a survey of SPA directors. Early in 1997, surveys were sent to 46 SPA directors. City SPAs and large multi-state and national SPAs were not included in the survey. Eighteen of the 46 directors responded, for a 39.1% return rate. Findings of the survey included:

- On the average SPAs had been in existence for 55.2 years, with the oldest formed in 1913 and the youngest in 1979. Four directors listed no exact date, as no record existed in their files.

- The average number of years the director had served was 6.1 years, with the least time on the job being one year and the longest time 18 years.
- Of the respondents, 61% were college faculty; 17% were high school advisers serving as president; 11% were staff members of state high school leagues; one reported the association was looking for a sponsor; and one was not a college faculty member but the association was housed in college's journalism school.
- Titles of the SPA leaders were: 47% executive director, 24% director, 18% president of the board; 5.9% assistant director, and 5.9% executive secretary.
- The percentage of their college workload filled by SPA activities:

Duties account for	Directors responding
0-20% SPA workload	28%
21-40% SPA workload	17 %
41-60% SPA workload	17 %
61-80% SPA workload	22 %
81-100% SPA workload	6%
NA	11% (full-time high school teachers)

As part of the CSPAA 21st Century Committee's report, Dickey (1997) conducted a survey of the 15 state directors of states in the Southern Interscholastic Press Association. She had a 100% response rate. Her results were included in *Scholastic Journalism in the 21st Century* and paralleled the findings of the national SPA survey conducted by CSPAA.

- The directors averaged of 6.7 years of service.
- Of the 15 SPAs, 11 were affiliated with universities, four were not.
- Of the 15 SPA directors, seven were on tenure track and eight were not.
- In terms of services provided: all 15 gave awards; 12 published newsletters, and conducted critique services; 11 offered summer workshops, and fall and/or spring conferences; eight gave scholarships to students and awards to advisers.

Dickey expressed concern as the new language from the journalism schools' accrediting body says colleges "could" support scholastic journalism, whereas the previous accrediting language said journalism colleges "should" support scholastic journalism.

Previous research documented the demographics of scholastic press directors (SPA duties, amount of job allocated to SPA work, salary, etc.).

METHODOLOGY

This study continued the research on scholastic press associations by examining the organizational structure of the associations, the directors' job descriptions (in terms of their SPA assignment and other assigned job duties), and what the directors considered as the strengths and weaknesses of their association work.

To collect information, a "cover letter" and 25-item questionnaire were e-mailed, in March 1998, to directors or presidents[1] of 44 scholastic press associations listed in the Journalism Education Association's 1997 Membership Directory. (A total of 87 state, city and county associations and summer workshop programs were included in the directory. Of the 87, 57 listed e-mail addresses. Only those with e-mail addresses were selected for the survey. City and county associations were not included in the survey nor were summer workshop programs. When the directory included both a state association and an advisers' JEA chapter for a state, only the state association was included.)

Items on the questionnaire (see Appendix A) asked for information about the SPA (history of the organization, inclusion of board of directors) and about the organization's director (educational background, job description, employment arrangement). Two open-ended items asked "What do you enjoy most about your work with the scholastic press association?" and "What do you enjoy least about your work with the scholastic press association?" Items for the questionnaire paralleled concerns addressed in previous surveys of SPA directors (CSPAA, 1997; Dickey, 1997; Nilson, 1989) and suggested by a review of the literature.

Of the e-mails sent to the 44 directors and presidents, five were returned -- one with an error in the address (which was corrected and the survey resent) and four with discontinued addresses. Thirteen responses were received following the initial e-mailing. An e-mail reminder

[1] Presidents were contacted when a director was not listed. When a director was not listed, either the association had a director but that person was not active in JEA or the association did not have a director, typically meaning that the association did not have organizational sponsorship.

was sent to those who had not responded, yielding 13 additional responses, for a 65% response rate (n=26).

Of the 26 responses, 22 were received from state SPAs, one was received from a regional association of 15 states, and three were received from national SPAs. For the purpose of this study, only the 22 state SPAs were included in the analysis.[2]

Supporting organizations

Of the 22 respondents, 86% (n=19) said their SPAs had an university sponsor or was supported by the state professional press association, with 14% (n=3) who said their SPAs had no sponsoring institution. (See Appendix B for information on each state association that completed the survey.)

The SPA directors who said their organizations had institutional support were asked to indicate the kind of support provided by a sponsoring institution:

- 77.3% provided office space;
- 59.1% provided a phone;
- 49.9% paid for the SPA mailings;
- 45.5% provided a computer;
- 40.9% provided maintenance of SPA computer;
- 36.4% paid the phone bills;
- 36.4% provided some amount of secretarial support;
- 13.6% provided faxing.

Respondents were asked to indicate if their association had a board of directors and, if so, how many individuals served on the board and how much authority the board possessed. Of the 21 who responded to the question, 81% (n=17) had boards of directors, and 19% (n=4) did not have boards. The size of the boards ranged from four to 28 members, with an average of 14

[2] Responses were received from four national/regional scholastic press associations -- Columbia Scholastic Press Association, National Scholastic Press Association, Quill and Scroll International and the Southern Interscholastic Press Association. These four were not included in the analysis of the survey. The researcher was concerned that the larger size of the regional/national associations could make these associations and their directors' jobs different from the smaller state associations. Further research could analyze whether, in fact, regional and national scholastic press groups do vary from state associations. Nevada was in the process of trying to establish a state association. Nevada was included in the data of the state associations but could not, in most instances, provide information asked in the survey.

members. Board members, typically, were advisers in the organization. Only one director indicated that high school students served on the board. Only one board included college representation beyond the association's director.

The authority of these board ranged from complete control for every decision to serving in an advisory capacity only. Of the 17 boards, 35% (n=6) served in an advisory capacity only; 29% (n=5) had authority for all decisions; 29% (n=5) shared in decisions with the director. Directors varied in their opinions about the value of their boards. Several directors said they tried to implement all the board's decisions, even when the board served in an advisory capacity. Two directors with boards that held decision-making power said that the arrangement often was frustrating to them as directors. Two directors whose organizations did not have boards said that having no board was a benefit, providing the directors with more autonomy in making and implementing decisions.

<u>Demographic information on association directors/presidents</u>

Of the 22 state scholastic press directors who responded to the survey, 72% (n=16) were university employees, 18% (n=4) were high school teachers, and 9% (n=2) were employees of state professional press associations. In the case of the four high school teachers, three were presidents and one was serving as a facilitator for a group of advisers who were trying to establish a state association.

For the 18 who were not high school teachers, their average time as SPA directors was 5.6 years. Their time as director ranged from six months to 19 years. Only six of the 18 SPA directors had held the position for more than five years.

In terms of their own experience with high school publications, 63.6% (n=14) of the respondents currently were or had been high school publication advisers. And 86.5% (n=19) had been on a school publication staff when they were high school students.

When asked to indicate their highest educational level: 22.7% (n=5) had a bachelor's degree as their highest level; 54.6% (n=12) had a master's degree; 14% (n=3) had doctoral degrees.

Job descriptions for association directors

Of the 22 respondents, four were high school teachers and were involved in association work as unpaid volunteers. Of the remaining 18 respondents, 16 were employees of universities that sponsored the SPAs -- with 14 receiving their salaries from the universities, one receiving half the salary from the university and half from the SPA, and one receiving a salary from an endowed fund for the association. Two were employees of state press associations and had their salaries paid by the professional press. Only one scholastic press association had the financial responsibility of paying the director's salary.

Of the 16 respondents working at universities, 37.5% (n=6) were on administrative appointments, 29.4% (n=5) were faculty in tenure-track positions, and 12.5% (n=2) were faculty in non-tenure track positions. One was an adjunct faculty member, one was a graduate student, and one was coordinator of off-campus programs.

The 16 university employees had, on the average, 25-50% of their time allocated to scholastic press work. Only one university employee had 100% of her time allocated to association work. Fifteen of the university employees provided information about the duties they had in addition to their SPA work. In describing the other duties they had in their university work, 73.3% (n=11) said they taught classes, and 46.7% (n=7) advised students. Other duties included directing summer workshops, supervising labs in the college, editing college publications, serving on committees, and recruiting students. Only 13.3% (n=2) said they were expected to conduct scholarly research that resulted in refereed papers and journal articles.

Respondents were asked to indicate their job duties in their SPA work. Of the 21 respondents:

- 85.7% conducted or helped conduct an annual convention;
- 71.4% were editor of the organization's newsletter;
- 71.4% directed a publication evaluation service;
- 61.9% directed an evaluation service for individual student work;
- 57.1% handled the organization's finances;
- 57.1% helped in the awarding of scholarships;
- 52.4% directed an office staff;
- 52.4% coordinated a summer journalism workshop;
- 42.9% coordinated or help coordinate workshops during the school year;
- 28.6% were responsible for fund raising.

Additionally, 71.4% (n=15) indicated that they were responsible for other association duties. Those other duties included helping the association work toward state press rights for student journalists, coordinating summer internships for advisers at newspapers in the state, coordinating a student journalist of the year program, overseeing the state scholastic journalism hall of fame, providing telephone support to advisers, maintaining a Web site, and coordinating board meetings.

Pros and Cons of SPA Work

In two open-ended questions, the SPA directors were asked to explain what they enjoyed most about their work and what they enjoyed least. All but two of the 22 responded to these questions. Because the questions were open-ended the range of responses varied. But some themes were present in their answers.

What do you enjoy most about your work with the scholastic press association?

The most frequent response was working with teachers. Some directors specified working with new advisers or working with teachers who were members of the board. But 12 of the 20 respondents indicated they enjoyed working with teachers. The second most frequent response (n=7) was working with the high school students. Other comments from directors included: being an advocate of a free and responsible press, which could mean involvement in state legislative action (n=4); having an impact on the future of scholastic journalism (n=2); networking with journalism educators around the country and/or media professionals (n=3); helping produce better student publications (n=2). One of the SPA presidents who is a full-time high school teacher and one university SPA director said what was most enjoyable was putting on a conference teachers and students enjoyed.

What do you enjoy least about your work with the scholastic press association?

Directors and presidents had less consensus on what they least enjoyed about their SPA work. The most frequently mentioned items were: workload (n=6); advisers who complained/whined about deadlines or publication ratings (n=5); lack of support from the professional media, the college journalism program, or the SPA board members (n=4); being taken for granted or not being respected by the high school advisers or university colleagues (n=3); trying to recruit funding for the association (n=2). Other topics included problems in having dependable publication judges, trying to get more advisers involved, planning workshops and conventions, and having an adversarial relationship with the board and the college journalism program. Only one person wrote "nothing" in response to the question. That was one of the full-time high school teachers and SPA presidents.

CONCLUSIONS

Both the Freedom Forum's *Death by Cheeseburger: High School Journalism in the 1990s and Beyond* (1994) and CSPAA's *Scholastic Journalism in the 21st Century* (1997) reported that strong scholastic press associations improved the quality of high school journalism programs. Understanding the relationship between press associations and sponsoring organizations (i.e., universities and professional press associations) and understanding the job demands and rewards for association directors can help provide direction for strengthening scholastic press associations. This study's findings are a further step in that direction.

A factor that speaks to why both university faculty members and high school teachers were involved in scholastic press association work: their own high school journalism experience. More than 60% of the respondents were or had been high school journalism teachers, and more than 85% had been on student publications as high school students.

This study identified several factors that SPA directors found as the most and least enjoyable aspects of their work. Based on the open-ended comments of the SPA directors, the advisers in the organization could be the best or worst part of a SPA director's work. Recognizing the importance of positive relations with the director, SPA boards want to set a positive tone and help establish (and follow) policies that help the director. In addition, SPA boards need to be aware of the overall job duties of their directors, recognizing that those individuals typically have less than half of their overall time allocated to SPA work.

Reinforcing the fact that SPA directors are not the employees of the scholastic press associations is the fact that only one scholastic press association actually had the financial responsibility for funding part of its director's salary. The other 17 paid directors received their salaries from universities or from professional press associations. In addition, many of the associations' expenses (i.e., office space, mailings) were paid for by the sponsoring organizations.

Scholastic press organizations should be attuned to the level of financial support they are receiving and acknowledge that support. As Dickey noted in her CSPAA's *21st Century* article, the directive from journalism schools' accrediting body is that universities "could," not "should," support scholastic journalism efforts. Consequently, the SPAs themselves need to help university journalism programs see the benefit of such sponsorship. Additional research could examine the attitudes of directors and deans of schools of journalism and communications that sponsor scholastic press associations to determine what factors influence their decision to make a commitment to support scholastic journalism. That information could help boards of directors for scholastic press associations and individual advisers in encouraging support for the scholastic press.

Research is one way to establish the value of SPA programs to sponsoring institutions and to increase the status with colleagues of SPA directors who are university faculty members. Published research, such as *Journalism Kids Do Better: What Research Tells Us about High School Journalism* (1994), documents what scholastic journalism programs do to improve high school students' academic skills and helps further develop the body of knowledge in scholastic journalism -- an important factor in establishing the credibility of the field in the eyes of the academic world.

A challenge for getting scholastic journalism research published in refereed publications has been the small readership potential for such research. The significant refereed publications in the field -- *Journalism Quarterly*, *Newspaper Research Journal* and *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* -- only rarely publish articles related to scholastic journalism. Scholastic journalism publications, such as *Quill and Scroll* and *Communication: Journalism Education Today*, regularly publish articles on research in scholastic journalism, but those publications are not refereed, which means publishing in these journals is not as highly valued in academic circles.[3] The advent of refereed electronic journals (Amiran, Orr & Unsworth, 1991) could provide the opportunity for publication of scholastic press research without the huge expense of traditional publishing. The Scholastic Journalism Division may want to investigate the possibility of publishing an on-line journal of scholastic journalism research.

Of the 16 university SPA directors who participated in this study, fewer than half were in faculty positions -- 31.3% in tenure-accruing positions and 12.5% in non-tenure positions. (The rest were adjunct faculty or on administrative appointments.) Only 13.3% said they

[3] The Journalism Education Association has published three issues of C:JET (one issue every other year) that are refereed. That publication is made possible through collaboration with the AEJMC Scholastic Journalism Division.

conducted research as part of their university assignment. Both of these factors reinforce remarks in previous articles (Butler, 1989; Dodd, 1989) that faculty in SPA positions are not viewed as having equal status with their colleagues who have more traditional teaching and research assignments. Further research could examine which employment model is more effective for university employees with scholastic press association responsibilities.

The few faculty who are engaged in research also means less research is being conducted in the field of scholastic journalism, meaning less publication on the topic, and, ultimately, less recognition of scholastic journalism as an area that merits investigation and serious consideration. The Scholastic Journalism Division has made progress in this area by hosting refereed paper sessions at both the mid-winter meeting and annual convention. An award and cash prize are presented for the top research paper each year. The division has worked with the Journalism Education Association to establish a refereed issue of *C:JET* every other year. The division should continue to determine ways to encourage graduate students to conduct research in scholastic journalism. Graduate students who conduct research in scholastic journalism not only contribute to the body of research through that specific research paper but become aware of scholastic journalism as an area for potential research in their academic futures.

Promoting scholastic journalism research, starting an on-line refereed journal, understanding the motivations of deans and directors in deciding to sponsor scholastic journalism, and educating SPA boards to the overall job demands of university faculty members who are SPA directors all are steps toward strengthening SPAs across the country and improving the job of the scholastic press association director.

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Appendix A

Scholastic Press Association Director/President Survey

Your name

Name of your scholastic press organization

1. What is the membership scope of your association?
___ Section of a state
___ State
___ Region of the country
___ National
___ Other. Explain

2. Does your organization have an institution (i.e., college or university, state press association) that provides support?
___ Yes
___ No

3. If yes, what is the name of the sponsoring organization?

4. Please check the support provided by the sponsoring institution. (Check all that apply.)
___ office space
___ telephone
___ telephone bills
___ computer
___ computer service
___ postage
___ secretarial support
___ other. Explain

5. Briefly, what is the history of your organization? Please explain if your association was set up by a university or by advisers separate from any specific institution. Also include the length of time your association has had affiliation with its current sponsoring institution.

6. If your organization does not have institutional support, why not?

7. What is your job title in terms of your work with your scholastic press association?
___ Executive director
___ Director
___ Executive secretary

___ President
___ Other. Explain

8. How long have you held this position?

9. Please indicate your highest educational level and area the degree was earned in.
___ BA/BS
___ MA/MS/MFA
___ Educational Specialist
___ EdD
___ PhD

10. Are you currently or have you been a high school publication/broadcast adviser?
___ Yes
___ No

11. Were you on a school publication as a high school student?
___ Yes
___ No

12. How much support do you have in terms of undergraduates, graduate students or secretaries? Please indicate who funds the salaries for these individuals.

13. Who is your primary employer in terms of paying your salary?
___ Scholastic press association
___ College or university
___ High school
___ State press association
___ Retired from ____________________
___ Other. Explain

14. Indicate the source of your salary in terms of percentage.
___ scholastic press association
___ university
___ state press association
___ state department of education
___ grant
___ other. Explain

If you are a college or university employee, please answer questions 15-19.
If you are not a university employee, skip to question 19.

15. What is your job classification at the college/university?
___ Faculty in tenure-track position
___ Faculty in non-tenure track position
___ Administrative appointment
___ Adjunct faculty
___ Graduate assistant
___ Other. Explain

16. What percentage of your job at the college/university is working with the scholastic press association?

17. What job duties make up the remaining part of your time?

18. If you are tenure-track, are you expected to conduct scholarly research that results in refereed papers and journal articles? If yes, please explain.

19. Please list your job duties (i.e., handling the organization's finances, editing a newsletter, coordinating an evaluation service for publications, coordinating an evaluation service for individual student entries, coordinating a summer workshop).

20. Does your organization have a board of directors/executive board?
___ Yes
___ No

If yes, answer questions 21-22.
If no, skip to question 24.

21. How many serve on the board?

22. How are board members selected and what is their term of office?

23. Please explain the authority/power of the board. For example, is the board's approval required for most of the organization's decisions and activities or does the board serve in an advisory capacity to the organization's director?

The following information will be reported anonymously, so please be candid.

24. What do you enjoy most about your work with the scholastic press association?

25. What do you enjoy lease about your work with the scholastic press association?

Appendix B

Scholastic Press Association Profiles

The following is information from the surveys of the state scholastic press associations. Information includes: name of the organization; sponsoring organization; person who completed the survey and person's job position; amount of paid time allocated to association work; the length of time the person has served with the association; and the board composition and power.

Arkansas Scholastic Press Association
Supporting organization: Arkansas Press Association
Beth Shull is director and an employee of the Arkansas Press Association.
Job: 100% scholastic press association work.
Years: 7 months
Board (11) - 3 journalism advisers, 5 regional directors, 3 ASPA officer school advisers. Have only met twice in 3 years.

Alabama Scholastic Press Association
Supporting organization - University of Alabama
Monica Hill is the coordinator and is on an administrative appointment at the University of Alabama.
Job: 65% scholastic press association. Serves as publications assistant for the Division of Student Affairs.
Years: 3 years
Established by University of Alabama in 1937 as outgrowth of journalism department workshops for high school journalists.
Board (4) - Advisers in 2-year terms. Advisory board. that makes recommendations.

Colorado High School Press Association
Sponsoring organization - University of Colorado at Boulder. CHSPA established by advisers in 1971 and became affiliated with CU in late 1980s.
Barbara Plungy is executive director and an adjunct faculty member.
Job: 100% scholastic press association work.
Years: 2 years
Board (16) - Board approval required for everything.

Empire State Scholastic Press Association
Sponsoring organization - Syracuse University. ESSPA has existed since 1928.
Sherri Taylor is director and on an admin. appointment.
Job: 15-20% scholastic press association work. She also teaches and manages the graphics lab and supervises lab teaching.
Years: 3 years
No board

Illinois State High School Press Association
Sponsoring organization - Univ. of Illinois/Champaign-Urbana
Dana Ewell is director and a faculty member in non-tenure track.
Job: 25% scholastic press association work. She also teaches a news editing course, handles the internship, job and scholarship counseling for journalism majors, and edits the college's alumni magazine.
Years: 8 years
No board

Indiana High School Press Association
Sponsoring institution - Franklin College (Indiana). Funding for the IHSPA is from a $30 million endowment from newspaper publisher Eugene Pulliam.
Dennis Cripe is executive director and a faculty, tenure track position (no research required) at Franklin College.
Job: 50% scholastic press association. He also teaches 12 hours of course work each school year.
Years: 6 years
Board (9) - Voted into office at fall convention. Advisory board, "partners" in decisions.

Interscholastic League Press Conference
Sponsoring institution - University of Texas/Austin established ILPC in 1924 as an extension of spring contests program.
Bobby Hawthorne is director and on an administrative appointment at the University of Texas.
Job: 50% scholastic press association. He also is director of the University Interscholastic League, which sponsors 22 high school and 17 elementary/junior high academic contests in a variety of subject areas and sponsors a series of workshops.
Years: 19 years
Board - No board.

Iowa High School Press Association
Supporting organization - University of Iowa
Vanessa Shelton is the executive director and is on an administrative appointment at Iowa University.
Job: 50% scholastic press association. She also conducts the summer journalism workshops, assists Quill and Scroll, teaches a journalism course and is liaison with prospective students and their parents.
Years: 7 months
Board (4) - Elected by membership at fall conference. to serve 2-year term. Determine program directions, either by approval or actually developing the idea. Some decision making, some advisory.

Journalism Association of Ohio Schools

Sponsoring organization - Ohio State University, which founded JAOS more than 65 years ago.
Tracie Mauriello is executive director and a graduate student at Ohio State.
Job: 100% of her assistantship is scholastic press association work.
Years: 2 years
Board (16) - Advisers apply and are accepted up to 20 on board. No explanation of board's authority.

Kansas Scholastic Press Association

Sponsoring organization - University of Kansas since 1970.
John Hudnall is executive director as a faculty member in non-tenure track.
Job: 50% scholastic press association work; also teaches journalism courses each semester.
Years: 8 years
Board (24) - 13 elected, 4 appointed, 7 college reps from all Regents institutions. Advisory capacity but more voice in contests.

Kentucky High School Journalism Association

Sponsoring organization - Kentucky Press Association. KHSJA began in 1997-1998, after Kentucky High School Press Association was inactive for several years.
Lisa Carnahan is administrator and a full-time employee of the Kentucky Press Association.
Job: Doesn't say how much time is allocated to SPA work
Years: 7 months
Board (6) - Chosen by KHSPA advisory council. Help make decisions.

Missouri Interscholastic Press Association

Sponsoring organization - University of Missouri, which started MIPA in 1923.
Anna Romero is executive director and is a faculty member on professional practice track.
Job: 50% scholastic press association work; teaches in the broadcast news department and directs a minority journalism workshop.
Years: 2 years
Board (15) - Advisory capacity to director but often director allows board to vote on most everything. Dean has final say on financial issues.

Nebraska High School Press Association

Sponsoring organization - University of Nebraska/Lincoln
John Bender is executive director and a faculty member in tenure track position research expected)
Job: 10-15% scholastic press association work. He also teaches, advises students and conducts research.
Years: 3 years
Board (5) - Director carries out decisions of the board.

Nevada - No association name yet. Advisers trying to organize and find sponsorship.

North Carolina Scholastic Media Association

Sponsoring organization - University of North Carolina/Chapel Hill
Kay D. Phillips is director and is on an administrative appointment at UNC.
Job: 90% scholastic press association work; she also teaches a non-credit grammar remediation course.
Years: 4 years
Board (25) - Advisory, with director trying to follow board's recommendations.

Northeast Ohio Scholastic Press Association

Sponsoring organization - Kent State University established NOSPA in 1938.
Candace Perkins Bowen is executive director and is on an administrative appointment and is an adjunct faculty member.
Job: 50% scholastic press association work. She also coordinates workshops, advises education majors who are in journalism, teaches Teaching High School Journalism, and teaches distributed learning courses.
Years: 3 years
Board (6-8) - Purely advisory

Northern Illinois School Press Association

Sponsoring organization - None. Originally at Northern Illinois University but advisers later broke away and made other arrangements. NISPA rents space at a college for convention.
Ted G. Heiser is president and a full-time high school teacher. NISPA has no director.
Job: No paid employee for scholastic press association work.
Board (11) - Elected by advisers for 3-year terms

Oklahoma Interscholastic Press Association

Sponsoring organization - University of Oklahoma. OIPA was established at OU in 1916.
Laura Schaub is the executive director and is in a tenure track position in teaching line.
Job: 33% or 50% scholastic press association work, depending on semester. She also teaches classes.
Years: 6 years
Board (4) - Elected. Director makes decisions with board's input.

Pennsylvania School Press Association

Sponsoring organization - None. PSPA was started in 1926 and always has been independent of any university of college.
Jane Blystone is president and a full-time high school teacher.
Job: No paid employees for PSPA. The organization currently is trying to secure a sponsoring organization and a director.
Board (27) - 20 adults and 7 students.

South Carolina Scholastic Press Association

Sponsoring organization - University of South Carolina
Bruce E. Konkle is director and is in a tenure track faculty in the Professional Track.
Job: 12% scholastic press association work. (Was 50% 10 years ago but now SCSPA has an office manager.) Konkle also teaches public relations classes.
Years: 13 years
Support staff: 1 full-time scholastic press manager (also asst. to SIPA and directs summer workshop) funded by college; 1 undergrad for 10 hrs. a week
Board (28) - Establishes policies and plans conferences and board meetings.

West Virginia H.S. Journalism Teachers' Association

Sponsoring organization - West Virginia University. The organization began in 1979 as part of the off-campus education program.
Pam Yagle is Off-Campus Education Committee chairperson and a faculty member in tenure-track position (research desirable).
Job: less than 10% scholastic press association work. She also teaches, coordinates advising and edits the college's publications.
Years: 19 years
No board

Yankee PEN

Sponsoring organization - University of Massachusetts since 1995. Yankee PEN established in 1989 and has been at two other universities before UM.
Michael J. Vieira is the president and a full-time high school teacher.
Job: No information provided on director
Board (19) - The board runs the organization.

Student Internet Rights

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Introduction

In January 1997, President Clinton, in his State of the Union address, challenged Americans to bring the power of the Internet into their schools and "connect every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000, so that, for the first time in our history, children in the most isolated rural towns, the most comfortable suburbs, and the poorest inner city schools, will have the same access to the same universe of knowledge" (Clinton, 1997). At the same time that President Clinton bestowed this challenge onto Americans, the fate of the constitutionality of the Communications Decency Act (signed into law by Clinton) was being considered by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The irony of the President's words and actions underscore the tension over student Internet rights. On the one hand, the Internet is being billed as a great education and communications tool, a "universe of knowledge"(Clinton, 1997). On the other hand, people are so worried about the content of the information available on the Internet that they are hackneyed to limit that universe of knowledge in an effort to protect minors (students) from the potential harms of that information. This content control is already happening in places such as Boston, Massachusetts and Loudon County, Virginia where libraries have begun using filtering software to limit users' access to information on the Internet.

This software, screens the Internet for sexually explicit or obscene material and then restricts access to these areas of the Internet. This screening process also blocks access to legitimate information. The software gives an administrator the ability to control all information from the Internet into his/her location. Initially this seems reasonable especially when applied to students. Perhaps students shouldn't be able to access obscene material from their schools' computers, but maybe control of access to information shouldn't be handed over to software companies and administrators. Wendy Kaminer, a columnist and fellow at the Radcliffe College Public Policy Institute notes, "The sexually explicit category is also likely to block discussion of free speech that refer to the censorship of pornography, discussion of sexual harassment cases or speech codes, as well as educational sites focusing on sexuality" (Kaminer, 1997). The rights of libraries to use filtering software is currently being judged against First Amendment rights of library users in Loudon County, Virginia.

The conflict over use of filtering software is indicative of the conflict over regulating the Internet, balancing the need to protect children from obscenity and pornography against the First Amendment rights of the adult public. Recently, there has also been a rush among legal scholars to define the Internet in legal terms, so that a long history of legal precedents may be applied to current Internet dilemmas. In a recent New York Times article, Amy Harmon explained, "But in a legal system that reveres precedent and relies on analogy, even defining the nature of an Internet-related dispute can be source of contention" (Harmon, p. C1, 1998).

The Internet is still very much a frontier; consequently there is little understanding of it. This lack of understanding is likely to lead to rash decisions by school officials to protect their students, which could in the process hurt them. It is imperative that thoughtful action be taken to understand this complex issue and address it through well-designed law.

The rights of students (defined here as persons, age 15-18 attending public schools) have historically and legally been balanced against the rights of schools to restrict student liberties in order to provide a controlled learning environment. However, students are in training to be our country's next elected officials, jurists and electorate. Schools seem to be a logical place to develop understanding and respect of the rights and liberties established in the Constitution. In West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette, the Supreme Court recognized, "That they (school boards) are educating the young for citizenship is reason for scrupulous protection of Constitutional freedoms of the individual, if we are not to strangle the free mind at its source and teach youth to discount important principles of our government as mere platitudes" (West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette, 1943, p.1637). What rights do students have to use and when using school computers and networks to access the Internet? What responsibilities do schools have to provide the Internet to their students? Can schools limit students Internet use, and if they can, should they?

To comprehend student Internet rights, a clear understanding of the following is necessary: Internet, legal analogies for the Internet, constitutional rights about these analogies, and students' rights with regard to these analogies. Currently, student access (defined as students using school computers and networks to access the Internet) varies from school district to school district. Consequently, students in different places do not have the *same* access to the *same* universe of knowledge. Legislation will be necessary to ensure that students in the most isolated rural towns, the most comfortable suburbs, and the poorest inner city schools will have the same access to the same universe of knowledge. The following analysis uncovers the legal foundations of student Internet rights and reveals the complexity of this important issue.

The Internet is a global decentralized conglomeration of connected networks and computers. Originally developed as a Cold War military tool for communication, the Internet has no hub. There is no centralized processing place or computer; there is no core. Like a spider's web, it has no starting point and no end. The Internet was designed to be indestructible. These connected networks and computers house and transfer billions of bytes of information.

When a new media technology is introduced, academics and lawmakers alike attempt to find an analogy for the new medium to better understand it and its legal place in society. Because the United State's legal system is deeply rooted in precedent, it is important to use analogies in order to understand what laws or legal principles should be applied. A precedent is "a judicial decision that is said to be authority for or to furnish a rule of law binding on the disposition of a current case. A precedent will involve similar facts or raise similar questions of law to the case at bar" (Gillmor, Barron, Simon, and Terry, 1990, p. 931). Determining an analogy for the Internet, or what it is most closely aligned with, is particularly important in mass communication where the laws vary widely from one medium to the next. Laws about the printed press are quite different from broadcasting laws. Nonetheless, all mass media have at least some First Amendment protection.

Understanding the legal context of the mass media begins with the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, adopted in 1791, that reads as: "Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press..." The U.S. Supreme Court has held the term "press" to mean all media of mass communication, which is not say that the First Amendment be applied to all media in the same way, but rather the "means of communication enjoy a protected status" (Gillmor, et al. 1990, p. 9). However, the First Amendment does not provide absolute rights. The freedoms of speech and of the press, if abused, are punishable by the state (Gillmor et al. p. 90). (Specific free press abuses will be addressed later in this paper.)

The Fourteenth Amendment is important in understanding First Amendment rights. In dictum filed with the Gitlow v. People of State of New York decision, Supreme Court Justice Sanford "offhandedly extended the limitations on legislation curtailing freedom of expression binding on the federal government by reason of the First Amendment to the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment" (Gillmor, Barron, Simon, and Terry, 1990, p.19 citing Gitlow v. People of State of New York, 1925). This statement takes the concept of "Congress" as stated in the First Amendment to mean "all government" by applying First Amendment responsibilities at all levels of government. Another Supreme Court decision noted, "the Fourteenth Amendment, as now applied to the States, protects the citizen against the State itself and all of its creatures – Boards of Education not excepted" (West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette, 1943, p. 1637). This is important because it interprets "Congress" within the wording of the First Amendment to mean "all government" including states, municipalities and public schools.

The second sentence of the Fourteenth Amendment states, "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." The Fourteenth Amendment protects all mass media from government regulation.

In contrast, the federal government has already attempted to regulate speech on the Internet. Title V of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, more commonly known as the Communications Decency Act, attempted to restrict communications over the Internet which might be deemed "indecent" or "patently" offensive for minors" (Reno v. ALCU, 1997). The Supreme Court found the Communications Decency Act to be unconstitutional and concluded that the Internet should have First Amendment protection. In the Reno v. ACLU case, the Supreme Court noted that the Internet is the most participatory form of mass speech yet developed and is entitled to the highest protection from government intrusion (Reno v. ACLU, 1997). The Internet is entitled to the same broad free speech protections given to books, magazines and casual conversation. This ruling provides the Internet with the highest amount of protection--equal to that of the press.

Even though the Supreme Court has ruled that the Internet has the highest First Amendment protection, it did not establish a legal analogy that can be used to determine what legal precedents and laws shall be specifically applied to the Internet. Without analogies it is difficult, if not impossible, to apply existing laws to the Internet much less create new legislation. The Internet is unlike any one thing, but instead a combination of several parts. It is an amalgamation of a library, a postal service and a publication. These Internet analogies will place the Internet in a legal context providing a backbone for understanding student Internet rights.

Libraries

The Internet is analogous to an extremely large and diverse digital library, holding almost a limitless amount of information with an equivalent quality and scope. Like a traditional library, the information takes a variety of forms: written, audio and video. The Internet provides access to things such as online magazines, books, songs, voice recordings and video clips. The information on the Internet might be factual or purely entertainment, but unlike a library, the distinction between fiction and non-fiction is very ambiguous and there is no cataloguing system to categorize the information as such. Like most libraries, all of the information on the Internet is free and people can access as much or as little of the resources as they choose. The Internet and libraries were both designed to be places to store and exchange information.

Constitutional law about libraries focuses on the Fourteenth Amendment and equal rights to use the facilities. "A State or its instrumentality may, of course, regulate the use of its libraries or other public facilities. But it must do so in a reasonable and nondiscriminatory manner, equally applicable to all and administered with equality to all. It may not do so as to some and not as to all" (Brown v. Louisiana, 1966, p. 646). This case does not imply that there is a right to use a library, but rather provides for equality of its use. Libraries and other public facilities cannot discriminate against one particular portion of the public by restricting library use. This decision stemmed from the Civil Rights Movement and was intended to ensure that African Americans were afforded the same use of libraries and other public facilities as whites. The same basic idea applies to high school students and Internet rights. Using the Internet is undeniably a privilege, as is library use. The revocation or restriction of Internet privileges must be clearly defined and must not be unreasonable or discriminatory.

Another way to discern student Internet rights is to understand how the courts have viewed school libraries and the content therein. In Minarcini v. Strongsville, a federal court determined that school boards have less power over books that are in a library. The court said that the school board had no obligation to provide a library or to stock it with (specific) books. However, once the privilege of a library is established, the state or school board cannot place conditions on the use of the library relating to the social or political tastes of the school board members (Minarcini v. Strongsville, 1976). Therefore, school boards have great control over what books go in to a library, but can only remove books under extenuating circumstances (Minarcini v. Strongsville, 1976).

Applying Minarcini v. Strongsville to the Internet, schools would have to ban sites before establishing connection to the Internet. But after providing access to students, schools can ban sites only under extenuating circumstances.

In the Board of Education v. Pico, the Supreme Court ruled that members of a school board could not remove books from a library simply because members of the school board disagreed with the content of the books. "While students' First Amendment rights must be construed 'in light of the special characteristics of the school environment,' the special characteristics of the school library make that environment especially appropriate for the recognition of such rights" (Board of Education v. Pico, 1982, p. 438). The decision went further by separating the library from curriculum. A school board has absolute discretion in matters of curriculum by its duty to "inculcate community values" (Board of Education v. Pico, 1982, p.438), but that power does not wholly apply to schools' libraries. Inculcating community values does not extend to non-compulsory domains such as the school library. "Local school boards may not remove books from libraries because they dislike the ideas contained in those books and seek by their removal to 'prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion'" (Board of Education v. Pico, 1982, p. 439). This ruling prevents school board members and administrators from using his/her position to promote his/her social agenda.

Using the Internet as a library analogy, school boards and school administrators would be able to ban students from accessing certain Internet sites, as long as the ban was not motivated by viewpoint discrimination. Schools can restrict information that is vulgar or obscene, but do not have the Constitutional right to restrict information because of ideas.

Publications

The Internet is also similar to a publication. Web sites allow people to produce something that is an expression of ideas, that has a message. The publication includes images, pictures and information. It is produced by a few people for presentation to many. Web sites provide information in ways similar to magazines, newspapers, newsletters or brochures. According to Gillmor et al, a publication has two elements: "Printing, posting, circulating, or disseminating is the first step in publication. Someone reading, viewing, or hearing a message is the second" (Gillmor et al. 1990, p. 182).

The First Amendment guarantees freedom of the press. The fundamental purpose of freedom of the press is that all ideas have the right to be expressed and heard. It is based on the principle, "that debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust and wide-open, and that it may well include vehement, caustic, and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials," (Gillmor, et al. 1990, p. 191).

Near v. Minnesota is a landmark Supreme Court case because it was the first time the Court addressed the constitutionality of prior restraint. Prior restraint is a form of press censorship that prevents the publication of questionable information. As noted earlier, freedom of the press is not an absolute right and there are exceptional areas of instances where prior restraint is legal. They are cases where: (1) national security was involved in time of war; (2) the 'primary requirements of decency' were involved, such as the problem of obscene publications; (3) the public order was endangered by the incitement to violence and overthrow of force of orderly government (Near v. Minnesota, 1931).

The liberty of the press has historically and principally (not exclusively) been immune from prior restraint (Gillmor et al. 1990, p. 92). The freedom of the press to publish without censorship is vital to a democratic society. The Near v. Minnesota decision found the Minnesota statute (in question) that provided for the enjoinment of persons found guilty of a public nuisance of "'malicious, scandalous and defamatory' newspaper or periodicals" (Gillmor, et al. p. 92). In essence, the state could prevent people found guilty of violating this statute from publishing again; consequently using prior restraint because it prevents the said people from their freedom of press right to publish. The Supreme Court found that the statute imposes an unconstitutional restraint upon publication.

The New York Times v. Sullivan decision protects criticism of the government. In this decision, the Supreme Court noted, “the Constitution delimits a State’s power to award damages for libel in actions brought by public officials against critics of their official conduct” (New York Times v. Sullivan, 1964, p. 708). Sometimes called the Fourth Estate, the press serve as a watchdog over government and are not required to be truthful, providing for critical discussion of the government and its officials. This idea is important to the notion of a free society. “Throughout history those in power – absolute rulers and elected officials alike – have used any means available to stifle the voices of dissent” (Law of the Student Press,1994, p.43). It is for reasons such as this that the First Amendment was established.

Although it is undeniable that freedom of the press serves a vital role in a democratic society, in most states students have limited free press rights. In fact, student press rights are subject to prior restraint and can be censored. The limitations of student press rights are explained in the Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier decision which outlines how and why schools can limit students’ expression and free press.

In Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier the Supreme Court ruled that school officials can censor “inappropriate” or “harmful” student speech in official school activities. The Court listed school plays, art exhibits, newspapers and yearbooks as official school activities, but did not include expression through unofficial channels. The important question in determining if Hazelwood applies to the Internet is to ask whether publications using school networks to access the Internet, such as web sites, would be considered an official school activity. However, since the school pays for the computers, network and

Internet access, it is likely that the courts would rule Internet use to be an official school activity.

If student web sites are determined to be an official school activity, schools would have much more ability to censor information on those web sites. The Hazelwood standard states that censorship of school sponsored student expression is permissible when it is reasonably related to pedagogical concerns (Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier, 1988). "The Hazelwood decision's vague and sweeping language has made it difficult for both student journalists and school officials to understand precisely what type of censorship is or is not allowed." (Law of the Student Press, p. 45) If the web site on a school's network were found not to be school sponsored, then students would enjoy full freedom of press rights.

Mail

One of the original uses of the Internet was to aid communication and the exchange of information among military personnel and eventually university researchers. This exchange of information makes the Internet analogous with the U.S. Postal Service. The Internet delivers messages between people (email)-- aiding interpersonal private communication. When mail is properly addressed, both the Internet and U.S. Postal Service will deliver to the listed address. The Internet and a postal service primarily deal with the sending and receiving of written communication, but neither is limited to only written communication.

There are many Supreme Court cases about the use of the U.S. Postal Service, but none that indicates a right to send and receive mail. Rather, it is a privilege regulated by government. Congress may not exercise its control over the mail to enforce a requirement which lies outside its constitutional province. When Congress lays down a valid regulation pertinent to the use of the mail it may withdraw the privilege of that use from those who disobey (Champion v. Ames, 1903).

In addition to withdrawing mail privileges, Congress also has the power to "designate what shall be carried in the mail and what excluded" (Jackson, 1878, p. 877). The government, however, does not summarily have the right to open "letters and sealed packages subject to letter postage" without a warrant (or similar oath of affirmation) describing the contents (Jackson, 1878). The constitutional guaranty of the right of people to be secure against unreasonable searches and seizures extends to their papers, thus closed against inspection, wherever they may be (Jackson, 1878).

Drawing from the previously mentioned mail cases it is possible to predict students' mail rights. Schools can make "regulation pertinent to the use" of the email as long as the regulation doesn't infringe upon a constitutional right. Once the regulation is established, schools can withdraw emailing privileges from those who disobey the regulation.

Schools have the power to designate what shall be carried in the (e)mail and what excluded, but does not have the right to open and read student email without a warrant describing its contents.

Although the courts have not specifically addressed students' rights regarding mail use at school, Tinker v. Des Moines addresses students constitutional rights for personal communication. Using the email/mail analogy, email is undeniably a form of personal communication and therefore subject to the Tinker standard: "student expression is constitutionally protected unless it materially and substantially disrupts normal school activities or invades the rights of others" (Tinker v. Des Moines, 1969, p.41).

AUPs

Most schools use Authorized User Policies (AUP) to establish guidelines for acceptable Internet use. However, most of these AUPs are vague regarding what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. For example, the AUP for the Whitefish Bay School District in Milwaukee County Wisconsin (see Appendix A), states "responsible users shall not access, communicate, display, download or send messages or images of material that is offensive, objectionable, inflammatory, educationally inappropriate or unlawful" (School District of Whitefish Bay Acceptable Use Policy,1997). It would be easy for school administrators to use viewpoint discrimination when determining that which is offensive, objectionable or inappropriate.

Other districts use their AUP as a way to restrict student First Amendment freedom. Ironically, the Muskego-Norway School District in Waukesha County Wisconsin (see Appendix B) claims to provide free speech rights in its AUP. "The right to free speech, as set forth in the United States Constitution applies to communication on the Internet/MuskegoNet. Access to the Internet through Muskego-Norway Schools is created for educational purposes. This limited forum is similar to the school newspaper; therefore, users must abide by the guidelines stipulated in this policy" (Telecommunications Acceptable Use, 1996). This policy further states, "MuskegoNet may be routinely maintained and monitored. Users should expect limited privacy in the contents of personal files on the district system. Like lockers, electronic resources are provided to students for their convenience and said use may be likened to a privilege rather than a right" (Telecommunications Acceptable Use, 1996). This AUP clearly demonstrates that school districts are more concerned about other issues than about student Internet rights. Legislation clearly outlining student Internet rights and responsibilities would be helpful both to school districts and to students because, it would provide schools with established guidelines while protecting the rights of students.

Providing the *same* access to the *same* universe of knowledge requires more than telecommunications equipment. *Same* access to the Internet requires a legal understanding of the Internet and a clear understanding of why students should have the *same* access. The goal of providing *same* access should be more than an issue of equality, it should be a civics lesson about government and the laws designed to protect us. Students are this nation's tomorrow. The earlier the United States can demonstrate the importance of the Constitution and government system, the better the chances for a strong democracy in the future. Legislation will be necessary to protect students' Internet rights and the country's future.

Proposal

States including Kansas, Iowa, California, Massachusetts, Colorado and Missouri have passed laws providing students with greater freedom of press rights than those outlined in the Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier decision. These laws grant students the right to exercise freedom of expression through speech and press. Supporters of these laws emphasized the educational rights of students. Although no states currently have laws protecting and providing for student Internet rights, it is a controversial subject that is likely to come before state legislatures in the near future. The following might be used to create such legislation.

(1) The general assembly declares that students of public schools have the right to exercise freedom of speech and of the press with regard to the use of the Internet.

(2) The Internet shall be considered a library; therefore, if a school district decides to limit student access to certain areas of the Internet it must follow the same procedure used in limiting books from libraries. The state and school districts shall not ban an Internet site because they dislike the ideas contained in those sites and seek by their removal to prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion or other matters of opinion.

(3) The Internet shall be considered a governmental postal service and therefore the information exchange shall be deemed personal expression and shall not be monitored by schools unless it materially and substantially disrupts normal school activities or invades the rights of others.

(4) The Internet shall be considered a publication and students shall have freedom of speech and press and shall not be subject to prior restraint except for when expression:

(a) is obscene

(b) creates a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts, the violation of school regulation, or the material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school or which violates the rights of others to privacy.

Conclusion

Failure to provide equal access to information on the Internet would have unfavorable results. It might give school officials carte blanche to censor information they find "indecent." It would also add to the growing disparities in education from district to district. If the United States is truly going to provide every classroom with access to the Internet by the year 2000, it will be more important than ever to have solid analogies that can be used to determine the Internet's legal place in American society, and to pass state legislation providing students with "the same access to the same universe of knowledge" (Clinton, 1997). Taking action now will prevent problems in the future.

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Student Internet Rights

Appendix A

School District of Whitefish Bay
1200 East Fairmount Avenue
Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin 53217

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Students in the School District of Whitefish Bay have the opportunity to participate in instructional programs using district computers and networks. With these opportunities come certain rights along with certain responsibilities. The intent of this communication is to share information about this district resource, and to explain the associated rights and responsibilities of use to parents and students.

Computer literacy and electronic information skills are vital in an information society. Such skills will be introduced and taught throughout the K-12 program. The district will provide education about ethical use of all electronic resources.

Students will also have access to the Internet on a developmentally appropriate basis, providing them the opportunity to access information and resources of libraries and databases across the world, as well as the opportunity to communicate with people throughout the world. The district believes that the benefits of such appropriate Internet use outweigh potential disadvantages. While the computer network is set up to safeguard students from electronic materials which many people would consider objectionable, it is not technologically possible at this time to restrict access to every single electronic address where such materials might be found.

All network users are responsible for observing the general school standards of conduct and the district's educational goals, written or implied, when using electronic resources. The district has an Acceptable Use Policy which will guide matters of computer network use, including use of Internet resources This policy is as follows.

School District of Whitefish Bay
Acceptable Use Policy

It is district policy that users will abide by policies established by the district which include generally accepted rules for conduct, including, but not limited, to the following:

Acceptable Use

Responsible ***users:***

- will adhere to the same standard of conduct as expected and required in the school setting when using electronic resources
- will use the system for educational use, instructional projects, and not for personal use
- will follow procedures for applying for and using password and electronic mail accounts will log off the system as soon as finished to permit others to access the system
- will use the student applications or menus that are specifically intended for student use, and not those intended for professional use
- will respect the rights and privacy of other users by not accessing the files of others
- will follow the regulations posted in the classroom, work area, and computer labs
- will respect and uphold copyright laws and all other applicable laws or regulations
- will follow the directions of the adult in charge of the classroom, work area, or computer lab
- may use the Internet to send electronic mail to other users per district policy and practice
- may use the Internet to research appropriate instructional projects
- may use the Internet to explore other educationally relevant computer systems
- will report violations of the above rules to a responsible school official

Acceptable Use Policy, continued

Unacceptable Use

Responsible users:

- shall not access, communicate, display, download or send messages or images of material that is offensive, objectionable, inflammatory, educationally inappropriate or unlawful
- shall not use the network in any way that will disrupt the work or use of others
- shall not tamper with or damage hardware
- shall not install or alter computer software or executable programs of any kind unless under the direction/authorization of the computer programming teacher(s) for course purposes
- shall not violate copyright or other laws
- shall not access or use another's work folders, work files, with or without permission
- shall not use an account other than their own or misrepresent their identity
- shall not create or distribute a computer virus across the network
- shall not reveal personal addresses or telephone numbers of others across t he network
- shall not deliberately access materials that are inconsistent with the school's code of conduct or the district's educational goals or show others how to do the same
- shall not use computers or the district network for financial gain

Violations of this policy as determined by a member of the school administration can result in the loss of computer network access privileges. Violations may result in other disciplinary actions as well. Willful damage to district computers and networks will result in financial liability. The district is not responsible for any damage, harm, or injury caused by individuals who violate this policy.

Revised 7/97

Please read and sign the attached user agreement and return it to the school office as part of your school enrollment activities no later than September 9, 1997 Both parents and students are required to sign for students under the age of 18 years Students 18 years or older may sign the form without parent/guardian permission.

If you have any questions regarding use of district computers and networks or about the computer use agreement, please contact the principal of your school as soon as possible. **Students without a signed Computer Network Use Agreement will not be permitted to use district networks and computers after September 9, 1997. Thank you.**

MUSKEGO-NORWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE HANDBOOK

INSTRUCTION
363.1(P)

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCEPTABLE USE

The Board supports the right of students to have reasonable access to various information formats and believes it incumbent upon students to use this privilege in an appropriate and responsible manner. The use of the Internet/MuskegoNet is a privilege, not a right. The use of this privilege is subject to the guidelines outlined in this policy.

A. Educational Purpose

1. Access to the Internet/MuskegoNet has been established for educational purposes. Muskego-Norway Schools reserves the right to determine user privilege. The term "educational purpose" includes classroom activities, career development, and high-quality discovery activities to enhance learning.

2. Muskego-Norway has the right to place reasonable restrictions on the material accessed or posted through the system. Users are expected to follow the rules set forth in Board policy and the law.

B. Internet Access

The District believes the benefits to students from access to the Internet/ MuskegoNet, in the form of educational resources and opportunities for collaboration, far exceed any disadvantages. Ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying standards that their children should follow when using electronic resources. Some material on the Internet may contain items that are inaccurate or potentially offensive to some people. Muskego-Norway Schools support and respect each family's right to decide whether or not to apply for independent student access to the Intern et/M us kego Net

1. In order to obtain an individual e-mail account, student users must sign an account agreement to be renewed on an annual basis. Student accounts must be approved by the student's parent(s)/guardian(s); that approval may be withdrawn at any time.

2. All material placed on Web pages must be preapproved in a manner specified by the school. Personal web pages may be posted on the MuskegoNet.

MUSKEGO-NORWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE HANDBOOK

INSTRUCTION
363.1(P)

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The Board supports the right of students to have reasonable access to various information formats and believes it incumbent upon students to use this privilege in an appropriate and responsible manner. The use of the Internet/MuskegoNet is a privilege, not a right. The use of this privilege is subject to the guidelines outlined in this policy.

A. Educational Purpose

1. Access to the Internet/MuskegoNet has been established for educational purposes. Muskego-Norway Schools reserves the right to determine user privilege. The term "educational purpose" includes classroom activities, career development, and high-quality discovery activities to enhance learning.

2. Muskego-Norway has the right to place reasonable restrictions on the material accessed or posted through the system. Users are expected to follow the rules set forth in Board policy and the law.

B. Internet Access

The District believes the benefits to students from access to the Internet/ MuskegoNet, in the form of educational resources and opportunities for collaboration, far exceed any disadvantages. Ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying standards that their children should follow when using electronic resources. Some material on the Internet may contain items that are inaccurate or potentially offensive to some people. Muskego-Norway Schools support and respect each family's right to decide whether or not to apply for independent student access to the Internet/MuskegoNet.

1. In order to obtain an individual e-mail account, student users must sign an account agreement to be renewed on an annual basis. Student accounts must be approved by the student's parent(s)/guardian(s); that approval may be withdrawn at any time.

2. All material placed on Web pages must be preapproved in a manner specified by the school. Personal web pages may be posted on the MuskegoNet.

C. User Rights

1. Free Speech

   The right to free speech, as set forth in the United States Constitution, applies to communication on the Internet/MuskegoNet. Access to the Internet through Muskego-Norway Schools is created for educational purposes. This limited forum is similar to the school newspaper; therefore, users must abide by the guidelines stipulated in this policy.

2. Search and Seizure

   a. MuskegoNet may be routinely maintained and monitored. Users should expect only limited privacy in the contents of personal files on the district system. Like lockers, electronic resources are provided to. students for their convenience and said use may be likened to a privilege rather than a right.
   b. An individual search will be conducted if there is reasonable suspicion that violations of Muskego-Norway policy or the law have occurred. The investigation will be reasonable and related to the suspected violation.
   c. Parents/guardians have the right at any time to request to see the contents of their child's e-mail files.

3. Due Process

   a. The District will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through Internet/ MuskegoNet.
   b. In the event there is a claim that a user has violated Muskego-Norway policy in their use of the Internet/MuskegoNet, the user will be provided with notice and opportunity to be heard in the manner set forth in Muskego-Norway policy.

D. Limitation of Liability

The District makes no guarantee that the functions or the services provided by or through the District system will be error-free or without defect. The District will not be responsible for any damage the user may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service. The District is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the system. The District will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through the unauthorized use of the system.

E. Safeguards

1. Personal Safety

    a. Users may not post personal contact information about themselves or others including home address, telephone number, social security or credit card numbers.
    b. Students will not meet with someone they have met online without parent/guardian approval.
    c. Students will promptly disclose to teacher or other school employee any messages received that are inappropriate or that makes them feel uncomfortable.

2. System Security

    a. Users are responsible for individual accounts and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their account. Under no conditions should a personal password be provided to another person.
    b. The system administrator should be notified immediately if a possible security problem has been identified.

3. Respect for Privacy means that users will not repost a message that was sent to them privately without permission of the person who sent the original message.

4. Respecting Resource Limits

    a. Users will not download large files at a time when the system is being heavily used and will immediately remove the file from the system computer to their personal computer.
    c. Users will not post chain letters
    d. Users will check e-mail frequently, delete unwanted messages promptly, and stay within the e-mail quota.
    e. Users will subscribe only to high-quality discussion group maillists that are relevant to educational purposes.

5. Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement

    a. Users will not plagiarize works found on the Internet/MuskegoNet. All work should be appropriately cited.
    b. Users will respect copyright law.

F. Unacceptable Uses

The following uses of Internet/MuskegoNet are considered unacceptable and may result in loss of Internet privileges and disciplinary action. Legal action, when appropriate, may also be taken against students who violate the Internet/MuskegoNet use guidelines.

1. Illegal Activities

   a. Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to MuskegoNet or any other computer system through MuskegoNet or go beyond authorized access. This includes attempting to log in through another person s account or access another person's files. These actions are illegal, even if only for the purposes of "browsing."

   b. Users will not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the computer system or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means. These actions are illegal.

   c. Users will not use MuskegoNet to engage in any other illegal act, such as arranging for a drug sale or the purchase of alcohol, engaging in criminal gang activity, threatening the safety of person, etc.

   d. Users will be subject to penalties under law if that user:

      - With intent to frighten, intimidate, threaten, abuse or harass another person:
        * sends a message to a person on ap e-mail or other computerized communication system and in that message threatens to inflict injury or physical harm to any person or the property of any person;
        * sends a message to the person on e-mail or other computerized communication system while intentionally preventing or attempting to prevent the disclosure of his/her own identity; or
        * sends a message to another person on e-mail or other computerized communication system and in that message uses any obscene, lewd or profane language or suggests any lewd or lascivious act
      - With intent to harass, annoy or offend another person, sends a message to another person on an e-mail or other computerized communication system with the reasonable expectation that the person will receive the message and in that message uses any obscene, lewd or profane language or suggests any lewd or lascivious act.

- With intent solely to harass another person, sends repeated messages on an e-mail or other computerized communication system with the reasonable expectation that the person will receive the messages.
- Knowingly permits or directs another person to send a message prohibited by law from any computer terminal or other device that is used to send messages on an e-mail or other computerized communication system and that is under his/her control.

2. Inappropriate Language: Restrictions against inappropriate language apply to all postings. The following are considered inappropriate:

   a. obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language
   b. engaging in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks
   c. harassment of another person
   d. posting false or inflammatory information about a person or organization

3. Inappropriate Access to Material

   a. Users will not use Internet/MuskegoNet to access material that is profane or obscene (pornography), that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards other people (hate literature).
   b. Parents/guardians should instruct their children if there is additional material that would be inappropriate to access. The district fully expects that students will follow parent's/guardian's instructions in this matter.

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Political Discourse, Economic/Fiscal Policy Issues, and Civic Journalism

by

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Abstract

In-depth interviews with 90 individuals were reviewed for data to guide media in political issues coverage regarding economic and fiscal policies. The study reveals problems ranked as respondents' most important concerns and concerns most frequently voiced prior to the 1996 elections. Next, what respondents held accountable for concerns related to the overall economy and fiscal policy is explored. Framing theory is then applied to reveal commonalties among specific topics framed as concerns. The findings support the benefit of going directly to citizens to learn their views of the issues and also show how applying theory can provide structure for in-depth opinion gathering.

Public Discourse, Economic/Fiscal Policy Issues, and Civic Journalism

Introduction

On any given day during the 1996 election campaign, reporting of nationwide polling revealed a marked diversity of opinion. Polls reported in the news showed that the public supported competing and even downright contradictory policies regarding many issues, including economic and fiscal policy. Americans wanted a balanced federal budget; also, tax cuts; comprehensive but low-cost health care with protection for Medicare; welfare reform plus traditional social programs for the needy; and any number of other, often opposing, policy preferences. This wide and conflicting nature of citizens' perceptions of political issues is not a new but a continuing phenomena. It also is a phenomena often viewed as problematic by fiscal-policy makers, journalists, and mass communication analysts.

What is important to citizens? How do individuals' perceive their own and government's financial well being? How can articulating the public's common concerns contribute to assessment of public opinion and to news coverage of important issues? The research to follow will examine these questions by investigating individuals' understanding of political issues dealing with economic/fiscal policy and relating these findings to the development of public opinion polling and political issues reporting. The findings of this study are based on one-on-one, in-depth and open-ended interviews conducted during the fall of 1996 with 90 local residents of a midsize, Midwestern city.

Literature Review

Much has been written about the volatile character of public opinion in general and the confusing and conflicting opinions that often surround fiscal policy issues (Beck, Rainey, Nicholls, & Trout, 1987; Benton & Daly, 1992; Glaser & Hildreth, 1996; Green, Kahneman, & Kunreuther, 1994). Nevertheless, current studies that dovetail the nature of individuals' personal and political concerns with opinion polling and media representations are virtually nonexistent. Yet, the separation of these subjects into the respective domains of economics, media audience studies, and political communication has not been the case always. Interest in comprehensive assessment and the interpretative nature of public sentiment goes as far as back as Plato and Aristotle (Peters, 1995). Rousseau (1984), during the Enlightenment era, appraised the nature of public spirit. By elevating emotion above reason, Rousseau created interest in the less-than-rational collective concerns of individuals as a component of public life. The development of democratic government paralleled the eighteenth century growth of the popular press. In the United States, a combination of partisan politics and a "party" or political press emerged, and party and press grew to be allied, primary forces in tapping public opinion (Herbst & Beniger, 1994).

By mid-19th century in the United States, the public's opinion was being gathered in "straw" or informal, pre-election "votes," conducted by political parties and newspaper reporters and editors. To this informal means of monitoring opinion was added generous, anecdotal feedback collected for publication from what today would be labeled "opinion leaders." Also, publishers sometimes obliged rank and file party members and other citizens by printing the information from privately collected straw votes (Herbst, 1995). The effort was concerted, provided a voice for citizens, and was directed toward explicating individuals' common concerns. Nevertheless, gauging the tenor of the public remained an unrefined pursuit.

In the early 20th century, however, several factors combined to formalize the measuring of public opinion (Herbst, 1993) reconceptualize its nature and source, and clearly separate the function of gathering public opinion from the function of news gathering. During the 1930s and 1940s, the sophistication of social scientific research methods enlarged exponentially the possibilities for investigating social phenomena and, likewise, the public's opinions. Along with these changes came a refinement of what constituted legitimate research. A positivist paradigm appeared, ascended, and solidified. By the 1950s, the sample survey had emerged as the supreme tool of valid pubic opinion assessment (Herbst, 1993). Quantitative methods ruled, and, gradually, public opinion was claimed as the purview of professional pollsters, political scientists (Beck & Dye, 1982; Welch, 1985), economists (Lyons & Lowery, 1992; Troub, 1984), and other social researchers (Miller & Miller, 1991; Robbins, 1996).

Media organizations went their separate way. Using the same theoretical and research tools, they began to study, not the public per se, but size and composition of "the audience" for potential advertisers. It is not surprisingly that, as time past, media audiences, defined largely by demographics and lifestyle interests (Ettema & Whitney, 1994), often came to be viewed even more narrowly, as "consumers" (Curran, 1996). Increasingly, story selection was shaped not by appeal to broad, general publics as in the past but by deliberate efforts to fill marketing niches. Market forces encouraged, neutral, fact-oriented political news over the interpretative role of journalism (Sloan, Stovall & Startt, 1993). Media started relying on outside organizations, or their own research departments, to poll political attitudes toward specific issues. The results were then "covered" as news. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, this role began to take precedence over the role of serving as a voice of the public in many news organizations. Thus, it developed that assessment of public opinion was determined by individuals' reaction to narrowly operationalized issues, the media audience was viewed more as individual consumers rather than the electorate as a whole, and public concerns were partitioned from the gathering of news.

This corporate and intellectual environment fed the dominate research orientation of positivism and, concomitantly, the positivist paradigm informed most empirical study of past decades. Much social-science research developed from the positivist approach. Explanations for the confusing and oftentimes paradoxical nature of American public opinion arose from a variety of rationales, most of them centering on individuals' circumstances. Media studies emphasized the public's lack of time, interest, education, or development of critical thinking skills as bearing on individuals understanding of politics or learning from news (Graber, 1988; Kraus, 1990; Kosicki & McLeod, 1990). Public policy and public opinion studies advanced ideas that taxpayers' attitudes depend on the state of the micro-economy--their pocketbooks (Beck, Rainey, & Traut, 1990)-- and other indicators of self-interest (Sanders, 1988). Still other studies claim individuals' willingness to pay for services is not directly related to the benefits gained from those services (Glaser & Hildreth, 1996; Green, Kahneman, & Kunreuther, 1994), or that public opinion polls are generally good indicators; it is the wording of the questions that generates conflicting results from the public (Glaser & Bardo, 1994; Rasinski, 1989).

In actuality, public opinion polls in the United States simply are not designed to prioritize Americans' overall *concerns* . Nor do they show acceptable trade-offs among the varied and at times directly opposing desires of the public. They do not tap base-line civic connections. Public opinion polls are designed to demonstrate what Americans think about particular *issues* currently being argued in the political arena. Furthermore, the traditional function of news media to inform the public, for the past three decades at least, has not focused on the role of citizens in political issues development. The focus has been to deliver balanced news coverage that often is an almost instantaneous assessment of public response at any given moment. In short, highly professional news teams with sophisticated news gathering techniques report the polls (Nimmo & Combs, 1990).

The trends of the 20th century, which fostered the professionalization of public opinion measurement, random-sample surveying, and media audience studies, also gave rise to a different public opinion. Today, most efforts in gathering the public's commonly held opinions no longer emerge from news organizations sounding out citizens as a whole. They, instead, are conceived outside news rooms and achieved through quantitative measures of isolated individuals' conscious attitudes on previously reported issues.

Recently, the intertwining of public opinion quantification, issue-agenda polling, and objectivity in news reporting has come under scrutiny from academics (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1995; Iorio & Huxman, 1996; Neuman, 1990; Rogers, 1993). More frequently, however, criticism of current opinion assessment and political issues coverage has come from professional pollsters and journalists themselves. These professionals point to the fragmentation of public opinion and denounce the consequences. Yankelovich (1991), president of a large polling corporation and respected researcher in his own right, has suggested that the ability of the public to make considered judgments may rest as much with those who gauge public opinion as with individual citizens' shortcomings such as lack of rationality or knowledge. In a similar vein, Entman (1989), Fallows (1996), Merrit (1995), Merritt and Rosen (1995), Rosen and Merritt (1997), and other media writers have taken news organizations to task. These analysts advance the argument that reporting on public concerns and citizen involvement is integral to the media's mandate of maintaining an informed citizenry.

Partly as a reaction to the aforementioned criticisms of present-day news coverage, changes have begun to take place. Beginning in 1990 (Merritt & Rosen, 1995), a variety of media organizations across the country started to experiment with new methods of tapping into and reporting on common community concerns, a process which has since come to be labeled "public" or "civic" journalism. The methods used are wide ranging. They include town-hall meetings, resource panels, citizen advisory boards, focus groups, in-depth interviews, group interviews, and "living-room" (1) interviews (Charity, 1995; Harwood, 1996; Hawthorne, 1993; Merritt, 1995; Merritt & Rosen, 1995; Willey, 1996). Some of the methods are innovative. Some are conventional. Some originate from professionally constructed research designs. Others are born out of news staffs' efforts to make a deeper-than-surface contact with community problems. One of the most comprehensive is a report by the Harwood Group for the Pew Center (1996) that identifies five areas where civic life gestates: official, quasi-official (civic groups, etc.), informal (workplace, etc.), interpersonal (everyday encounters between friends and acquaintances), and private (inside the home). Despite the variety and acuity of these efforts, none of the above opinion-gathering strategies, to date, have emanated from the starting point of a rigorous epistemology that is grounded in an interpretative theoretical perspective.

In the venue of academic research tentative moves beyond positivist prototypes to more comprehensive opinion-gathering strategies can be traced. These have their roots in recent quantitative designs that show the links between media, public judgment, and issues development (Iyengar, 1991; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Smith, 1987; Stamm, 1987). Specific rethinking of this intersection is found in Kinder's and Mebane's (1983) study on political process and economic change. Like the bulk of available literature concerning fiscal policy planning, this study uses previously operationalized variables, but Kinder and Mebane (1983) break new ground. They analyze descriptions of politics and economics in everyday lives by looking into how individuals gauge their own and the country's economic status. Kinder and Mebane (1983), however, bifurcate personal and national assessments as distinct variables and, thereby, set aside the complex interaction of processes individuals use in translating their personal experiences to judgments. Kinder's and Mebane's primary contribution lies in connecting to media agendas the tacit theories individuals rate as the *causes* of personal and national economic problems and the *locus of responsibility* for resolving these problems.

By the 1990s, a new line of investigation appeared. This form of inquiry is an interactive rather than behavioral approach to the flux of public, media, and issues. In the tradition of Lane's (1962) early qualitative study of working-class men's political ideology, these studies follow the suggestions of Glasser and Salmon (1995) and move beyond preconceived notions of what constitutes either the media audience or public opinion. They also incorporate Kinder's and Mebane's (1983) earlier attention to the framework for perceiving everyday life. This research avenue probes how simply talking about politics can reveal the way individuals frame certain themes related to political issues (Gamson, 1992; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). It also discards traditional segmentation of research on the public into media, public opinion, and other social science disciplines. It does this by investigating how a type of "common knowledge" regarding issues develops from the reciprocal interplay of news context, individuals' interpretative action, and the strategies of media and political elites (Neuman, Just & Crigler, 1992). Lastly, this line of investigation looks beyond prescribed issue agendas to study individuals' personal concerns and how individuals use mental framing processes to understand particular situations by linking; "colorizing" or personalizing the nature of their concerns; and "collapsing" or focusing on certain aspects of problems (Iorio & Huxman, 1996).

It is the goal of this research to build on these interpretative orientations and qualitative approaches by applying framing processes to analyze one area of citizens' concerns. Using individuals' framing of fiscal policy problems as subject matter, this study will extend the research of Kender and Mebane (1983). While the research to follow cannot fully explain the connection of individuals' concerns with codified public opinion and the news coverage of issues; it can apply theoretical concepts to the articulation of people's concerns and, thereby, inform news coverage of civic life.

Research Design

Personal, 30-minute interviews were conducted with a total of 90 residents of Sedgwick County which surrounds the city of Wichita, Kansas, a metropolitan area of more than 350,000. Data collected are part of a larger study sponsored by the Kansas Public Finance Center, The Knight Ridder Foundation, and *The Wichita Eagle*, the local newspaper. Respondents were located by random-digit dialing and by purposive calling of individuals who had participated in a similar, earlier study. For a desired sample frame totaling 90, an over-sampling yielding 110 respondents was obtained. Of the 90 recruited, interviews with 79 people were held on October 3,4, and 5 of 1996 at the newspaper's offices and the Campus Activities Center on the Wichita State University campus. Because 11 people failed to meet their interview appointments and/or rescheduled appointments, 11 of the remaining 20 individuals drawn by the random sample were interviewed by telephone on October 6,7, and 8. The responses of the telephone interviews, when analyzed, did not differ appreciably from those obtained in the on-site interviews. In total, 37 of the respondents interviewed in October of 1997 also had been interviewed in 1990 for the previous study. Data taken from all 90 respondents were combined into one group for the purposes of this study. The respondents were assured anonymity.

The goal of the research was to elicit in-depth responses on a maximum number of topics. This methodology has been encouraged by Merton (1987), Mishler (1986), and Merton, Fiske, and Kendall (1990) for use in similar research situations. The respondents were told they were being interviewed because the local newspaper and the public finance center were interested in learning about their concerns. At the outset of the interview they were asked to speak freely about their views. Any response offered was accepted as meeting the definition of "concern." "Economic/fiscal policy issue" was defined as any comment offered that connected both government and funding within the same reference or addressed the condition of the local, state, or national economy. Except for demographic data, all questions were open-ended. Interviewers asked respondents to (a) identify their concerns and probed for how respondents specified those concerns that dealt in any way with economic/fiscal topics; (b) indicate whom or what respondents believed to be the cause of the problem(s) named, and (c) indicate whom or what respondents believed to be responsible for the problem(s) named.

The interview guide was prepared, pre-tested, and revised prior to the first interview. Although the interview guide was flexible, some structure was imposed (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Interviewers used a common question sequence, and they probed for how respondents specified their replies. Interviewers received 12 hours of pre-interview training in verbal and nonverbal interpersonal skills. A heterogeneous group of 14 graduate students made up of both genders and a variety of ages ensured a broad cross section of interviewers. The interview sessions were tape-recorded and transcribed.

With few exceptions, those interviewed exhausted their allotted time. Many expressed gratitude for having an opportunity "to be heard out" and thanked interviewers for inclusion in the project. Yet, as with all research designs some methodological obstacles were encountered. A few interviewers said some of the respondents appeared to try to "make a good impression" by voicing only positive statements or expressing only normative ideas. In a few cases, respondents apparently tailored their responses to conform to perceived personal traits of individual interviewers. For example, the two interviewers who were internationals reported a higher rate of discussions centering on global concerns than did other interviewers. Moreover, the interviews took place in the fall of 1996, a pre-election period. There was no way of knowing how the timing of the study might have affected what was brought up in the interview responses.

Demographic information gathered from the respondents included gender, age, length of residence at one's present address, and education. Data obtained from the *Kansas Statistical Abstract* (1995) that contained 1990 U.S. census data were compared to the data taken from respondents (Zaher, 1996). The sample yielded a proportion of men and women representative to the total population. The sample reflects a larger proportion of individuals 45 and older, and college graduates than in the general population. The comparisons of the group interviewed to the larger society are not identical; nor are they aberrant. The reader should take into account sample-size and the self-reported nature of the responses in assessing the comparisons (2).

To ensure validity and reliability, a debriefing session was held after all the sessions were completed. Moreover, the analysis was developed from coding sheet summaries prepared by each of the 14 interviewers, the two-hour debriefing, an overall coding matrix prepared by one research assistant, and separate coding prepared by the principal researcher directly from the individual interview transcriptions (Chirban, 1996; Lindlof, 1995). Category names are drawn from the actual words of the respondents. Tables do not always equal the total sample of 90 because the tables are compiled from open-ended questions. Some respondents offered more than one item per response, and some did not answer each question. Concentration is placed on "constant comparison" of the categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1984). The goal was to produce substantive data regarding citizens' concerns during the month prior to the 1996 election.

Findings

First, the responses are analyzed as to how respondents spoke about their concerns, then they are organized into categories based on the topics brought out in the concerns. Next, the study looks across the responses in total to show how the talk was framed by respondents. The findings are compared with those of Kinder and Mebane (1983), as a starting point in determining how the respondents accounted for the cause and responsibility associated with economic/fiscal policy issues,

Speaking out about concerns

To begin, the concerns respondents voiced and how they were voiced are presented. The salience of concerns across the responses is noted as is the frequency with which respondents voiced their concerns. Then the search narrows to a look at what respondents said concerned them about economic matters and fiscal policy.

An overview of the concerns.

What did the people of Wichita voice as their concerns one month before the 1996 presidential election? The responses were challenging. People's talk ranged widely, as other studies have noted (Gamson, 1992; Iorio & Huxman, 1996; Lane, 1962; Neuman, Just, & Crigler, 1992; Robinson & Levy, 1986). When asked to name their concerns, respondents brought up a multitude of topics. These were as particular as one individual's interest in the high cost of cemetery lots which he attributed to a growing local economy or another observation that city street workers used individual bricks in intersection repair, a practice he deemed wasteful extravagance. Problems dealing with education in general and local schools in particular, bus service, city growth, abortion, welfare, health insurance, conflicts between social classes, world-wide terrorist attacks, and many other topics were voiced. The levels at which concerns were engaged--personal, family, neighborhood, local, state, national and international--were often interrelated or glossed over as "all-encompassing" references, a occurrence noted by other researchers (Robinson & Levy, 1986; Graber, 1988). Only a few respondents, like the woman who argued for accompanying job training with public assistance or the man who assessed the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement in Mexico, produced detailed, factual accounts. The vast majority of responses were full of emotion intertwined with personal experience. The responses were frequently less-than-rational appraisals, another circumstance others also have found (Robinson & Levy, 1986).

Overall, the tone of responses was mixed. There were many contradictions. Crime was said to be rising and falling, Christian values practiced and neglected. Wichita was a small town and a big city. Some responses were upbeat and reflected the experience of good times. Others were not so optimistic. Among the 90 accounts, we heard of a local aircraft-building boom accelerating on a soaring national stock market, hometown meat-packing jobs gone west to Dodge City, and corporations departed to Denver and Dallas. We heard of work found and lost, phased out and created, downsized, out-sourced, and redefined.

When asked to name the most important concern of all those discussed, 33 different problems were cited. In ranking the top 10, the status of the American family and family/community values was mentioned most often, named by 20 respondents; crime ranked second, named by 18; economic concerns were third, named by 15; and education was fourth, named by 13. Concerns relating to children [child care, safety, welfare, etc.] ranked fifth, named by 5 respondents. Government, health care, and taxes each were named by 4 respondents. Drugs, ranked ninth, was named by 3 respondents, and the environment was tenth, named by 2 respondents. Tallying the most important concerns, however, did not divulge fully the scope or nature of the concerns mentioned. Categorization and a tally of each separate concern mentioned by respondents revealed topics relating to economic/fiscal policy were the most often cited. These were presented in 120 separate comments, crime was mentioned 113 times; government policies and practices, 93; family and family/community values, 68; education, 58; health care, 38; taxes, 28; issues relating to children, 26; the environment, 25; and drugs, 15. Together, taxes and economic/fiscal policy concerns were brought up 148 times

Concerns relating to economic/fiscal policy.

Among the 148 references to economic issues, fiscal policy, and taxes, a total of 56 different subjects were noted. Some respondents mentioned the same topic more than once during their interviews, and each of those separate references were coded. Coding was made on (a) general statements about respondents' perceived status of economic and fiscal policy issues, including concerns respondents said relate to or impact economic or fiscal policy such as the strength of the U.S. dollar against other nations' currencies and (b) concerns respondents expressed on an individual-level as affected by or effecting economic/fiscal policy. These ranged from the effect of a rising cost of living index on fixed incomes of the elderly to efficacy of the federal minimum wage law to gasoline prices. Some individual-level concerns, such as personal and property taxes, were voiced as directly impacting a respondent or his/her own family. In other instances the same topics were voiced as observations indicative of conditions across the general population. No distinction was made between personal and societal levels in respondents talk; therefore, levels are commingled within topic categories.

Concerns about job loss and job security were cited most often, 20 times, followed by high taxes, 17; personal financial insecurity and personal debt, 14 times; and welfare entitlements, 13. The general status of the local, state, and national economy and problems relating to social security were each mentioned 11 times by respondents. Poverty, deficit spending, and local, state, and national budgets were each mentioned 3 times. All other concerns mentioned were brought up less than 3 times across all the interviews.

When the respondents spoke about their concerns, their remarks registered wide ranging problems expressed with a high degree of individuality from respondents. The responses were elemental, "gut" level judgments, pulled together from disparate sources, condensed, and value laden. More respondents named family and family/community values and crime before economic concerns, when asked to list what each considered most important. Yet, when the total number of times a concern was mentioned was recorded, concerns about economic/fiscal policy problems came to the fore as most frequently mentioned. The condition of the local, state, or national economy was cited 120 times in the interviews and taxes 28. Response patterns within the category of economic/fiscal policy concerns mirrored the expanse found among the broad subject areas listed by respondents.

Searching for common threads among the responses

People's talk showed that economic/fiscal problems were salient to respondents. What categorizing and summarizing of the responses did not reveal were specific ties between the concerns over economic and fiscal policy and specific issues covered in media. That respondents were greatly concerned with their own economic circumstances and that of government was apparent, but how did respondents perceive these problems? To address this puzzle, data were regrouped and analyzed from a different approach. This time the responses across all the questions were analyzed together. Following guidelines extrapolated from Kinder and Mebane (1983), respondents' accounts of the cause of economic/fiscal policy problems and who or what is responsible for resolving the problems were analyzed. Rather than simple categorization of responses, the method of constant comparison was used to look for themes. The purpose was to look for organizing principles around which the respondents' concerns were articulated. Patterns in the way respondents linked, colorized or infused their responses with emotion, and collapsed or narrowed their concerns were coded (Iorio & Huxman, 1996). The objective was to find in the data commonalties that could be expressed straightforwardly as matters for discussion in the public arena.

Personal and proximal forces. Kinder and Mebane separated "ordinary economic theory" or the everyday beliefs that individuals hold into 1) ideas people hold about the causes and responsibility for their own economic circumstance and 2) the nation's. Such a dichotomy was not found in the responses of individuals in this study. Few people viewed immediate conditions as solely responsible for their personal or other's collective situations, and no clear source of responsibility repeated throughout the interviews.

Previous research shows that during the Great Depression of the 1930s people did cite themselves as the cause for their own unfortunate circumstances (Bakke, 1940), but by the 1980s, more modern Americans located their troubles in proximal, particular circumstances (Kinder & Mebane, 1983). By the mid1990s, that too had changed. Those interviewed in 1996, did tend to "fragmentize" (Lane, 1962), that is, offer items of personal judgment or bits of experience as explication of their concerns, and a few did locate the fault within themselves. An example is the man who attributed his problems with being laid off as his own fault. He said he did not possess a secondary work skill such as carpentry to "tie" him "over" until his higher paying job at an aircraft company was reopened for hiring again. Another example is of the person, when asked about the locus of responsibility for economic problems, answered "There's a lot of people who have that attitude that "It's not my fault, but really, it can't be anything more than just taking responsibility for my own actions." Overall, however, the responses in this study, did not show that most people blamed themselves for their personal economic problems.

Local conditions did not dominate as the source of economic problems either. Those respondents who did cite proximal effects most often couched the reference in a broader perspective that tied the close-at-hand to larger forces. For example, a soldier reasoned his paycheck tied to federal budget problems also was tied to Congressional bickering.

> I don't have much faith in Congress. What had more effect on me this year than it did last year was this. . .bickering over, uh, the budget, because I'm a member of the military. I

> work out at the [unit of the national guard]. We didn't get furloughed and our check wasn't late, but, boy, they sure told us it was going to be.

Overall, individuals no longer seemed to believe that the source of their difficulties resided within themselves alone or in local conditions. Few of those interviewed for this research project harbored feelings of shame or personal inadequacy or felt obliged to shoulder responsibility for their troubles privately as did many of their Depression era predecessors. Neither did more than a few ascribe to immediate forces, such as a plant closings, as the source responsible for their personal state of affairs.

Social forces. If few respondents indicted themselves or local problems as the source their economic well being, many more appeared unsure about where responsibility did lie. Most responses were tentative rationales, fraught with uncertainty, as the themes repeated again and again show. In fact, more than a few respondents had difficulty fixing any judgment. Take for example the words of this person

> There's a lot of people having to file bankruptcy because they've gotten into the (credit card) habit. People are living beyond their means. It was started years and years ago, the time payment plan. We never had it before that. If you didn't have the money, you didn't buy it. Kids out of high school are getting applications for credit cards and they are not meeting those obligations. . .I definitely feel that *they* need to do something with that.

Often respondents cited "government" but not in specific terms. One person who pointed to government was not exactly sure who or what could be blamed.

> Maybe I'm wrong about this, but I think it's only the Senate and Congress who have any say on it (fiscal policy), because really, I mean, the President can guide that, maybe. Oh, well, . . .I don't know who did. Because I suppose the President can suggest it through Congressmen and do it too. I don't know, but I feel like it was done in Washington.

Along a similar line, a man offered

> If you go to the partisanship of what happens on the federal level it makes it tough. We know that they can work together if they really want to. We've seen them do it from time to time. Especially at about this time every four years. It's really tough, you know, because everything is ammo. Everything gets distorted and twisted and fuzzed up and it's really hard to get anything done, you know. Everyone is taking credit for everything. Surely, they didn't all do it.

One new and distinct trend appeared in the data. Many respondents' assumptions about economic and fiscal policy problems were attributed to wide-ranging, collective social forces normally not considered under government control. The domains of these social forces were quite abstract.

Several respondents referenced the cyclic nature of economic conditions. One man offered, "the economy goes down and corporations have to down side. I think it's just a cycle. Middle management and the economy and just things, just; they go down." I think it happens about every seven, 12 years. Still another person ascribed problems to cyclical change in the following way

> The economy is going to change. That's a given. So if it is going to change, I don't mean that it's going to get worse. The economy is cyclical. It moves up and down and sideways and in circles, it seems to me and when that happens there needs to be safeguards for people so that they can still maintain their standard of living and what have you. I don't think there's anything wrong with the economy right now. I just want to make sure that it stays as stable as possible and that there is some kind of underpinnings in the framework of the economy to hold it up there.

Someone else point to a completely different source. He attributed responsibility economic circumstances to a type of class conflict.

> I feel like I've got to do what I have to do take care of me my family. So my goal is to go out there. . . and make enough money to where I can just spend my own way out of the country's problems. And a lot of people are doing that. I think the real problem in the country in the next 20 years is going to be this separation of class. The haves versus the have nots.

Another person thought flaws related to capitalism were the root cause. "That's capitalism and sometimes it goes to the extreme. That doesn't make the whole system bad. But there are areas that get abused. Sometimes it's hard to make money if you [corporations] are too altruistic, unless you already had more than you could spend."

The causes of the country's current problems overall were complex and large-scale respondents said. Taken altogether, the responses reflected a continuing pattern of commingling personal responsibility for economic concerns (as shown in the previous section) and responsibility at various levels of government authority with talk of the impact of collective social forces. Much of the talk placed responsibility on collective forces; yet again, the respondents' talk found to be so wide ranging, little of it could be related to current, specific economic and fiscal policy issues. In still another attempt to get at underlying commonalties in the data, the review looked for any patterns that might be identified from a review of framing processes used by respondents.

Colorizing. The review looked for patterns in the way respondents colorizied their concerns or used affective appraisals to personalize and illustrate the topics they brought up. In colorizing, individuals verbalize topics through associating "concerns with assumptions regarding how people act and with personal assessments about how life circumstances unfold" (Iorio & Huxman, 1996, pg. 107). Coding revealed respondents often described their own circumstances in connection with how they viewed the circumstances of others, and viewed economic and fiscal policy issues in very personal terms. Their assessments often encompassed individual and community values. An interesting framing mode was one that personalized the impact of government and business at all levels. The response that follows illustrates how one woman's observations of others reveals a dilemma of personal responsibility and government policy.

> . . .Someone says that's a good idea. Let's take that money. The problem is that some people have too much money for Medicare and rest home assistance. They can pay for it themselves. And so they're abusing it (the system). They liquidate all their assets and distribute them to their children so that they can be solely on assistance. They can't get help unless they have nothing. It's a Catch 22. But I understand why people do that because they don't have the means to fully take care of their parents. . .People are cheating everywhere. That's it.

A different person generalized about the impact of personal debt on the overall economy.

> I suppose this is something that has happened over, decades of time. . . that we have become a spend first and pay later kind of economy. It's starting to catch up with us. It's our overall attitude. The ability to buy things and have big ticket items. They're just thrown at you and people, people go into huge debt right off the bat. I mean, the amount of debt if you took all of America and all consumers that everybody owed it would be mind boggling. It probably would be incalculable.

Still another example is that of a person who extrapolated information from television to assess international business.

> Well, I'm one of these people that watch Primetime and shouldn't have, because I hear people like Toyota and some of those companies come over and don't pay taxes and yet I don't think that's fair that the foreign countries somehow are getting away from paying taxes if that's true what I've heard. And I don't think that's fair. I think that ought to be looked at. If they're working here and have a business here, it should be taxed accordingly. . . I don't think that's fair for a corporation to get off on that. They've got a little more clout that the rest of us.

The responses interconnected personal experiences with broad issues. They also addressed issues beyond the scope of personal experiences by reformulating those issues in ways that brought large-scale problems into a personal context. Often this talk applied individual and community values to assess government and business at all levels. This type of framing was noted to occur with economic and fiscal policy issues throughout the responses.

Linking. Initially, the search sought any links or connections made in respondents' accounts between talk about economic issues and fiscal policy and other topics. Viewed from this vantage point, many links were discovered. In the interest of space, linkages are presented that are "typical" of many responses. First, the link of "welfare" to the economy is illustrated by one respondent's words

> Is there a strong base underneath [the economy] when [aircraft manufacturer] hires 5,000 people and then turns around and lets 3,000 of them off six months later? Is there a base that the economy can absorb those 3,000? or do they go on the welfare rolls or the unemployment rolls or whatever? Those are the concerns that I have.

The link between health care issues and the long run development of the nation's economy is shown by another person who said

> I think that we're spending a great deal of time, energy, and money on things that, are hot at this time and very popular, but in the long run, there are other [economic] issues that are much more important (for example) Medicare and Medicaid and health care, in general. I'm not sure what the political issue is. I mean. . .it's been on hold for four years and it has not improved.

Last, the link to Social Security entitlements and economic stability is referenced by a woman attempting to explain overall changes in the nation's economy.

> There are too many people (sic) that borrow from it [social security funds] and that's basically the problem. Find funding for those programs somewhere else and just leave it alone. It will survive." . . . The whole change in the economy, the economic set up, has got people scared. And when people are scared, they do stupid things.

It was not unusual to find responses that wound these major links of welfare, health care, and aging expressed repeatedly across all the responses into one assertion. The following is illustrative of such linking.

> There is a common lack of --a lot of people don't save their money. I mean, they just don't save their money. A perfect example, I talked to a guy the other day that can't get by. He can't make ends meet and he has medical bills; yet, he spends 500 or 600 dollars on just dumb stuff. I've run across people who say they want to talk about planning for retirement and they're 62 years old. There's maybe things that the government can do to give people more incentive to do things. . . But what happens? Boom! They go on welfare, first thing and the chances are you have kids that grow up in that environment. You see it everyday.

The responses showed many links between economic issues and fiscal policy planning and other issues of concern. Certain topics were given emphasis in respondents' remarks. Examples of topics that came to the fore repeatedly include welfare, health care, and aging.

Collasping. Next, the responses were searched for evidence of "collapsing" or reducing economic/fiscal policy concerns to a central core. The process of collasping does not involve recall of factual detail surrounding political issues or media coverage but "reducing information and impressions to a central kernel of understanding" (Iorio & Huxman, pg. 105). By looking at how concerns and issues might be melded into central, elemental concepts by the respondents, responses were found collapse around many topics. Study of what the respondents' collasped their talk around turned out to be a fruitful approach. Many key elements were found to appear in respondents' talk. Examples of continuing threads that tied together a number of the responses include the focus on quality of government and the changing nature of work. Statements that collasped around the changing nature of work included the impact of new technology, a decrease in employment security, and a shift toward workforce globalization.

First, just as respondents often cited government when asked directly what appear to them as a major cause and locus of responsibility for economic and fiscal policy problems, the core frames of respondents' replies to other questions also revealed government to be a focal point of concern. Despite this, seldom was any one politician or public figure named as the major cause or locus of responsibility for the problems the respondents' named. Although a presidential campaign and two U.S. Senate, a U.S. House of Representatives, and numerous state and local races were in progress at the time of the interviews, there was little mention of them or the candidates by the respondents. More typical is the response of the man who discredited all politicians. He complained, "if Bob Dole or Bill Clinton want to screw things up, hey, you know, I've just had it with all of them." Typical of those responses was

> As far as the government's fiscal problems, I think it's because they mishandled money. I just think that they thought, "oh, well, here's a surplus over here. Well, we'll just use the interest off that for a while and cover our debts over here." And [they] cover it up and cover it up and cover it up until they can't cover it up any more.

Another said,

> [administrators and elected officials should] act as adults, as a business and not personalities. And if they can't do it, turn it over to the citizens and let them come up with an idea and then present it back to the city and the county. Get both levels of government together and come to an agreeable solution. . . rather than somebody's name in the paper from Sedgwick County and somebody's name in the paper from the City Commission. They just use it back and forth, it seems like, just to see their name in the paper.

Some issues prominent in the ongoing political campaign were mentioned--tax cuts or a flat-rate income tax, for example. The responses on taxes, the national debt, and budget battles did feature prominently in respondents' talk that collapsed around government. Most respondents, on the other hand, replied in general terms regarding overall problems they wished government to correct in connection with economic and fiscal policy. It should be noted, however, that respondents were not asked to speak directly about the 1996 political races but, instead, were asked to respond to questions about their personal concerns. This certainly may have had bearing on the information offered.

In addition to the performance of government, the topic of work occupied many of the respondents' discussions. The talk that focused on work as central to economic concerns often revolved around job loss and job security, changes in technology, and global matters. Respondents often collapsed "job loss and job security," which was the most frequently named economic/fiscal policy concern within larger systems encompassing American business interests. Along those lines, a woman's discussion of her own career development included the following assessment of the relationship of education to employment

> They're predicting that by the year 2000, 50 percent of the college graduates, no matter what age, will be working for temporary contractors. And that's pretty scary, you know. When they [corporations] don't need them [employees], the tell them to go find another job instead of trying to find them a job within the company.

Another said

> Well, I'm a good worker. I'm pretty secure. It ain't the best job. Anybody could do it. But he could fire me anytime he wants to. Like I said, I griped about insurance. I could be laid off tomorrow. There ain't no job security I guess. If he don't like my comment, I may get an extermination (sic) paper.

Further, another man expressed these comments.

> Corporate America is not giving its fair share to the citizens who buy products, to customers who buy products, to those who have made them the rich corporations that they are today. They squeeze out the small businessman. Bookstores, for example; the small bookstore owner is extinct. They've squeezed that person out of the market completely. So I think that the wealth has concentrated in a smaller group of people and it squeezed the middle. . . For the minorities, you know, in the inner city, they have come across a situation of desperation that hasn't been seen in this country since at least the 1960s.

The global nature of economic concerns was also expressed. One woman expressed a desire to look at workforce issues and international economies. She said

> It is a worldwide problem and in this state--the ability of other nations to purchase the products that we produce. That determines the economy. To say that everything needs to be handled here is crazy. It can't be. It has to be expanded at the national level and the international level.

Another person boiled the core of his concerns down to the impact of global economic issues on individual employment. He said

> I think for the financial problems of the United states, I think those are partly because of job security, because of jobs leaving. I think that some people feel that way. I don't necessarily know that NAFTA was the villain for that. Because to me, I'm kind of a global person. I want to reach out. But what I'm thinking is that they need to keep those jobs here too.

A reference to changes in technology was expressed thusly

> People ought to be aware. We're having a shift in how we will be earning our money and (we ought) be a step ahead of the rest of the nation if possible. Because it's like the industrial revolution when everybody came off the farm. And we're going to be seeing one [another revolution] between now and the year 2,000.

Another person assessed technology and the job market by offering that, "Companies are downsizing and consolidating all over. Maybe it's not so much here in Wichita because our economy is booming with the aircrafts picking back up, but I think in the past it has been a very big issue for people."

In summary, respondents in 1996 were unlike those of earlier times and research studies. When discussing their own and the country's well being, respondents dealt to some degree with personal and proximal influences often connected to broader social forces. Many saw a "big picture" of collective forces shaping the economic scene. Examining the framing processes of respondents that included linking, collapsing, and colorizing revealed several primary themes. Issues of concern were those that resonated a personal connection. Major issues were linked together and to the economy and fiscal policy planning. Many of the respondents' concerns were "boiled down" to the accountability of government and business regarding job security, changes in technology and globalization of workplace issues. The tenor, in general, was not so much anger as perplexity regarding the influence of social change, disappointment in "government" and corporate America, and concern for the future.

Connecting Common Concerns and Issue Coverage

From 90 respondents' discussions of their personal concerns during the month prior to the 1996 presidential election, substantive data was sought to guide media in addressing the disparate and often conflicting findings of public opinion surveys. The goal was to enable a more civic journalism by identifying ways that the public's concerns regarding economic conditions and fiscal policy might be tapped into and this civic discourse translated into issues for discussion in media.

A cursory review of the in-depth responses indicated that this research project faced the same problems so often mentioned by reporters seeking collective input to build civic/public journalism projects (i.e., information people offered came across as vacillating, unfocused, vaguely stated personalized assessments). Respondents articulated few issues as presented by candidates in the election campaigns that were going on at local, state, and federal level during the time the interviews were conducted. Moreover, the responses to the questions posed by the interviewers did not clearly identify distinct or new political problems respondents wished tackled regarding their concerns.

The data revealed the respondents' concerns were broadly articulated as politically charged "problems" rather than specific issues. Family and values was named as the most important concern, followed by crime then by the economy. Concerns related to the overall economy and fiscal policy, however, were the most frequently named.

Kinder's and Mebane's (1983) earlier work finding that only a small portion of the public are "sociotropic" individuals whose political preferences are shaped by the country's economic condition not their own was borne out in the respondents talk. However, unlike the earlier study, individuals generally were not found to blame personal and proximal causes for their personal financial well being. Most discussions stressed other factors and entwined personal level knowledge and experience in explaining the influence of wider economic forces. Further, in framing their talk, respondents not only colorized or expressed their concerns as personal problems, they linked other political issues as dimensions of economic/fiscal policy concerns. They also appeared to "collapse" or concentrate economic/fiscal policy concerns on themes, often themes that related to government fallibility and activities of corporate America. The tenor of the responses and their emphasis fell on complex, intertwined events and issues as the roots of economic conditions.

The nature of personal frames of reference is that they structure experience so that individuals may recognize what is happening around them. This study concentrated on concerns in the area of economic issues and fiscal policy and the frames used to explicate those concerns. Through this effort, untapped, fertile areas for public opinion research and for reporting of public opinion in media were distinguished. The responses collected in this study revealed information valuable for media coverage at two different levels. One level is that of general goals for issues coverage. The other is the level of specific topics of interest related to economic and fiscal policy.

In terms of general goals for issues coverage, it would appear that civic discourse would benefit by economic and fiscal policy issues that are discussed in terms *relevant* to individual's personal life-worlds (i.e. those that fit patterns of colorization easily). Second, issues reported in *comprehensive* contexts (i.e. those that show how links to other issues individuals deem relevant either do or do not bear on economic and fiscal policy) appears appropriate. Third, issues presented in a*coherent* manner (i.e. those that collapse, or get to the core of, everyday individuals' ideas of issues as opposed to what political elites find compelling about issues) also appear warranted. Such reporting would give a different picture of the news. It would give space to what everyday individuals find important regarding issues, what is being done about these issues in various segments of the public arena, what is the status of issues over time, and how one issue may be connected to other important issues.

The second level of research results offers more practical suggestions. Although framing processes are transitory and subjects framed may shift over time, in-depth interviews can identify specific topics for media coverage not tapped by other techniques. At the time the interviews in this study were taken, it appears that reporting to explain how economic and fiscal policy issues are related to collective social issues, many of which traditionally have not been addressed through legislation would have paralleled individuals' current common concerns. In particular, the data indicates stories that show how holding government policies and corporate America accountable for particular economic and fiscal policy problems may or may not be appropriate would have helped expand public space for those interviewed, as would stories that addressed welfare, health care, aging in conjunction with economic and fiscal policy. Further, issues such as job security, changes in workplace and general technology, and matters relating to globalization of workers' everyday concerns also resonated with individual citizens.

When people are asked about their concerns, their responses are difficult to summarize or relate to political problems; yet, addressing public opinion at the level of in-depth personal interviews can provide insight for political issues news coverage. Whether the public's transitory opinions appear confused, unsophisticated or just plain wrong, addressing what the public perceives as the nexus of issues at a given point in time, this research showed, does offer new opportunities for the development of news about issues and public opinion. The application of questions introduced by Kinder and Mebane (1983) and breakdown of the concern framing processes (Iorio & Huxman, 1996) that this study undertook indicates theory and method can be applied to narrow the gap between public sentiment and the articulation of political issues in media.

Further research is needed to verify the application of framing theory to answer substantive questions. Research also is needed to establish successful methodologies for exploring the public's concerns. Increasing the validity and reliability in of the methods now being employed in public or civic journalism and other research activities is necessary as well. Expanding the definition of public opinion research beyond attitude assessment of narrow issues, approaching the study of citizens' concerns as legitimate grounds for public opinion studies, establishing valid and reliable methods to ascertain what are citizens' common concerns, and reconceptualizing legitimate news coverage of public opinion, all are unexplored terrain for communication research.

Notes

(1) Held in homes, living-room interviews are informal, group surveys of individuals previously known to each other (Willey, 1996).

(2) Of the 291,703 people eligible to vote in Sedgwick County Kansas, 77% were registered voters as of November 1, 1996. In comparison, 94% of the 79 respondents personally interviewed were registered voters. In Sedgwick County 49% of the population is male and 51% female while 52% of respondents were male and 48% female.

Although 13% of county residents were 18-24 years old, none of the respondents were in the 18-24 age group; 47% of the general population were in the 25-44 age group compared to 41% of respondents; 13% of county residents were in the 45-54 group while 29% of respondents were; 13% also were in the 55-64 group while 15% of respondents were; lastly, 15% of the general population were age 65 or older while 15% of respondents fit that category.

Census data showed the education level of Sedgwick County residents to be 18% with less than a high school education while only 1% of respondents indicated that they did not finish high school; 32% of county residents were high school graduates while 14% of respondents said they were, 23% of county residents have some college work while 25% of respondents said they did; and 27% of county residents are college graduates while 56% of respondents said they were college graduate.

In addition to the above data, respondents were asked their length of residency at their present address. This information was not reported in census data and could not be verified elsewhere. A tally of respondents showed that 38% had lived less than five years at their present address; 28% 6-10 years, 10% 11-15 years, 6% 16-20 years, 13% 21-30 years, 1% 31-40 years and 4% had lived more than 40 years at their present address.

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Is public journalism cheap journalism?

Putting public journalists' money where their mouths are

By

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Is public journalism cheap journalism?

Putting public journalists' money where their mouths are

As a press practice, public journalism is relatively new, dating only to the late 1980s and early 1990s. This period coincided with a newspaper-industry recession during which staff reductions swept newsrooms. "Re-engineering" reorganized traditional geographic news beats into topical teams intended to "empower" reporters. Re-engineering coincided with downsizing and conversion to public journalism.

Based in part on such anecdotal evidence, critics have suggested that public journalism is a cover for cheap journalism. After roughly seven years of public-journalism practice, what do public-journalism data show?

This paper draws on data gathered by Philip Meyer and Deborah Potter in their research on the effects of public journalism in the 1996 national election. With Meyer and Potter's primary data, this study performed a secondary analysis to show what proportion of news hole in each of 20 markets' newspapers was devoted to staff-written stories and what proportion to wire. Some papers practiced public journalism, some did not. Critics say that public journalism is journalism on the cheap. If this is true, public journalism newspapers, after circulation size is controlled, should contain a higher proportion of wire stories in their election coverage than other newspapers.

The hypothesis proved false. The analysis showed that public-journalism newspapers invested in staff-written stories on the 1996 election and did not shift to wire stories to fill their news holes. The eight highest-performing newspapers on staff-written stories were top-ranking public-journalism newspapers in the research conducted by Meyer and Potter.

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Citizen-based journalism traces its intellectual roots in America to the early 20th century, when educator and philosopher John Dewey proposed his idea of a free press in a democracy, partly in response to journalist Walter Lippmann's more elitist view.[1] Citizen-based journalists claim more recent descent from the social responsibility theory of the press, as enunciated by the 1947 Hutchins Commission and its Report on Freedom of the Press.[2] Citizen-based journalism adherents also claim spiritual kinship to the concept of communitarianism, citing Confucius, Plato, Augustine, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, Niebuhr and, more recently, sociologist Amitai Etzioni.

Citizen-based journalism is a relatively new practice that dates to the late 1980s and early 1990s.[3] The practice still defies agreement among its adherents on how to define it[4] and even what to call it.[5] The debate extends to traditional journalists, who have criticized citizen-based journalism for perceived threats to such core professional values as objectivity. Where the traditional ethic of journalism calls for enlightening audiences and then letting them find their own way to solving community problems,

[1] Jay Rosen, "The impossible press: American journalism and the decline of public life" (Ph.D. diss., 1986).

See also: Coleman, Renita (1996). "The intellectual antecedents of public journalism," paper presented to AEJMC Southeast Regional Colloquium, Knoxville, TN, March 1997, p. 2.

[2] Robert M. Hutchins, *A free and responsible press* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947).

[3] Davis W. "Buzz" Merritt of the Wichita, Kan., *Eagle* often is cited as a pioneer in the development of public journalism, beginning with the 1990 elections.

[4] Alicia C. Shepard, "The gospel of public journalism," *American Journalism Review* (September 1994): 29.

[5] Public journalism also has been referred to as civic journalism, community journalism, citizen-based journalism, reader-based journalism and communitarian journalism.

See also: Peter Parisi, "Toward a "philosophy of framing': news narratives for public journalism," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* Winter 1997), 673-686. The author distinguishes civic from public journalism by defining civic as local in scope and public as global.

citizen-based journalism leads them to a discussion of issues, serving as community convener, as well as chronicler.[6] Citizen-based journalism is dedicated to solutions, not just descriptions, of social problems.[7]

This more activist model of journalism has not been well received when it has been proposed to the profession in the past. In the early 1950s, for example, Associated Press editors debated inserting interpretive reporting into straight objective accounts of news events -- particularly the Communist-hunting of U.S. Sen. Joseph McCarthy -- to add meaning and foster understanding. The argument divided journalists for years before pro-interpretation editors won the debate and the wire service began to include basic background information in its routine reporting. In the more recent citizen-based journalism debate, traditional journalists once again have been opposed to a new form of journalism for its willingness to shed the profession's tradition of objectivity and standoffishness. But by the early 1990s, the economic climate in the newspaper industry had become more conducive to change.[8]

When the innovation of citizen-based journalism was being advocated by newspaper managers in early 1990s, the newspaper industry was undergoing a recession.[9] Staff reductions -- or "downsizing" and "flattening newsroom hierarchies" -- swept newsrooms. Daily newsroom employment peaked at 56,900 in 1990. Over the succeeding six years, 3,100 newsroom jobs were eliminated, a bit over 5 percent of the journalistic labor force.[10] "Re-engineered newsrooms" began to reorganize

[6] Philip Meyer, "The media reformation: giving the agenda back to the people," in *The elections of 1992.* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1992), 92.
[7] Max Frankel, "Journalists should leave reform to reformers," *The Masthead*, Fall 1995, 21.
[8] Meyer, "The media reformation," p. 95.
[9] John B. Bare, "Toward a definition of public journalism" (Ph.D. diss., 1995).
[10] Richard Harwood, "When downsizing hits the newsroom," *The Washington Post*, 2 April 1996, sec. A, p. 13, col. 6.

traditional geographic news beats into topical teams intended to "empower" reporters.[11] At the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, for example, newsroom workers by the early 1990s were cut to about 220 from around 280 as the paper re-engineered its news operations, converted to topical teams from geographic beats and adopted public journalism.[12]

Former journalist and professor Ben Bagdikian, among others, asserted that the trend proved that some newspaper publishers were cutting expenses in favor of boosting short-term profits.[13] Other critics charged that citizen-based journalism was merely a profit-maximizing strategy for newspapers.[14] Gene Roberts, former managing editor of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and former editor of *The New York Times,* criticized what he called public journalism for "cutting back on news hole and staff," which he said "has a lot to do with P.T. Barnum and hocus-pocus. But it doesn't have much to do with journalism and public responsibility."[15]

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[11] Kathleen A. Hansen, Neuzil, Mark, and Ward, Jean, "Newsroom topic teams: Journalists' assessments of effects on news routines and newspaper quality" (paper presented AT annual conference of AEJMC, newspaper division, Chicago, Ill., July 1997),1, 7, 9.

[12] Internal documents in possession of the author.

See also: Carl Sessions Stepp, "Reinventing the newsroom," *American Journalism Review* (April 1995): 33. Stepp writes about the *Virginian-Pilot*, *The* (Columbia, S.C.) *State*, the *Charlotte Observer*, the Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* and other "re-invented" newspapers where news editors are aided by "corporate coaches."

See also: Doug Underwood, "Reinventing the media: The newspapers' identity crisis," *Columbia Journalism Review* (March/April 1992): 26. Underwood cites a Knight-Ridder vice president for news as saying that "entrepreneurial think" is increasingly valued in newsrooms.

Generally, see also: Doug Underwood, *When MBAs rule the newsroom: How the marketers and managers are reshaping today's media* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995)

[13] Ben Bagdikian, *The media monopoly* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 201.

[14] Philip Meyer, "Public journalism and the problem of objectivity" (address delivered to Investigative Reporters and Editors convention, October 1995), 3.

[15] Gene Roberts, "Corporatism vs. journalism: Is it twilight for press responsibility?" (lecture delivered at *Press-Enterprise* Lecture Series, No. 31, University of California, Riverside, 12 February 1996).

Roberts affirmed and elaborated on the view of public journalism as primarily profit-motivated in an interview with the author following Roberts' lecture at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, April 13, 1998.

Research question

Critics have charged or implied, then, that the philosophy of citizen-based, or public, journalism provides a cover for junk journalism -- journalism on the cheap, in which, for example, publishers are more likely to use less-expensive wire-service copy than stories produced more expensively by their own staffs. Traditional publishers, on the other hand, are therefore seen as more likely to invest in their news staffs by printing proportionately more staff-written news stories and fewer wire stories. The *Little Rock Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, for example, is owned by a traditionally inclined publisher who is critical of citizen-based journalism and who has increased his news staff.[16]

After roughly seven years of citizen-based-journalism experimentation, what do actual citizen-based-journalism results show? Are citizen-based-journalism publishers more inclined than their traditional-journalism peers to run more wire copy in their papers and fewer staff-written stories? To answer these questions, this paper draws from data gathered by Philip Meyer and Deborah Potter in their research on the effects

[16] Luther W. "Sonny"Sanders, Jeanne Norton Rollberg, and M.D. Buffalo, "David slays Goliath: The death of the *Arkansas Gazette*," *Southwestern Mass Communication Journal* 9:1 (1993): 54.

See also: Jonathan Yardley, "In Arkansas, profiting from print," *The Washington Post*, 20 April 1998, sec. 2, p. 2, col. 1.

The newspaper's publisher, Walter E. Hussman Jr., declared his opposition to citizen-based journalism and his faith in traditional journalism in a panel discussion, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Communications Day, April XX, 1997.

It should be noted, however, that some have asserted that citizen-based journalism is expensive, particularly its tools of opinion polls, focus groups and community meetings. See, for example: Meyer, Philip (in press). "Assessing public journalism, Chapter 14, further research is needed," p. 23.

of citizen-based journalism in the 1996 national election.[17] The Meyer and Potter data include a content analysis of campaign coverage in a sample of 10 newspaper issues in each market on random days during the seven-week period before the election. Using that primary content-analysis data, this study relies on a secondary analysis showing what proportion of national election stories was staff-written. Its hypothesis is that citizen-based journalism, coupled with re-engineering, meant downsized news staffs, which would lead to fewer staff-written news stories. Or, put another way:

CBJ + re-engineered newsroom *x* (downsized news staff) = fewer staff-written stories

One cause of this phenomenon, if it exists, could be a proliferation of new media, a process that makes a social-responsibility philosophy of news reporting harder to practice because the competition creates pressure on the paper's bottom line. Citizen-based-journalism newspapers would contain more wire stories than staff stories on the theory that citizen-based journalism is journalism on the cheap, and cheap journalism is downsized journalism that must rely on wire copy to fill the news hole.

The hypothesis was not supported by the data. After adjusting for circulation size differences among the 20 newspapers sampled in the Meyer-Potter study citizen-based-journalism newspapers were shown to produce more staff-written c□opy than did traditional papers. Citizen-based-journalism publishers, therefore, were not practicing journalism on the cheap.

[17] Philip Meyer and Deborah Potter, "Effects of Citizen-based Journalism in the 1996 National Election," National Press Club seminar, Washington, D.C., March 17, 1997. Condensed version available at www.unc.edu/~pmeyer/

Method

Every story mentioning a presidential or senatorial candidate and the election from a sample of 10 newspapers in each of the 20 markets -- 1,873 stories in all -- was coded. This secondary analysis used the data gathered in the content-analysis portion of the Meyer-Potter study.

Two of the content-analysis variables recorded by the Meyer-Potter study were key to this analysis. One of the variables measured the area -- the physical space occupied in the paper -- of each campaign story analyzed. The other variable characterized the author according to nine categories, including "staff writer" and various wire-service categories.[18] By collapsing the author categories into two -- local and other -- it was possible to compute a percentage of campaign coverage in each newspaper devoted to staff-written stories by dividing the sum of the square centimeters devoted to campaign stories into the area occupied by locally written stories, or:

$$pctstaff = staff / (staff + other)$$ [19]

When the created variable showing each paper's percentage of locally written copy was correlated with each paper's intent to practice citizen-based journalism, the Pearson correlation was .434, a measure with two-tailed significance at a marginal .056 and an R-square of .1883. Thus, 19 percent of the variability in the percentage of locally written news stories is explained by intent to practice citizen-based journalism.

[18] A 10 percent subsample was coded by two coders, whose agreement was 89 percent, Scott's pi = .77.
[19] The percentages of space devoted to staff-written stories in each newspaper are listed and ranked in Appendix 3. The Meyer-Potter rankings of citizen-based-journalism newspapers are in Appendix 1.

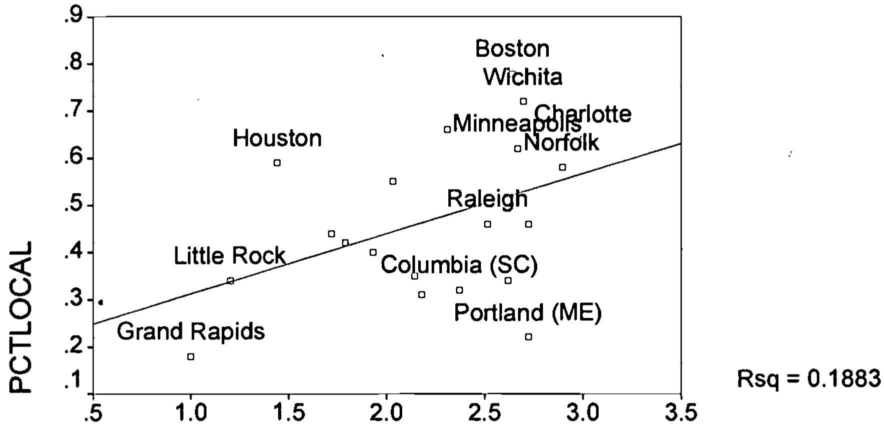
However, the full effect is masked by variation in circulation size. Larger papers can afford more staff coverage of national elections because of their economies of scale.

(Insert Graph 1 and correlation about here)

GRAPH 1

CBINTEND (intent to do CBJ) by PCTLOCAL (% local stories)

USA Today excluded



Intent to involve citizens in campaign coverage

Correlations

Correlations

		CBINTEND Intent to involve citizens in campaign coverage	PCTLOCAL
Pearson Correlation	CBINTEND Intent to involve citizens in campaign coverage	1.000	.434
	PCTLOCAL	.434	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	CBINTEND Intent to involve citizens in campaign coverage	.	.056
	PCTLOCAL	.056	.
N	CBINTEND Intent to involve citizens in campaign coverage	20	20
	PCTLOCAL	20	20

Graph

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A comparison of two tables -- one ranking the percentages of locally written news copy in the Meyer-Potter newspapers and the other showing the Meyer-Potter ranking of newspapers according to their intent to practice citizen-based journalism (see appendixes 1 and 3) -- shows that some newspapers ranked low in the citizen-based-journalism intent but ranked relatively high on locally written news content, and vice versa. Atlanta, for example, ranked in the bottom half on the Meyer-Potter list but in the top 10 on rankings for locally written content. The created variable showing each paper's percentage of locally written material was correlated with a new circulation variable created with figures drawn from *Editor & Publisher*, a trade periodical. The resulting Pearson correlation was .549, indicating 30 percent of the variability in the observed percentage of locally written news stories is explained by each paper's market circulation ($p = .012$).

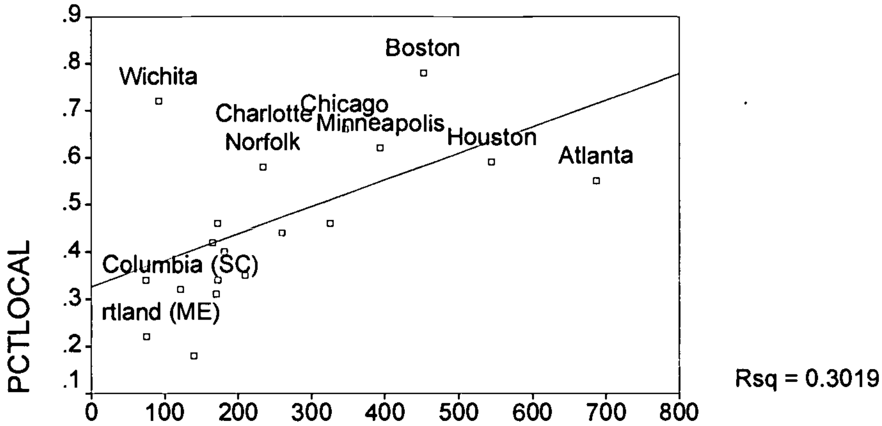
(Insert Graph 2 and correlation about here)

GRAPH 2

CIRC (market circulation w/o control) by

PCTLOCAL (% local stories)

USA Today excluded



mkt circ in thousands

Correlations

Correlations

		PCTLOCAL	CIRC mkt circ in thousands
Pearson Correlation	PCTLOCAL	1.000	.549*
	CIRC mkt circ in thousands	.549*	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	PCTLOCAL	.	.012
	CIRC mkt circ in thousands	.012	.
N	PCTLOCAL	20	20
	CIRC mkt circ in thousands	20	20

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Graph

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Inspection of the two plots suggests that circulation does have a confounding effect. The comparatively small Portland, Maine, paper ranked high in citizen-based-journalism intent in Meyer-Potter's study, for example, but in the scatterplot above the paper ranked low in actual citizen-based-journalism output, as measured by the percentage of locally written election content. The slightly larger Wichita paper -- right behind Portland. Maine, on the Meyer-Potter citizen-based-journalism list -- ranked high both on intent and output in the scatterplot. Atlanta, on the other hand -- tops in circulation but low in citizen-based-journalism orientation -- ranked high in its percentage of locally written stories.

To control for circulation size an adjusted variable for local percent was created by using the residuals from the plot in Graph 2. The residuals of the dependent variable, percentage of locally written stories, were saved as a new variable to show the relative proportion of locally written stories as though each paper had the same circulation.[20] When the new variable of the residuals was correlated with the variable for each paper's intent to practice citizen-based journalism, the Pearson correlation strengthened to .573 ($p = .008$) with an R-square of .33, meaning that a third of the variability in circulation-adjusted local effort is explained by intent to practice citizen-based journalism. This is a considerable improvement over the earlier scatterplot using the uncontrolled circulation variable.

(Insert Graph 3 and correlation about here)

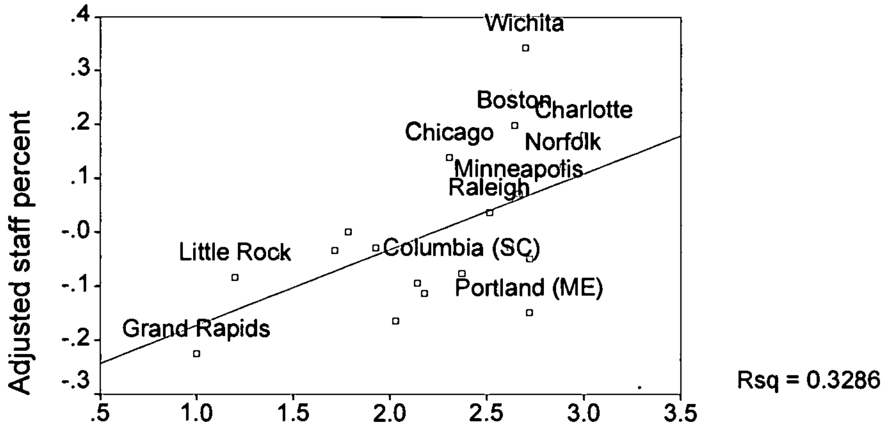
[20] Cities above the regression line are shown with positive residuals. They had more locally written campaign stories than expected for their circulation size. Those below the line had less.

GRAPH 3

RES_1 (staff % adjusted for circ) by

CBINTEND (intent to do CBJ)

USA Today excluded



Intent to involve citizens in campaign coverage

Correlations

		Adjusted staff percent	Intent to involve citizens in campaign coverage
Pearson Correlation	Adjusted staff percent	1.000	.573**
	Intent to involve citizens in campaign coverage	.573**	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	Adjusted staff percent	.	.008
	Intent to involve citizens in campaign coverage	.008	.
N	Adjusted staff percent	20	20
	Intent to involve citizens in campaign coverage	20	20

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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Summary and conclusions

This analysis found a statistical connection between citizen-based-journalism newspapers and the percentage of campaign stories their news staffs produced. The connection showed that citizen-based-journalism papers published more staff-written stories than traditionally oriented newspapers. The connection was strongest after adjustment for circulation size.

Therefore, the hypothesis that publishers of citizen-based-journalism newspapers are practicing journalism on the cheap was not supported by the data. Charlotte, Norfolk and Minneapolis, for example -- three re-engineered papers practicing citizen-based-journalism -- all produced a higher percentage of staff-written stories than the Atlanta paper, a traditional paper that posts the largest circulation of the 20 papers. When performance was compared after adjustment for circulation, the Atlanta paper dropped and the citizen-based-journalism newspapers improved on staff-written news-story production. Thus, traditional newspaper publishers seem to be more likely to practice cheaper journalism than the citizen-based-journalism publishers.

Additional questions raised by this analysis deserve more study. For example, what explains the performance of Portland, Maine, where the paper is highly ranked on intent to practice citizen-based journalism but performed poorly on staff-written stories and worse after circulation was held constant?

Further, is the high staff-written-story output sustained at citizen-based-journalism newspapers when campaign season concludes? What about their efforts between elections?

Further research should evaluate the staying power of these publishers' commitment to citizen-based journalism and its attendant expenditure of resources by their news staffs. Until then, the publishers of citizen-based-journalism newspapers in this study have demonstrated that they are putting their money where their mouths are.

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Appendix 1

Newspapers in the Meyer-Potter study are ranked according to their orientation to citizen-based journalism. Rankings, based on a three-point scale (with 3 indicating the highest orientation to citizen-based journalism and 1 indicating the lowest), are included.[21]

Citizen-based journalism rankings

Charlotte	3.0000
Norfolk	2.8929
Portland, OR	2.7214
Portland, ME	2.7143
Wichita	2.6976
Minneapolis	2.6667
Boston	2.6429
Rockford	2.6190
Raleigh	2.5143
Columbia	2.3714
Chicago	2.3095
Des Moines	2.1786
Richmond	2.1429
Atlanta	2.0286
Austin	1.9286
Birmingham	1.7857
New Orleans	1.7143
Houston	1.4405
Little Rock	1.2000
Grand Rapids	1.0000

[21] The newspapers that fell into the top 10 of the Meter-Potter rankings all had a history of citizen-based reporting or community-involvement programs.

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Appendix 2

Following are Meyer-Potter study newspapers and circulations ranked by size, largest to smallest (in thousands).[22]

Newspaper circulation size

Atlanta	687
Houston	545
Boston	452
Minneapolis	394
Chicago	345
Portland, OR	324
New Orleans	260
Charlotte	236
Norfolk	234
Richmond	209
Austin	181
Little Rock	172
Raleigh	172
Des Moines	170
Birmingham	165
Grand Rapids	140
Columbia	122
Wichita	92
Portland, ME	75
Rockford	74

[22] Source: *Editor & Publisher*,1997 Yearbook. Sunday circulation figures.

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□Appendix 3

Following are newspapers in the Meyer-Potter study ranked according to their percentage of locally written stories, without adjusting for circulation size.

<u>Percentage of locally written stories</u>

Boston	.78
Wichita	.72
Chicago	.66
Charlotte	.64
Minneapolis	.62
Houston	.59
Norfolk	.58
Atlanta	.55
Raleigh	.46
Portland, OR	.46
New Orleans	.44
Birmingham	.42
Austin	.40
Richmond	.35
Rockford	.34
Little Rock	.34
Columbia	.32
Des Moines	.31
Portland, ME	.22
Grand Rapids	.18

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Appendix 4

Following are newspapers in the Meyer-Potter study ranked according to their adjusted circulation. The column of numbers on the right lists the unstandardized residuals of the dependent variable for percentage of locally written stories after being regressed against circulation. Positive values fall above the fit line on Scatterplot 3; negative values fall below it. The figure should be interpreted as a gauge of actual citizen-based-journalism performance.

Citizen-based-journalism performance	
Wichita	.34164
Boston	.19827
Charlotte	.18029
Chicago	.13872
Norfolk	.12142
Minneapolis	.07104
Raleigh	.03645
Birmingham	.00040
Rockford	-.02819
Austin	-.02864
New Orleans	-.03327
Houston	-.04427
Portland, OR	-.04942
Columbia	-.07531
Little Rock	-.08355
Richmond	-.09445
Des Moines	-.11242
Portland, ME	-.14875
Atlanta	-.16449
Grand Rapids	-.22547

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Appendix 5

Following are side-by-side comparisons of the Meyer-Potter and the Loomis rankings of the 20 papers analyzed in both studies. Boldface indicates significant upward movement. Italics indicate significant downward movement.

Meyer-Potter rankings[1]	Loomis rankings[2]
Charlotte	Wichita
Norfolk	Boston
Portland, OR	Charlotte
Portland, ME	**Chicago**
Wichita	Norfolk
Minneapolis	Minneapolis
Boston	Raleigh
Rockford	**Birmingham**
Raleigh	
Columbia	*Rockford*
	Austin
Chicago	New Orleans
Des Moines	Houston
Richmond	*Portland, OR*
Atlanta	*Columbia*
Austin	Little Rock
Birmingham	Richmond
New Orleans	Des Moines
Houston	*Portland, ME*
Little Rock	Atlanta
Grand Rapids	Grand Rapids

[1] Papers that fell into the top 10 all had a history of concern with citizen-based reporting or with community programs.

[2] The first eight newspapers had positive values, indicating a citizen-based-journalism orientation and performance.

THE VISUAL COMMUNICATION OF PUBLIC JOURNALISM: A CONTENT AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

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THE VISUAL COMMUNICATION OF PUBLIC JOURNALISM: A CONTENT AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

ABSTRACT

Public journalists argue that the content of stories generated through public journalism is different from that generated by traditional reporting methods. This prompts the question: If the content of public journalism stories is different, and design is driven by content, doesn't it follow that design for public journalism will be different than design for non-public journalism?

This study explores how public journalism projects have been visually communicated in newspapers practicing the public journalism genre, and how it differs from the visual communication of non-public journalism. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, this study examines visual qualities of projects at six newspapers. Of six hypotheses regarding the visual display of the goals and ideals of public journalism, two were supported; four hypotheses were not supported, but two showed means in the direction hypothesized. The presentation of public journalism projects appears to differ in some ways from non-public journalism, however, there is not enough significance to says that it represents a radical departure from non-public journalism.

The Visual Communication of Public Journalism: A Content and Textual Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Between 1990 and 1996, more than 200 public journalism projects were undertaken by U.S. media (Lambeth and Craig, 1995). Much has been written about the philosophy behind public journalism, its goals, and techniques. Individual public journalism projects have been analyzed and compared against these goals and philosophies, and also compared to traditional journalism to see what, if any, difference exists (Riede, 1996). However, no study has yet focused on the visual communication of public journalism in newspapers.

Public journalism practitioners and theoreticians argue that the content of stories generated through public journalism methods is significantly different from the content generated by traditional reporting methods. This prompts the question: If the content of stories generated through public journalism methods is different, and design is driven by content, doesn't it follow that design for public journalism will be different than design for non-public journalism? This is a key question that visual communicators and public journalists must address if the final product is to truly integrate written and visual meaning.

The purpose of this study is to explore how public journalism projects have been visually communicated in newspapers practicing the public journalism genre, and how it differs from the visual communication of non-public journalism.

Through content analysis, textual analysis, and telephone interviews, this phase of a two-part study examined the design and photography of projects at six newspapers; four practicing public journalism and two practicing non-public journalism. This study explored the research questions: RQ 1 - How are public journalism projects visually communicated in newspapers that practice this genre? and RQ 2 - Does the visual communication of public journalism differ from the visual communication of non-public journalism?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public journalism is very much a child of the 1990s – its first experiment was in late 1989 in Columbus, Ga. (Rosen, 1991). At this nascent stage, there are as many operational definitions of public journalism as there are media outlets that practice it. For a conceptual definition that speaks to the developing theory of public journalism Rosen has said: "Journalism can and should play a part in strengthening citizenship, improving public debate and reviving public life" (Rosen, 1994). Public journalism derives many of its philosophical foundations from other theories, specifically the Social Responsibility Theory of the press and agenda-setting theory. While some scholars of public journalism trace its roots as far back as Thomas Jefferson, John Locke, and John Stuart Mill (McMillan et al, 1996), it seems unarguable that the development of the ideas that infuse public journalism were an outgrowth of the debates between John Dewey and Walter Lippmann over the proper role for the press in a democracy (Coleman, 1997). Dewey and other scholars of philosophy, social science, and the emerging field of mass communication helped lay the foundation for a gradual shift away from libertarianism in the 20th century. In its place began to emerge the Social Responsibility Theory of the press, which was akin to Dewey's (1927) proposal of the role of the press in helping build a more pluralist and tolerant society. The evolution of the Social Responsibility Theory culminated in the Commission on Freedom of the Press' report in 1947. The Hutchins Commission's work can be seen as a forerunner of public journalism in that it called for the press to offer "a method of presenting and clarifying the goals and values of the society" and for reporting to project "the opinions and attitudes of the groups in society to one another." (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947, 20). Although Social Responsibility Theory has been challenged as a product of its time (Nerone, 1995), the developing concept of public journalism has drawn heavily from the Hutchins Commission and expanded on the role of the press by incorporating ideas from Dewey, philosophers Jurgen Habermas (1989) and Hannah Arendt (1958), and political scientist Michael Sandel (1982). Arendt, Habermas and Sandel all acknowledge the important role media play in society – without communication there is no public sphere. Contemporary authors whose thoughts have added fuel to the public journalism fire include Daniel Yankelovich (1991) in *Coming to Public Judgment*, Neuman, Just and Crigler (1992) with *Common Knowledge*, and Christians, Ferre and Fackler's (1993) *Good News*, and the writings of James Carey (1987) and Davis Merritt (1995).

Public journalism also incorporates aspects of agenda-setting theory, which says that one of the effects of mass communication seems to be to direct the audience's attention to certain problems or issues (Severin & Tankard, 1992, 207). By conducting focus groups and taking polls of what the audience considers important before reporting on issues, public journalists make a self-conscious effort to avoid agenda-setting by the media or others, including government and special interests.

While there is no consensus on what public journalism is, or even on what to call it, the premise that all agree on is that it is the duty of the press is to improve the quality of public life by fostering public participation and debate. Some of the methods and techniques public journalists are best known to have used toward these goals include holding focus groups and citizen advisory boards to discover issues of important to people; eschewing conflict framing of stories and "expert" sources; seeking to clarify the "core values" behind opinions and underlying causes of problems; focusing on solutions and success stories; and taking an active role in promoting discussion among citizens with public forums and town hall meetings.

Turning to the issue of design, inherent in all its definitions is the idea that design is not simply decoration or dressing up a page, but that form carries a content of its own (Miller, 1992). The literature laments the use of designs that overemphasize form to the detriment of communication" (Hurlburt, 1977, 126; Rand, 1985, 239; Arnold, 1969; Ames, 1989; Barnhurst, 1994). Originally, design developed in response to the mechanical needs of page make-up. Column rules were used to hold type in place; headlines were confined to one-column widths because of the column rules. With the advent of photocomposition, these and other problems were eliminated and so were the design conventions they necessitated. Today, the story content and needs of the reader drive design (Turnbull & Baird, 1975, 5).

It is the consensus in design theory that form is inextricably involved with message meaning. The form, or design, of news changes the perception of its content (Barnhurst & Ellis, 1991). If newspaper page design is truly to be used to communicate meaning derived from the story's content, and if public journalism has changed that content, then design must change to reflect that. Design must now communicate "the public agenda." For example, photographs used for public journalism stories might reflect citizens and not just candiates, or photojournalists might refuse to participate in pack journalism photo opportunities, just as reporters have. Public journalism design has also focused on certain elements which communicate its goals, such as summary boxes that describe the values in conflict over a certain issue, and graphics that direct readers on how to get involved, express their opinions, or get more information on an issue. These and other topics must be addressed by public journalism's visual communicators if the final product is to truly integrate written meaning with visual meaning. If public journalism is an attempt to better address the goals laid out by the Hutchins Commission, how might design encourage this?

There is some indication in the public journalism literature that design is beginning to be considered. Most are references made in passing with little follow-up thoughts as to how the goals of public journalism might be achieved. Others offer some specifics, for example, in a speech to the Regional Reporters Association, Jan Schaffer of the Pew Center for Civic Journalism said: "Another way is to build in graphic devices that invite and encourage readers and viewers to contact the news organization and react to an issue, a controversy, a public problem" (Schaffer, 1996a). And: "If the pages of the newspaper are thought of as a public space designed by journalists, then what the (Wichita) *Eagle* did is arrange this space so that the proper concerns of politics ('issues in depth') shone through" (Rosen, 1996, 38). For each of the major issues, the *Eagle* published a list called "Places to Start," with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of organizations and agencies working on the problem. Repeated invitations were issued to readers to contact the paper with their comments and suggestions (Rosen, 1996). At the Charlotte *Observer*, the "Where They Stand" feature was more than a voter's guide. If candidates refused to answer the questions the public posed for "Where They Stand," a blank appeared under the candidate's name. This was a powerful use of space, charged with visual meaning. A survey found that one of the most useful features was the "Where They Stand" box (Rosen, 1996). Schaffer also reports that a focus group at one newspaper responded differently to information conveyed in an infographic than when the same information was reported in a bylined story: "They loved the voter's guide in a grid and asked why we didn't give it to them earlier and repeat it often. It seemed to them fairer and more factual. There was no byline and no news peg, just distilled information. Even though it was from bylined stories, the way it was presented seemed to make a difference in how much people believed it" (Schaffer, 1996b).

In addition, the question of photography arises. In Wisconsin at the *State Journal*, the newspaper gathered citizens in the seats of their representatives at the state capitol to question candidates, resulting in "a startling visual" (Rosen, 1996, 53), a visual symbol that things had changed.

At the *Virginian-Pilot* in Norfolk, a new feature was inaugurated on the front page to stimulate more productive dialogue on controversies in the news (Rosen, 1996). The paper also created a new design element that graphically conveyed the its new treatment of controversy. After summarizing the themes of the issue, the boxes then asked readers to question themselves. For example: "If you tend to disagree . . . in what part of (his) argument can you find merit? Even if you tend to agree . . . what part of (his) argument do you have problems with? Where is the common ground?" (Rosen, 1996, 56).

Some research even alludes to the value of visual communication to public journalism's goals. The most "depth" in the Wichita *Eagle*'s "The People Project" came in the graphics: "the graphic goes beneath the surface, personality-based coverage of politics typical of traditional journalism" (Riede, 1996, 21). This same study calls the "innovative use of the 'core values' graphics' . . . the project's most promising attempt at depth in coverage" (Riede, 1996, 29).

In order to test the overarching research questions, How have public journalism projects been visually communicated? and How does the visual communication of public journalism differ from that of non-public journalism? six hypotheses regarding visual communication were developed based on public journalism characteristics derived from the literature. They are:

> H1: Public journalism will visually convey more mobilizing information than non-public journalism.
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> H2: Public journalism will visually convey more interactivity, i.e.: ways to contact the media.
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> H3: Public journalism photographs will use fewer managed photo opportunities than non-public journalism.
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> H4: Public journalism will use more photographs of citizens and "real people" than candidates or experts than non-public journalism.
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> H5: Public journalism will use more visual devices to convey views of citizens and "real people" than non-public journalism.
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> H6: Public journalism will use more visual devices to convey common ground and solutions than non-public journalism.

METHODOLOGY

To understand how public journalism is communicated visually in newspapers, six newspapers in two circulation sizes were sampled. Two large-circulation non-public journalism newspapers were compared against four public journalism newspapers (both large and small circulation sizes); two small-circulation public journalism newspapers were compared against two large-circulation public journalism newspapers; and two large-circulation public journalism newspapers were compared against two large-circulation non-public journalism newspapers. This allowed the study to compare the presentation of public journalism against non-public journalism two ways, and also allowed comparison of the presentation within the genre of public journalism. To maximize comparisons, medium-size papers were not included. It was postulated there would be little difference, for reasons like resources, between medium and large papers, but the difference would be greater between small and large papers.

Purposive sampling was chosen over randomization for several reasons. Approximately 200 newspapers have experimented with public journalism since the first project in 1989. Although this has significance for the future of the movement, for this study's purposes it represents only 13 percent of the 1,533 total daily newspapers in the country. A census of 200 is not large enough to make random sampling and projection to the population meaningful.

Purposive sampling with newspapers stratified by circulation size and chosen for their experience with the public journalism approach better suits the purpose of comparing newspapers within the public journalism genre to see how they vary in presentation, and of comparing public journalism newspapers to non-public journalism newspapers.

The six newspapers were initially chosen for a different study by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism. The basis for this decision included the level of experience each paper had with public journalism philosophies and techniques, and Pew's director's and assistant director's assessment that these particular papers were doing some of the more interesting work within the public journalism genre. Because of their early entry into the movement, the philosophies and practices of public journalism at these papers are assumed to be more highly developed than those of papers just beginning to practice public journalism. Therefore, the visual communication of public journalism stories should have achieved a deeper level of consideration in the newsroom. Also, by experimenting with the photographing and presentation of public journalism for a longer period, their practices should be more finely tuned and may represent the direction that other newspapers will take in public journalism.

The two large newspapers not practicing public journalism were chosen by this researcher to represent specific regions of the country and for their similarities in circulation size and reader demographics to the public journalism newspapers. Also, their editors have stated their opposition to the public journalism approach either in the literature or by personal communication with this researcher.

The differences in design style across the different newspapers were taken into account in the textual analysis. The public journalism newspapers were sampled using their latest public journalism project; the non-public journalism newspapers were sampled using their latest series that was either on a similar topic as the public journalism series in its comparison paper, or, if that was not feasible, a project that ran as a series of similar magnitude was chosen. Sampling time was one week. All news and feature articles dealing with the subject in the A section and metro/local news section were analyzed.

The characteristics of each newspaper sampled are:

• *San Francisco Chronicle*: 489,238 circulation. Public journalism project is on commuter transportation. Ran December 1996 and January 1997.

• Charlotte *Observer*: 239,173 circulation. Public journalism project is the fall 1996 election. Ran September and October 1996.

• Philadelphia *Inquirer*: 469,398 circulation. Compares with the San Francisco paper's circulation. The *Inquirer* has been an outspoken opponent of public journalism. Although the editorial page editor recently instituted some public journalism techniques (Eisner, 1996), the news department has not done any public journalism projects. Topic is change in a suburban neighborhood in the past 50 years. Ran February 1997.

• Omaha *World-Herald*: 232,360 circulation. Corresponds with the Charlotte *Observer's* circulation and includes one non-public journalism paper from a western region of the country, which compares with San Francisco in the public journalism category. The *World-Herald* has not done public journalism, according to the city editor. Topic is the fall 1996 election. Ran September and October 1996.

In the small circulation category:

• *Wisconsin State Journal,* Madison: 86,585 circulation. Public journalism project is the election. Ran September and October 1996.

• Binghamton (NY) *Press & Sun-Bulletin*: 68,919 circulation. Public journalism project is the community's economic problems. Ran September 1996.

Content analysis followed the methods recommended by Krippendorff (1980) and Babbie (1992) with two independent coders. Using Scott's Pi, an average reliability estimate was calculated at .98 coder agreement. The range of reliability estimates for all variables was 1.0 to .6; an aggregate was calculated because a 10 percent overlap of coder reliability checks was five newspaper issues for an N of 41. Disagreement on even one variable drives the numbers down to .6.

Textual analysis followed the methods of Stuart Hall (1975). Text and visual design elements were closely "read" to determine if and how the written content differed from the visual content to assess how content-driven the design was.

Interviews using open-ended, unstructured questions were conducted in telephone calls with the designers of the projects. Interview methods followed those described by Denzin & Lincoln (1994) and Lindlof (1995) using an interview guide.

One-way analysis of variance was used on interval data; chi-square was used on the categorical data. Since some chi-square cells contained less than five, correlation was also used to determine probability level.

Because of the small number of newspaper issues analyzed ($N = 41$) and the fact that little was previously known about the topic under consideration, the significance level for this exploratory study was set at .10 rather than the usual .05.

RESULTS

When public journalism newspapers were compared against non-public journalism newspapers on the six public journalism characteristics, the scores showed a significant difference ($p < .10$) for two variables (H2: Ways to contact the media, H6: More visual devices for common ground and solutions). Two other variables (H3: Fewer managed photo ops, H4: More photos of real people) had means in the direction hypothesized. And two variables showed no significant differences (H1: More mobilizing information; H5: More visual devices to convey views of real people.) In addition, these same hypotheses were used to compare large public journalism newspapers against large non-public journalism newspapers in order to help control for the greater resources of larger circulation newspapers, and to compare small public journalism papers to large public journalism papers to see if public journalism is being practiced consistently across circulation sizes. When significant, these results are presented in the discussion section.

For statistical tables, please see the appendix.

DISCUSSION

Results of this study showed that public journalism used significantly more visual devices to convey common ground or solutions ($p < .05$). None of the non-public journalism papers used visual language to convey common ground or solutions (H6), while 21 percent of the public journalism stories sampled did so. Reporting common ground and solutions is fairly unique to public journalism, with non-public journalism traditionally focusing on past events. Common ground and solutions speaks to Yankelovich's (1991) idea that media should facilitate a "working through" stage that ultimately leads to solutions, rather than stopping at the consciousness-raising stage. That none of the non-public journalism newspapers visually conveyed common ground or solutions reinforces the belief that non-public journalism limits itself to issue-raising. Even though there is a significant difference between public and non-public journalism on this variable, fewer than one-quarter of the public journalism newspaper stories sampled (21 percent) used visual devices to convey common ground and solutions. Higher ratios may be achieved as public journalism develops. This is a sign there is beginning to be awareness of the need to visually communicate common ground and solutions. If reporters and editors are not including common ground and solutions in stories, then visual journalists are indeed adhering to content-driven design principles when they leave them out of designs. However, the lack of both words and visuals to explain common ground and solutions could point to an incomplete understanding of public journalism.

This hypothesis also showed a significant difference between small and large papers within public journalism ($p < .10$). Larger papers used visual devices for common ground and solutions in 36 percent of their stories, while only 7 percent of stories sampled in small paper did so. This perhaps speaks to the difference in resources between small and large papers. It may be that common ground and solutions are harder to conceptualize, thus, small papers with smaller design staffs, more inexperienced designers, and less time to design each page, will not have the resources to devote to such complex issues. The other side of this argument is that a box conveying possible solutions with typography is neither hard to conceptualize nor time-consuming to execute. Alternately, it could mean that reporters and editors at small papers are not including common ground and solutions in stories, thus the designers are not either. This seems to be the case with one small public journalism paper sampled here. In textual analysis, the *Wisconsin State Journal's* "We the People" project on the fall 1996 election showed no common ground or solutions in either the text or visuals. The possibility that the topic may not lend itself to exploring common ground and solutions is less likely because the other public journalism paper that covered the election, the Charlotte *Observer*, did visually present common ground and solutions. On most days, the *Observer* had a box on the issue of each day (crime, school vouchers, taxes and government spending, health care) outlining different sides, giving background, and telling where there is agreement or not. The solutions box on school tuition vouchers explains three reasons for supporting vouchers and three for opposing them. Common ground is explained thus: "Critics and supporters agree that school vouchers, if offered on a national scale, have the power to dramatically change the face of public education. Where both sides disagree is whether those changes will improve or ruin public schools."

Election coverage in the public journalism paper, *Wisconsin State Journal*, more closely resembled non-public journalism in the Omaha *World-Herald*. Both focused on differences in the candidates' positions rather than where there is agreement on issues. The main difference is that the public journalism election treatment included forums for citizens to question candidates, whereas the non-public journalism coverage did not. This difference between the small public journalism paper and the large one could still be partly due to staff resources. But the possibility that journalists at the small paper do not have as great an understanding of public journalism is another likely explanation. In the informant interviews, two designers at the small public journalism paper indicated they had received no training in the philosophy, goals, and techniques of public journalism (Hoot, 1997, personal communication; Sparks, 1997, personal communication), while the design director at the large public journalism paper said design staffers had been included in educational sessions with one of the founders of public journalism, Prof. Jay Rosen (Moses, 1997, personal communication).

The hypothesis that public journalism papers would visually convey interactivity between readers and the media more than non-public journalism (H2) was also significant ($p < .05$). Seventy-five percent of the public journalism stories used visual elements to encourage readers to contact the media, while 46 percent of non-public journalism stories did so. In addition, the number of *different* ways public journalism stories provided for readers to contact them (address, phone, e-mail, web site, fax) was highly significant ($p < .001$). There was no significant difference between small and large papers on this variable, as would be expected if all size papers were practicing public journalism the same way.

The subject of interaction between journalist and audience has become one of the more lively and wide-ranging discussions about public journalism. Supporters of interactivity see it as a means of connecting with community and learning what is important to readers as well as a means of receiving feedback. They say those opposed to interaction are distancing themselves from their audience and are resistant to change for tradition's sake alone. Those opposed to interactivity say journalists sacrifice independence by letting others tell them what to cover. They see the perils of interactivity as pandering – avoiding important stories that may offend readers or fearing to take an unpopular editorial stand.

The two public journalism characteristics that were not significant when public and non-public journalism were compared but whose means were in the direction hypothesized included public journalism using fewer managed photo opportunities than non-public journalism (H3), and public journalism photos featuring citizens and "real people" more often than candidates or experts (H4). The non-significant findings may be due to the low number of cases sampled ($N = 41$), but it is important that for both hypotheses the means show that public journalism stories used fewer photographs from managed "photo ops" (mean = .4 for public journalism vs. mean = .5 for non-public journalism) and also used more photos of citizens and "real people" than candidates or experts (mean = 3 photos for public journalism vs. mean = 1 photo for non-public journalism). Comparisons within public journalism showed no significant difference between small and large papers' photos on H3 regarding photo opportunities, or on H4 regarding citizens and real people in photos versus candidates or experts.

When small public journalism papers were removed from the equation, neither hypothesis showed any significant difference between large public journalism and non-public journalism papers. The public journalism papers tended to use a slightly higher mean of non-managed photos, however (mean = .6 for public journalism; mean = .5 for non-public journalism). The reason for the similar number of non-managed photos used by large non-public journalism and large public journalism papers appears confounding since resources such as staff photographers should not be significantly different between public and non-public journalism papers of similar circulation sizes. Instead, it appears to be a difference in story subjects and ideology. Additionally, trends in photojournalism quite apart from public journalism may account for the tendency to steer away from orchestrated photo opportunities. The declining use of photo opportunities is nothing new, nor is it unique to public journalism. For some time now, photojournalists have been discussing the manipulative nature of managed "photo ops" and are becoming more reluctant to photograph prearranged publicity events.

Textual analysis revealed both small public journalism papers used all photos of real people from non-managed photo sources. Binghamton used pictures on five of seven fronts, with most inside pages carrying no pictures. Likewise, San Francisco used all non-managed photos featuring citizens in its series on transportation. The Sunday issue had a full page with five large pictures; weekdays used one to two pictures. Since Binghamton's series was on the local economy and primarily covered the citizen's forums, and San Francisco's series was on commuter woes, it is perhaps not surprising that they were able to find photo subjects that did not involve officials and experts. It is more unusual for a newspaper covering an election to avoid photos of candidates, yet that is just what the Wisconsin paper did. It achieved this goal mainly by running only one photo (citizens at a forum) over all seven issues; six stories had no photos at all, which is inconsistent with design readership predictors. In the large non-public journalism genre, Omaha used all photos of candidates, most thumbnail-size mug shots. The variation is mainly explained by the non-public journalism Philadelphia paper's use of all non-managed photos of real people, and the public journalism Charlotte paper's heavy use of managed photo ops of candidates – a finding that is counter to what would be expected in ideal public journalism.

The story subjects provide partial explanation. In its series on a typical suburban neighborhood, Philadelphia used five to eight pictures every day, all from non-managed sources, all of real people. In its election coverage, the Charlotte paper used mug shots or photo collages of candidates on nearly every cover, plus cut-out photos of candidates in its full-page graphic of candidates' answers to voters' questions. This contributed to the finding of large public journalism papers using more managed photos of candidates than large non-public journalism papers. In addition, Charlotte used four conventional "campaign trail" photos over the course of the series, in traditional political photojournalism style. The only non-managed, real-people photos Charlotte used were approximately three to five photos daily of the citizens who asked questions of the candidates or whose opinions were quoted. The Charlotte design director indicated in a telephone interview that the amount of campaign-trail photographs they shot were "not nearly as many as five years ago . . . An effort was made to take photos of real people, but that makes things harder" (Moses, 1997). The convention of candidate photographs for election coverage apparently remains strong, even at papers that have embraced public journalism principles better than most. The design director's acknowledgement that finding photos of real people is "harder" than following the ritual of attending planned photo opportunities is a candid admission that is probably more true than journalists would like to admit.

Comments by designers at Binghamton, Madison, and San Francisco are congruent with statistical and textual analyses; all said their photographers tried to avoid managed photo opportunities in favor of real people, however, photo ops could not be avoided entirely. The former graphics editor at the Madison paper provided some interesting background on the thinking:

> "The photo staff hates dull pictures, first of all. There is nothing worse than a talking head (politician) or a grip-and-grin. They do try and look for action or images from the issue they are addressing. It is a combination of public journalism and aesthetics" (Hoot, 1997).

He attributed the lack of photos (one photo over seven issues) to aesthetics:

> "With 'We the People,' the premiere events are these town meetings. They don't make particularly good photos. They are often held in the capitol, which has miserable lighting, and it's a sea of people sitting around. The marching orders are we will shoot that, but we would probably try to limit that to one. Otherwise, we would have photos and stories about journalists from different media getting together to organize 'We the People' " (Hoot, 1997).

This is interesting reasoning when compared with Binghamton's daily use of five or six big photos of local people in meetings. No doubt photographers' aesthetic values are quite different from readers', who seldom find photos of themselves aesthetically displeasing or dull.

The idea of using photos of real people that are not the result of "photo ops" orchestrated by people seeking to manipulate publicity goes to the heart of public journalism philosophy and reflects a conscious effort to avoid agenda-setting effects. The conscious use of this type of photo is a sign that public journalism's goals are beginning to be translated into practice. Since the means are in the direction hypothesized, it is possible that a larger sample may yield more significant differences, which would indicate that public journalists are cognizant of the philosophy and making a conscious effort to avoid manipulation.

Of the two remaining hypotheses, neither showed any significant differences between public and non-public journalism. One was the hypothesis that public journalism will visually convey more mobilizing information than non-public journalism (H1). There was no significant difference between public and non-public journalism stories' use of mobilizing information. However, when comparisons were made within public journalism between large and small papers' stories, there was a highly significant difference ($p < .001$) in the visual communication of MI with small papers scoring better. Only 14 percent of large papers' stories used visual elements to convey MI, whereas 71 percent of small papers' stories used one visual element, and 7 percent used two. The only significant difference between public and non-public journalism stories regarding MI resulted when large public and non-public journalism stories were compared ($p < .10$); non-public journalism papers did better at visually conveying mobilizing information – a finding that is counter to the proposed hypothesis.

The interviews offer little insight; all designers said that MI was an integral part of their public journalism coverage and claimed that their papers emphasize designs for MI. Textual analysis helps shed light on which papers did it, if not why. Of the public journalism papers, both large papers (Charlotte, San Francisco) used no MI in visual format. Both small public journalism papers visually conveyed MI. The topic – the Charlotte *Observer's* election coverage – cannot be the reason, however, since the two other papers which carried election coverage, including one non-public journalism paper (Omaha) listed MI – dates, times, and places for candidates' appearances. The other large public journalism paper, San Francisco, gave almost no mobilizing information on its transportation series. Possible MI that could have been included with other stories in the series would be dates, times, and places of government meetings on transportation. In one story on proposed traffic-related legislation, no information was given on the proposing legislator's address or phone number for citizens to offer input. Both small public journalism papers listed MI frequently; Wisconsin had the most and most regular MI with its boxes for forum broadcasts, call-in lines, and registration information for upcoming town meetings. Wisconsin even developed regular graphic devices it calls "democracy boxes" (Hoot, 1997; Sparks, 1997). Perhaps the convention of having these boxes to fill keeps MI in the forefront for Wisconsin designers. Binghamton usually publicized an upcoming "priority setting conference" on results of the economic teams' reports. One of the large non-public journalism papers conveyed MI – Omaha listed candidates' appearances. Philadelphia's neighborhood series was without any MI. Possible MI could have included crime watch and school board meetings, senior center events, etc.

Reasons for the results on MI besides individual newspaper ideology, could be because MI is an unusual variable. It is not new or unique to public journalism the way other variables can be. For this study, MI consisted of announcements of events related to the series' topic, such as public discussion forums, radio or TV broadcasts, debates, crime stoppers' meetings, and government meetings on the issue; and opportunities to volunteer to help solve problems, such as public forums, task force openings, parent-teacher organizations, neighborhood groups, or names, addresses and phone numbers of non-profit or government agencies. However, MI is not a new concept. The importance of information which allows people to take action has been discussed in scholarly and trade publications since at least the 1970s (Lemert & Ashman, 1983; Lemert, 1981; Lemert & Cook, 1982; Lemert, Mitzman, Seither, Cook & O'Neill, 1977). Also, MI is not a concept specific to public journalism; "traditional" journalism can offer dates of neighborhood watch meetings, names and addresses of redevelopment agencies that offer grant money, etc. Announcement of government meetings and coverage of non-profit groups is a mainstay of all forms of journalism. Therefore, due to the length of time over which journalists have been aware of the importance of MI, and the ubiquitous nature of such information, it may not be surprising that there are no significant differences in the amount of MI conveyed visually by public and non-public journalism.

The greater resources at larger papers cannot help explain why small papers used more visual devices for MI. Nor can it explain why large non-public journalism papers did better than large public journalism papers. MI, which is nothing new, should be quite familiar and top-of-mind to designers at both small and large papers, public and non-public. Perhaps another explanation for the highly significant difference between small and large public journalism papers that visually convey MI can be found within Lemert's findings on MI. Perhaps because small papers may better reflect their small communities, there is more awareness of readers' desire for visual display of MI. If large public journalism papers are not providing MI, this supports the finding that MI is regularly missing when issues are located outside of town, where audiences ordinarily can't look up addresses and phone numbers (Lemert & Ashman, 1983, 657). This may be applicable for large newspapers that cover many different communities. This still does not explain why large non-public journalism papers are visually conveying MI more than large public journalism papers; resources at large papers, both public and non-public, should be similar.

The other hypothesis that was not significant was that public journalism will use more visual devices to convey views of real people (H5). This non-significant finding between public and non-public journalism is interesting because views of real people rather than experts or politicians is one of the central tenets of public journalism.

Although all designers interviewed said they tried to include views of real people, two said it was a copy desk decision and would be done mainly through pullquotes (Hoot, 1997; Yule, 1997). However, textual analysis revealed that not all public journalism papers visually displayed views of real people. Both Wisconsin and San Francisco used no graphics or design elements for views of real people, although these views were carried within the text of the stories.

A lack of significant difference between public and non-public journalism's use of views of real people may signify that visual journalists do not fully understand or embrace this idea. If a significant difference were found to exist in the written communication of views of real people, but not in the visual communication, this would have implications for the integration of the designers and copy editors with the reporters and editors. It may indicate that designers have not been included in sessions devoted to explaining the philosophies of public journalism and do not understand its principles fully, or, they are aware of the importance of views of real people but are leaving it to reporters to include in stories rather than employing content-driven design to convey this visually.

There was also no difference between small and large public journalism's use of visual devices to convey views of real people, but this would be expected if all papers practice public journalism the same way.

Two final points of interest were revealed by qualitative methods. In the interviews, designers were asked whether they designed differently for public journalism than for non-public journalism. Designers at two papers said yes, public journalism design was different than non-public journalism design, and designers at the other two papers replied no, there was no difference. Interestingly, the "no difference" responses came from designers whose papers did not have training sessions on the concepts and techniques of public journalism, or who did not include visual journalists in those sessions. Both affirmative responses came from newspapers whose designers did participate in public journalism education sessions. Participation in public journalism training sessions was one of the explanations offered for some of the findings in this study, and the perception of designers regarding the difference in designing for public journalism reinforces those explanations. It would appear intuitive, and the answers to these questions seem to confirm, that fundamental grounding in the philosophies, goals, and practices of any new approach, such as public journalism, helps to predict the success of that approach.

Also, one of the designers interviewed offered an off-the-record insight that is worth examining. The designer, who wished to remain anonymous, complained that too many journalists at the paper felt like they had been ordered to do public journalism with no opportunity for discussion or input. This paper, coincidentally, did not offer training sessions in public journalism. "If they're really going to get people on board to do this and do this well, there has to be that discussion. There are numerous ethical challenges in doing this, and they need to at least be explored, as do the possible pitfalls."

Both these insights have implications for managing editors contemplating introducing public journalism into their newsrooms.

CONCLUSION

This study has used the emerging theory of public journalism, which claims a significantly different content than non-public journalism, and the theory of content-driven design, which says that visual meaning must reflect the written content, to examine the question prompted by these theories: If the content of stories generated through public journalism methods is different, and design is driven by content, doesn't it follow that design for public journalism will be different than design for non-public journalism?

The results are mixed. Of six hypotheses that speak to the question of whether public journalism is visually different from non-public journalism, two showed significant differences. Public journalism used more visual devices to convey common ground and solutions, and ways to contact the media than did non-public journalism. Four hypotheses were not significant but two had means in the direction hypothesized. Public journalism was also more likely than non-public journalism to use fewer managed photo opportunities and more photos of real people than candidates or experts. These are signs that public journalism's goals may be beginning to be translated into practice. That there is no significant difference in the way three of these characteristics were practiced at large and small public journalism papers hints that there is beginning to be consistency in the way public journalism is practiced.

But there is also much room for improvement. The fact that there was no significant difference in how public and non-public journalism papers visually conveyed views of real people – one of the central tenets of public journalism – should be of concern. That public journalism visually communicated no more mobilizing information than non-public journalism is of less concern because mobilizing information is not unique to public journalism the way the other characteristics can be. The importance of information which allows people to take action has been discussed in journalistic circles since at least the 1970s. Many public journalism characteristics, such as using fewer managed photo opportunities and conveying common ground and solutions, are harder for journalists to do. They also represent major breaks with journalism conventions.

This study has also found that, in some cases, public journalism papers that have established new conventions in place of the old have found it easier to adhere consistently to public journalism principles; for instance, the development of standing graphics such as "democracy boxes" for mobilizing information and ways to contact the media.

The biggest problem in the consistent communication of public journalism characteristics, however, seems to be with journalists' fundamental understanding of public journalism. Confusion over and even unawareness of public journalism principles seems to be a basic, underlying reason why the practice of public journalism is not significantly different from non-public journalism in terms of visual communication.

In addition, it appears that not all designers are practicing content-driven design. For instance, this research found stories which included views of real people in the text, however the visual communication was silent on these topics. Since most public journalism projects are the result of advance planning, this may indicate that visual journalists have still not been successfully integrated into newsrooms. Ultimately, this failure to practice content-driven design can be misleading and confusing to readers in that it can convey the wrong impression regarding the story.

In conclusion, there appear to be some significant differences in the way public journalism is visually communicated compared with non-public journalism. However, there is not enough significance to say that it represents a radical departure from non-public journalism. In some cases, it appears another researcher's conclusion regarding the content of public journalism is correct for the visual display as well: there is no overriding, core philosophy of public journalism at some of the papers practicing it; instead it has become a label used to name a variety of special projects (Riede, 1996, 30).

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TABLE 1

PUBLIC JOURNALISM VS. NON-PUBLIC JOURNALISM

Public Journalism Variables

χ^2 & r Results of public journalism characteristics by type of story

Variables (percent with yes values)	N	Public Journalism stories	Non-Public Journalism stories	r value	P value
Mobilizing Information	41	47%	46%	.03	.42
Ways to contact media	41	75%	46%	.28**	.04
Views of real people	41	43%	39%	.04	.40
Common ground & solutions	41	21%	0%	.28**	.04

ANOVA results of public journalism characteristics by type of photo

Variables (no. of items)	N	Public Journalism photos (Mean)	Non-Public Journalism photos (Mean)	r value	P value
Non-managed photos	35	.61	.45	.95 (1,33)	.34
Photos of real people	35	3	1	.68 (1,33)	.42

Significance: * $p < .10$ ** $p < .05$ *** $p < .01$ **** $p < .001$

TABLE 2

SMALL VS. LARGE PUBLIC JOURNALISM

Public Journalism Variables

χ^2 & r results of public journalism characteristics by size of paper					
Variables (percent with yes values)	N	Small PJ paper (Mean)	Large PJ paper (Mean)	r value	P value
Mobilizing information	28	79%	14%	-.63****	.000
Ways to contact media	28	79%	71%	-.08	.68
Views of real people	28	36%	50%	.14	.45
Common ground & solutions	28	7%	36%	.35*	.07

ANOVA results of public jour. photo characteristics by size of paper					
Variable (size in square inches)	N	Small PJ paper (Mean)	Large PJ paper (Mean)	F value (d.f)	P value
Non-managed photos	22	.7	.6	.2 (1,20)	.65
Photos of real people	22	6	1	2.1 (1,20)	.17

Significance: * p < .10 ** p < .05 *** p < .01 **** p < .001

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TABLE 3

LARGE PUBLIC VS. LARGE NON-PUBLIC JOURNALISM

Public Journalism Variables

χ^2 & r results of public journalism characteristics by size of paper

Variables (percent with yes values)	N	Large PJ paper (Mean)	Large Non-PJ paper (Mean)	r value	P value
Mobilizing information	27	25%	63%	-.35*	.08
Ways to contact media	27	71%	46%	.26	.2
Views of real people	27	50%	39%	.12	.56
Common ground & solutions	27	36%	0%	.46**	.02

ANOVA results of photos with public j. characteristics by paper size

Variables (no. of items)	N	Large PJ paper (Mean)	Large Non-PJ paper (Mean)	F value (d.f.)	P value
Non-managed photos	26	.6	.5	.5 (1,24)	.50
Photos of real people	26	1	1	.02 (1,24)	.90

Significance: * p < .10 ** p < .05 *** p < .01 **** p < .001

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIVE AND PUBLIC JOURNALISM AS TECHNIQUES

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A Comparative Analysis of Objective and Public Journalism as Techniques

Abstract

This paper aims to make sense of the present debate between objective and public journalists by studying each journalistic approach as a technique. The study of technique calls for close scrutiny of the practices and values of an activity. Our analysis yields and explores three conclusions. First, labels of elitism and egalitarianism are useless. Second, both approaches advocate different levels of constraint on the press. Finally, each approach conceptualizes quality journalism in fundamentally distinct ways.

The past fifty years have witnessed much scholarship and debate focused on the practice of objective journalism (e.g., Gans, 1979; Meyer, 1973; Schudson, 1978; Tuchman, 1978). This focus has been further intensified with the advent of public journalism, whose advocates boldly assert that objective journalism is fundamentally flawed (Merritt & Rosen, 1995). Not surprisingly, much heated debate has emerged in which proponents of either practice of journalism accuse the other of being negligent, misleading, or culpable in the erosion of democracy (cf. Jackson, 1997; Clark, 1997; Grimes, 1997; Rosen & Merritt, 1994). Of key concern to this paper is the propensity for participants in this debate to talk past one another (e.g., Diamond, 1997; Kelly, 1996; Fitzgerald, 1996)--to be too quick to judge and dismiss the other practice as intrinsically broken, and thus, something to be immediately recanted and forsaken.

The debate concerning objective and public journalism is flawed because it focuses almost exclusively on the final products of each approach, usually demonstrating how their final products fail to achieve desired goals (cf. Fallows, 1996; Jackson, 1997; Fiske, 1996). This is because there is no fair and standardized way to compare and contrast the processes of each approach. We believe that the study of journalistic practices as techniques overcomes this problem. Analyzing objective and public journalism as techniques affords the opportunity to focus on the means, not simply the end results, of each approach. We believe that this is a necessary step in enriching the debate over objective and public journalism.[1] Without this focus, we feel that future debate will continue to produce more derision than deliberation.

The Study of Technique

The study of technique is the study of process. Ellul (1964) elicits the aid of Harold Lasswell in stating that the study of technique incorporates the need to focus upon values, practices (means) and resources.[2] First and foremost, the study of technique allows scholars to focus on the actual practices of any activity. As Ellul (1964) states, "technique is nothing more than the means and the ensemble of means" (p.19). Second, technique examines values in relation to the practices of an activity. Clearly, one cannot study the practices of an activity without also examining the values which drive that activity. However, we believe that it is crucial to make the examination of values secondary to that of practices in order to avoid the philosophical polemics over the nature of objectivity or the needs of the polity. That is, it is not fair to judge journalistic approaches by comparing their final products to the goals for which they strive. Rather, focus should be placed on how each approach attempts to achieve its goals.

Finally, although Lasswell (1949) eludes to the fact that the study of technique should involve the topic of resources, we have decided to focus exclusively on means and values. The topic of resources (both capital and human) is important to consider, and critics of public journalism have raised a concern about what goals are within the limited reach of some news organizations (Frankel, 1995). However, for the purpose of introducing the study of technique to journalism, we will concentrate only on means and values.

Focus on Means Ellul (1964) asserts that "our civilization is first and foremost a civilization of means; in the reality of modern life, the means, it would seem, are more important than the end" (p.19). The means or practices of any activity are nothing more than steps taken to achieve a desired goal. It is important to stress that focusing on the means of an activity requires an examination of the efficiency of the means. Ellul (1964) claims that "technique is the totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency" and that techniques are designed to "search for the greatest efficiency" (p. xxv). Clearly, the matter of efficiency is very important to the time-constrained world of journalism. In Ellul's (1964) terms, both objective and public journalists seek out the "one best means" to achieve their goals (p.21).

Focus on Values Lasswell (1977) stresses that a defined value structure is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the utilization of a given technique. Because value orientations are what necessitates the employment of a given technique, a complete analysis of a technique must entail a thorough explication of the goals and values which provoked the creation of any particular set of practices. Indeed, if an individual or organization does not have some set of values or desired goals in mind, then specific practices will not be generated.

Further, these goals and values must be conscious realizations of individuals or organizations. The conscious nature of these values brings a human element to the activity. Indeed, the study of technique "attempts to take human nature into account in order to keep man from being crushed by technique" (Ellul, 1964, p. 337).[3] It is not the technique which drives people, but the values constructed by people which initiates the process. People are not beholden to any one technique, rather, any technique can be altered to suit changes in the value structure of an individual or organization. As Ellul (1964) points out, this gives technique a "flexibility" that allows for a more humanist approach to the study of human activities (p. 336).

The Utility of Technique

We are not alone in highlighting the need to focus on the process of reporting rather than its final product. In discussing the impossibility of true objectivity, Denis McQuail (1983) asserts that "objectivity is both necessary and impossible" and that it is more of "an approach...than an achievement" (p. 108). Jay Rosen (1997) asserts that "objectivity is better understood as a set of procedures for operating in a world of limitless subjectivities" (p. 193). Finally, we completely concur with Jorgen Westerstahl (1983) when he states that "maintaining objectivity in the dissemination of news can...most easily be defined as adherence to certain norms and standards. It is not a question of basing conclusions on some definition of the inherent nature of objectivity" (p. 403). All of these scholars have emphasized the need to focus on objective reporting as a process rather than becoming distracted by the philosophical debate over the possibility of true objectivity.

Because public journalism is still very young, there is no single set of procedures which the approach advocates. However, using a series of case studies, some scholars have outlined how different organizations approach the practice of public journalism (cf. Thorson, Freidland, & Chaffee, 1996; Fouhy, 1994). Other researchers have gone so far as to outline some common practices (i.e., public forums, public opinion polling, etc.) typical of public journalism projects (Charity, 1995) and some urge the creation of a "systematic method" for public journalism (Harwood, 1996). Thus, while "public journalism is...an invention of each newspaper that uses it" (Charity, 1985, p. 14), there remain some common practices which it consistently espouses. Thus, public journalism also yields itself to the study of technique.

The next two sections of this paper will highlight the defining characteristics of objective and public journalism. Each section will open with a discussion of the goals of each technique followed by a look at the practices created to obtain these goals. After highlighting the most significant points of contrast between the two approaches, we will discuss how the focus of journalistic approaches as techniques helps clarify and nurture the debate between objective and public journalism.

Objective Journalism

> If you mean by objectivity absence of convictions, willingness to let nature take its course, uncritical acceptance of things as they are ... the hell with it. If you mean by objectivity a healthy respect for the ascertainable truth, a readiness to modify conclusions when new evidence comes in, a refusal to distort deliberately and for ulterior or concealed motives, a belief that the means shape the end, not that the end

> justifies the means, all well and good. (Stewart, 1970, p. 316)

Opponents of objective journalism argue that pure objectivity is unobtainable and that the notion of objectivity is, at best, a shield devised by corporate America to insure a sanitized version of the 'truth' (Katz, 1997), and at worst, an ideological weapon used to maintain the status quo (Fiske, 1996; Herman & Chomsky, 1988). However, studying objective journalism as technique allows us to avoid this philosophical debate and concentrate on the means and values of the approach. As Stewart highlights, it is the practices employed to achieve this unobtainable goal which are most important. Paralleling Stewart, Sydney Gruson states, "Pure objectivity might not exist, but you have to strive for it anyway" (Sesser, 1969, p. 6).

<u>Values of Objective Journalism</u> Objective journalism is often seen as the successor to the sensationalistic journalism which was common in the nineteenth century (Lippmann, 1931). Wishing to avoid heavily skewed, sensational and propagandistic news, many journalists, most notably Walter Lippmann, realized the need for a standard of journalism which would simultaneously ascribe credibility to the field and provide an intrinsically different news product. This new standard took the form of objective journalism, a technique modeled after the social sciences (Tankard, 1976). Its ultimate goal was to expunge the biases and ideologies that journalists bring to reporting. Objectivity, it was heralded, was a way to delineate facts from feelings, truths from opinions. Penultimately, it was hoped that the extraction of reporter biases would yield a more pure form of news reporting based singularly on

facts-- not absolute facts, but verified, consensual facts (Lippmann, 1922). Further, it was believed that objective journalism would benefit the public by providing unembellished and unbiased presentations of facts from which people could formulate their own conclusions. In short, the basic tenets of objective journalism are: To extract reporter biases from journalism; to present factual information in order to best inform the public; to protect the public from duplicitous or biased journalism; to eschew emotional or slanted reporting; and to raise the credibility of the profession of news reporting.

Means of Objective Journalism It was Walter Lippmann who best argued for the application of a systematic scientific study to journalism. He believed that "there is but one kind of unity possible in a world as diverse as ours. It is unity of method, rather than of aim; the unity of the disciplined experiment" (1920, p. 67). Mirroring the social sciences, journalists like Lippmann devised rigorous procedures which, if followed, would consistently yield facts on which all reporters could agree. Gans (1979) writes, "like scientific method, journalistic method is validated by consensus. Equally important, the methods themselves are considered objective" (p. 183). Similarly, Everett Dennis states that objective reporting is possible if "procedures are followed providing for systematic decisions" (Dennis & Merrill, 1991, p.118). Thus, the values of objective journalism were translated into a technique meant to produce unprejudiced, evidence-based reporting. If the method is properly followed, objective reporting should allow ten different reporters to reach similar conclusions from a set of consensually agreed-upon facts. Hence, "objectivity, in this sense, means that a person's statements about the world can be trusted if they are submitted to established rules deemed legitimate by a professional community" (Schudson, 1978, p. 7).

The influence of scientific method is clearly seen in all introductory journalism textbooks. Students are taught to dogmatically follow procedures of fact verification. Mencher (1984) writes, "An objective report contains material that everyone would agree is based on fact. Stories are objective when material in them is borne out by evidence. The reporting of facts that can be verified is the mainstay of journalism in the United States" (p. 48). As the basis of objective journalism, facts must be rigorously checked for validity, attribution, and accuracy. This is accomplished by checking every fact against multiple sources of information, including records, experts and other relevant information sources. Further, only after all the facts have been gathered should reporters comment upon them. Gans (1979) states that reporters should "strive for opinions based on 'subjective reactions' which follow from gathered facts. Journalistic values are seen as reactions to the news rather than a priori judgments which determine what becomes newsworthy" (p. 183).

Neophyte reporters are also admonished to gather as many facts as possible before conducting an interview to prevent news sources from using the media to disseminate mis- or disinformation; an informed reporter should be able to spot information discrepancies immediately and investigate them (Metzler, 1979). Further, students are told to strive for complete accuracy, which includes: Verifying the spelling of all names; understanding the information to be reported; avoiding unwarranted assumptions; placing the story in the most relevant context; and consistently seeking statements from all relevant parties in a story (Metzler, 1979).

The adherence of these practices is meant to mirror that of the scientist; reporters meticulously gather, question, verify and re-question information until they are convinced of its authenticity (Tankard, 1976). Only after this process is complete are reporters permitted to draw conclusions.

In sum, objective journalism strives to use the scientific method of systematic fact-gathering and fact-verification to remove reporter biases from news coverage. Westerstahl (1983) succinctly expresses the need for objectivity when he comments, "objective news reporting is not accomplished without conscious will," and "when that will is missing, then the requirement of truth will occasionally be affected, but relevance decisions, balance between the parties in the conflict, and the presentations of the parties will always be affected" (p. 421).

Public Journalism

> By their (reporters') actions, they should try to create the conditions in which the public can learn its business and find solutions to its problems. Public politics, public discussion, public involvement by public-minded citizens-- these are the announced goals. (Rosen & Merritt, 1994, p. 7)

Values of Public Journalism Public journalism is an inchoate technique that has been steadily evolving over the last several years. Rosen writes "Public journalism is not a settled doctrine or a strict code of conduct but an unfolding philosophy about the place of the journalist in public life" (Rosen & Merritt, 1994, p. 3). Put less eloquently, public journalism "is ambiguous and messy work" (Harwood, 1996, p. 8).

Charlotte Grimes (1997) comments that public journalism "aims to fix American public life and to fix American journalism, both of which it deems to be sadly, badly broken" (p. 125). Grimes is referring to the fact that the advent of public journalism was initiated by research highlighting that key American institutions are simultaneously eroding: The newspapers' loss of readers (Gleick, 1996), the decline in voting (Niemi & Weisberg, 1993), the national loss of a sense of place (Meyrowitz, 1985), declining civic membership (Putnam, 1995, 1996), the rising disgust with politics (Cappella & Jamieson, 1996), and the decay of public discourse (Jamieson, 1992) were all speculated to be related in some way (Merritt & Rosen, 1995). Several journalists and scholars assert that part of the problem stems from an objective press which has alienated itself from citizens by its code of detachment (Merritt & Rosen, 1995). The argument runs like this: People feel attachment to each other when they share certain core values; objective reporting champions itself as detached, thus implicitly claiming that it shares core values with no one; thus, citizens feel alienated from the news media, and this aids in the erosion of civic and political involvement (Rosen & Merritt, 1994). For decades, journalists have worked under the assumption that credibility stemmed from "a studied lack of concern for outcomes" (Merritt & Rosen, 1995, p. 9), and the result is a cynical, disempowered polity.

Carey (1978) stresses that journalists should avoid using value systems which are not inherent to human nature, like objectivity. Similarly, public journalists assert that credibility does not spring from detachment but from shared values and interests with their communities. Necessarily, journalists must move beyond the simple telling of news and take a pro-active stance on addressing problems and generating deliberative solutions to them. Charity (1995) writes, "Public journalism is nothing more than the conviction that journalism's business is about making citizenship work" (p. 9). Similarly, Bowman (1997) asserts that public journalism "seeks to engage citizens in public discourse, foster civic responsibility, and encourage citizens to take ownership of community problems" (p. 3). Thus, one of the basic distinctions of public journalism is that it emphasizes aiding the public in addressing and solving mutual problems over the straight-forward role of just informing the public.

Many public journalists have been inspired by Daniel Yankelovich's writings on generating "public judgment" (e.g., Charity, 1995; Lambeth, 1996; Merritt, 1995). Public judgment is the outcome of informed citizens deliberating about social-political problems with the goal of creating viable, consensually supported solutions. It stands in stark contrast to the term "mass opinion" and all of its cynical, negative connotations. Yankelovich (1991) argues that there are three stages to reaching public judgment: Conscious raising, working through, and resolution. Public journalists realize that the news media are very good at accomplishing conscious raising, as demonstrated by the numerous works on agenda-setting (e.g., McCombs & Shaw, 1993). However, to accomplish the second and third stages, public journalism "provides the information people need to engage in informed discussion of the items on that agenda" (Fouhy, 1994, p. 261) and it "moves beyond agenda setting by providing information relevant to the clarification of core values and organizing a discussion with that goal in mind" (Rosen & Merritt, 1994, p. 15). The stage of "working through" assumes that journalism can assist people in making educated decisions on tough issues.[4] Finally, once these decisions have been made, public journalists believe that it is the responsibility of journalism to champion these ideas to the public (Charity, 1995).

Bowman (1997) eloquently summarizes the stance of public journalism: "The goal of civic journalism is to provide citizens with the news and information they need to function fully as participants in our democratic society" (p. 4). According to public journalists, the accomplishment of these goals means going further than objectively supplying information to the public.

Means of Public Journalism Currently, the practice of public journalism is far more nebulous and diverse than its philosophy. Nonetheless, there are still several core practices which differentiate public journalism from objective reporting (e.g., Harwood, 1996).

As Rosen and Merritt (1994) make clear, public journalism requires a fundamental change concerning the way that audiences are viewed. Rather than thinking of them as simply consumers or readers, public journalists attempt to think about the audience as a collection of citizens. Consequently, public journalists attempt to discover the core values shared by the community; these values will become the cornerstone of news coverage. As Harwood (1996) points out, "the most fruitful insights from tapping into civic life emerge when journalists actively engage people in uncovering the essence of what they are thinking" (p. 8). This, of course, requires journalists to move beyond reporting and observing; they must adopt a pro-active and involved role in the community.

Most importantly, public journalism insists on a focus on solutions as opposed to problems (Merritt & Rosen, 1995). For instance, public journalists eschew the horse-race coverage discussed by Patterson (1994), and they refuse to talk about politics in terms of tactics and machinations. Instead, they focus on the needs and concerns of the citizens, attempting to encourage discussions centered around the core values of the citizenry. Merritt aptly points out that this requires "developing a new journalistic talent: the ability to understand and write clearly about the competing beliefs and priorities that underlie each public problem" (Rosen & Merritt, 1994, p. 15). Rosen and Merritt (1994) highlight four of the most intrinsic practices of public journalism: Sorting out the core values of citizens; encouraging constructive, deliberative citizen debates; providing in-depth reporting of particularly tough issues; and, reporting news stories which demonstrate the successes and potential of an active public.

Clearly, the above list is necessarily broad and vague; there are numerous ways to go about public journalism. In some communities, public journalism has taken the form of press-sponsored neighborhood round-table debates, while in other communities it has involved town hall meetings or "mock legislatures." But no matter how it manifests itself, the basic practice of public journalism always requires instigating citizens to confront and solve problems. Rosen states, "Public journalists thus try to challenge, cajole, and otherwise disturb the complacency of any community that has work to do, choices to make, opportunities to seize control of its future in a democratic manner" (Rosen & Merritt, 1994, p. 11).

It is important to emphasize that public journalists do not equate their breaking away from detachment with the breaking away of neutrality. Indeed, Rosen readily states that the pledge of neutrality is vital to public journalism because "it separates 'doing journalism' from 'doing politics' (Rosen & Merritt, 1994, p. 6). Similarly, Fouhy (1994) states that the essential values of traditional, objective journalism --accuracy, seriousness, context, and independence-- are retained by public journalists. Thus, the objective is to initially foment deliberation, after which the public journalist will allow the citizens to reach their own conclusions. However, due to the need for efficiency in journalism (Frankel, 1995), we believe that it is difficult for journalists to simultaneously emphasize both thorough fact-verification and provocation of the public. Rather, journalists must decide which goal they wish to emphasize most, and this choice will fundamentally determine which style of journalism they embrace.

Comparing and Contrasting Techniques

It should be obvious that there is an intrinsic difference between objective and public journalism. The former places a premium on providing the most accurate and factual information possible. It involves reporters quickly gathering and confirming facts and presenting them to the public in a detached manner. The latter places a premium on playing a pro-active role in communities. It asks reporters to discover which issues concern the public and to then provide a forum in which these issues can be discussed, debated and resolved. These competing primary goals have led to the creation of the two distinct techniques marked by their own unique set of practices. Yet, recent debate reveals a fundamental lack of appreciation for what each technique offers to journalism (cf. Fitzgerald, 1996; Stein, 1995). The next section will discuss certain key misconceptions about both journalistic approaches and will attempt to establish a more fertile ground for future debate. Specifically, the study of technique offers three insights: First, elitist/egalitarian labels are useless; second, both approaches differ in their notions of constraints; and, third, both approaches possess different definitions of high-quality journalism.

Elitism versus Egalitarianism One nuance of the debate between objective and public journalism entails the dichotomy of elitism and egalitarianism. While objective journalists have often been called elitists (Carey, 1988; Cose, 1985), public journalists herald themselves as egalitarians seeking to give "the people" a voice. Placing labels on either of these forms of journalism is limiting and debilitates the debate over their relative merits. The study of technique allows us to realize that both objective and public journalism contain elements of elitism and egalitarianism.

James Carey (1988) has pointed out that the egalitarian/elitism dichotomy has been part of the debate over the role of the press since the creation of objective journalism. He notes that John Dewey was one of the first to express concern over the elitist tendencies he felt to be ingrained in Lippmann's *Public Opionion*. Indeed, we can see a dose of elitism in some of Lippmann's writings; he states, "this notion that everybody is to decide everything destroys the sense of responsibility in the public men and deprives public opinion of responsible leadership" (1941, p. 99). The label of elitist is one which has remained with objective (traditional) journalists to date (e.g., Cose, 1985).

However, objective journalists also retain an inherent belief in the 'marketplace of ideas.' One role objective journalists see themselves playing is that of educator, and this role is intricately linked to the 'marketplace of ideas' approach (Hindman, 1997, p.31). This approach is best summarized by Oliver Wendell Holmes when he states,

> the ultimate good desired is better reached by the free trade of ideas - the best truth is the power of thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market, and that truth is the only ground upon which their [the polity's] wishes safely can be carried out" (Carter, Franklin, & Wright, p. 37).

Objective journalism is thought to play an intricate role in this framework because "the marketplace model rests on a belief in objective truth and in the predominance of rational thought" (Powe, 1991, p. 239). The means by which objective reporters ensure that the "the best obtainable version of the truth" (Brooks, et al., 1996) comes to light is by following the scientific method of fact-verifying, source-checking, and fair representation (Gans, 1979). Inherent in this belief is an egalitarian notion that each individual should be able to judge for him/herself the merits of a story. This belief is "summed up in the 'balanced' news story's implied message to the readers: get both sides and decide for yourself" (Rosen, 1997, p. 193). Although objective journalists have been termed elitists, we can see that their technique of reporting is inherently linked to some very basic egalitarian ideals.

Public journalism clearly embraces egalitarian principles (e.g., Charity, 1995).[5] However, just as objective journalism contains shades of both elitism and egalitarianism, so too does public journalism. Public polling and public forums are routinely used by public journalism organizations to determine what people want their news coverage to entail (Fouhy, 1994). While these forums are clearly egalitarian pursuits designed to give citizens "a bigger place in the newspaper itself" (Charity, 1995, p.10), issues ranked as highly important by the public may still remain uncovered by public journalism organizations (e.g., Kelly, 1996). Further, after public journalists have found numerous points of view in the community, they "must keep asking whether they are the 'right' ones to tap" (Harwood, 1996). Clearly, no matter how much public journalists let the public decide what should comprise the news, eventually reporters and editors must decide what will and will not be covered. The limited time and resources of the news media make this a reality. Frankel (1995) also recognizes this point:

> The elemental tasks of describing events and discerning their causes are already beyond the skills and budgets of many American newsrooms. Running forums, finding speakers and raising

> money are diversions for most television and newspaper staffs even if such activity had no compromising side effects (p. 28).

Public journalism strives "to re-engage readers, listeners and viewers with the public life of their communities" (Fouhy, 1994, p. 262) in order to encourage, even cajole them into confronting issues (Rosen & Merritt, 1994). Further, public journalists are willing to actively promote public decision-making "even if journalists must create the public space where those decisions are discussed" (Fouhy, 1994, p. 261-262). The fact that public journalists are attempting to force the creation of civic capital while simultaneously setting the conditions within which this capital can be exercised suggests elitist tendencies. William Woo, commenting on public journalism, states, "I think about the possibility of developing an elitism in which the non-voter, the non-participator, becomes not merely a second-class citizen but also a second-class reader" (Stein, 1995, p. 18). Just as in the myth of Plato's cave where only those who apprehend the form of the good are fit to rule, public journalists are defining what a public good consists of and they are constructing the stage upon which the good is to be revealed. While this sort of issue prompting may be necessary, perhaps even beneficial, it still suggests elitism.

Clearly, the elitism/egalitarianism dichotomy is far too simplistic and misplaced to aid in the debate over objective and public journalism. Studying each journalistic approach as a technique allows us to see that both approaches contain elements of each concept. The issue is not which approach is more egalitarian or elitist; the issue involves examing how each technique perceives its role in society.

The Role of Constraints The study of technique affords us the opportunity to take note of an important difference between these forms of journalism; their varying notions of constraints. The practices developed in objective journalism were created out a perceived need for constraints to be placed on the press. Walter Lippmann (1931), criticizing the state of the press prior to the advent of objective journalism, states,

> It [tabloid journalism] selects from events of the day those aspects which most immediately engage attention, and in place of the effort to see life steadily and whole it sees life dramatically, episodically, and from what is called, in the jargon of the craft, the angle of human interest (p. 404).

For Lippmann, the only way for journalists to see life steadily and whole was to incorporate a set of constraints, mostly based on social scientific study. Rosen (1997) aptly observes that objective "journalists assert a belief in objectivity not because they have a reliable method for separating facts from values, but out of a deep sense of pessimism that any secure 'values' or truly reliable 'facts' can be found" (p. 193). Rosen makes a crucial distinction: Journalists do not utilize the technique of objectivity simply because it allows them to accurately gather facts; rather, they use objectivity because without it, they argue, no pure facts would exist.

Conversely, proponents of public journalism are looking to break free of the constraints created by objective reporting. Fouhy (1994) observes that "they [public journalists] are finding that some of the 'ancient' and 'sacred' practices of journalism are simply habits best done away with" (p. 262). A reporter cannot disturb the complacency of a public or cajole the polity into making a decision while remaining detached, nor can a reporter urge action while remaining impartial. Charity (1995) points out that the ideals of detachment and impartiality have no sacred meaning or utility for journalists who wish to aggressively engage the public, and Bowman (1997) asserts that merely reporting news "falls short of what is needed to encourage an active citizenry" (p. 4).

The study of these two journalistic practices as techniques has shed light on the fact that each form of journalism has a very different set of notions about the necessity of constraints. Objective journalism was conceived out of the desire to reel in a sensationalistic press whose sole focus was to create outrageous and attention-grabbing stories (Lippmann, 1931). It advocates the use of constraints to set the press apart from the public and social institutions in order to ensure fairness and detachment. Public journalism was born out of a perceived need to reinvigorate the polity (Bowman, 1997; Charity, 1995; Fouhy, 1994; Rosen & Merritt, 1994). It advocates the breaking of prior constraints in order to directly engage and mobilize the public (Schaffer, 1997). The first technique instituted constraints on reporters and news organizations in order to best serve society, and the other is looking to emancipate themselves from those bonds in order to do the same. Any debate over the merits of these techniques must confront their divergent understandings of the role of constraints on the press.

Defining Quality Journalism Another issue of key importance involves the quality of news coverage. The examination of objective and public journalism as techniques reveals that each approach has a fundamentally different definition of a quality news product. Of primary importance to objective journalists is the presentation of reliable information (Tankard, 1976). Conversely, public journalists place prime importance on presenting information that voters can find useful in making decisions important to their community (Clark, 1997). This is not to say that objective journalists do not wish to provide useful information to the public or that public journalists do not strive to present reliable information, but we simply wish to stress that these two techniques vary in where they place these concerns along a continuum of importance. Again, we believe the reality of time constraints (Frankel, 1995) forces journalists to decide what is most important to them-- extremely reliable information which may sacrifice some usefulness, or extremely useful information which may sacrifice some reliability.

These different ideals of quality are at the heart of much of the criticisms leveled against both forms of journalism. Objective journalism has been accused of making information useless by presenting it in a detached and aloof manner (Rosen & Merritt, 1994). The charge is that while objective reporting may indeed strive to provide accurate and unbiased news, this does not adequately assist the public in interpreting and using this information (Bowman, 1997). Without such guidance, the argument runs, the public becomes disenchanted, disillusioned and cynical

(Rosen & Merritt, 1994; Merritt & Rosen, 1995). Inherent to the criticisms is a belief in the primacy of making sure the information being provided spurs civic engagement.

Critics of public journalism question whether it is wise to allow the press to lose the detachment inherent to objective journalistic practices (e.g., Frankel, 1995). Frankel claims that "the emphasis on 'solutions' and 'connections' will inevitably distort the news agenda, devalue problems for which no easy remedy is apparent, and end up compromising the newspaper and its independence" (p. 28). Further, he asserts that journalists should work harder at better reporting while leaving reform to the reformers. Dennis offers a similar sentiment when he claims that "journalists should cover the parade, not march in it" because community organizing must remain separate from journalism (Dennis & Merrill, 1991, p.163). Clearly, these criticisms stem from a deep-seeded belief in a need to keep the press detached.

The discussion of quality hints at tenuous assumptions made by each journalistic approach. Objective journalists assume that the public will make good use of the information provided to it. Merritt takes issue with this assumption, stating that "if journalists view their job as merely providing information --simply telling the news in a detached way-- they will not be particularly helpful to public life" (Merritt & Rosen, 1995, p.11). There is no guarantee that the public intrinsically knows what to do with all of the information it receives, which is why public journalists believe that information must be provided in a manner that is well-suited for the creation of a deliberative democracy (Bowman, 1997).

According to public journalists, detached news reporting does not provide the necessary assistance the public requires to understand its business (Rosen & Merritt, 1994).

Conversely, Schudson (1982) points out that public dialogue does not ensure a healthy democratic process. He states,

> when we criticize the reality of the mass media, we do so by opposing it to an ideal of conversation which we are not inclined to examine...We have developed a notion that all communication *should* be like a certain model of conversation, whether or not that model really exists or not (p. 43).

This is where public journalism has a problem: The ability of the public to generate a quality debate should not be treated as gospel. Schudson points out that "there is an unspoken sense among students of the mass media [and the same can be said of public journalists] that the world of face-to-face communication is the world of rich and complicated interaction," but this idealized version of debate may not exist in the real world (1982, p. 42). In summary, both approaches to journalism rest on challengable assumptions.

Conclusion

This study of technique has afforded us the opportunity to focus upon the means and values that are the driving forces behind both objective and public journalism. Rather than compare the final products of each approach with its self-professed goals - a comparison which we feel is unproductive - we have attempted to examine both through consideration of their values and means. As stated previously, we feel a debate focused only on final products leads to a fruitless argument in which each side showers the opposition with labels, insinuations, and professional debasements (cf. Katz, 1997; Fallows, 1996; Fitzgerald, 1996). The study of technique, by focusing on the means and values of each form of journalism has revealed some important points which we feel need to be recognized in the debate over the relative (de)merits of each journalistic approach. Specifically, quibblings over elitism and egalitarianism must be replaced with discussions of constraints and quality. We feel this understanding is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a fruitful debate.

End Notes

[1] Hoyt (1995) states that a focal point in the debate over the legitimacy of public journalism is the query, "is this journalism?" We believe that the critical analysis conducted here is a first step in trying to answer this question.

[2] Lasswell employed the study of technique in his analysis of propaganda (see Lasswell, 1949; Lasswell & Blumenstock, 1939). The study of propaganda is also an area of interest in which Ellul (1965) has utilized the study of technique.

[3] Barrett (1979) in his critical analysis of the process of technique highlights that too often technique is automatically associated with technology.

[4] The belief that the local news media, particularly newspapers, can promote community integration has received some empirical support (McLeod, et al., 1996).

[5] Perhaps part of public journalism's appeal lies in the fact that post-World War II America has been characterized as egalitarianism's longest winning streak (Henry, 1994).

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Civic Journalism, Political Awareness and the University

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Civic Journalism, Political Awareness and the University

The notion of public or civic journalism is currently challenging more traditional notions of journalism. Public journalism represents an attempt to connect journalists with the communities they operate within. It places citizen input at the center of journalistic concerns. In this paper, we provide a broad ranging assessment of public journalism. The first part of the paper identifies the characteristic features of public journalism, and accounts for its recent growth. The second part of the paper explores the relationship between a decline in civic consciousness and contemporary journalistic practices. The final part of the paper offers some prescriptive suggestions for enhancing citizenship education through changes in the University curriculum.

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC JOURNALISM

Defining Public Journalism

The overall purpose of public journalism is to help print and broadcast news organizations to ".... reconnect to their communities so they can engage their citizens in dialogues that lead to problem solving. (Fouhy 1996: 11). As such, this effort engages journalists within, the confines of their communities, as champions of political and, perhaps, social reform. This new movement strikes at the heart of more traditional tenets of journalism which emphasize the concepts of "objectivity" and "fairness", or so the critics charge (Case 1994: 14). The concerns of citizens tend to become the primary concerns of journalists and these concerns tend to drive their reporting.

The 1988 presidential election served as a catalyst for the initiation of public journalism.

Many journalists were concerned about the relationship between journalists and political candidates which had been developing throughout the 1980s. Many, including James Batten of Knight-Ridder and David Broder of the Washington Post spoke openly about their concerns for the journalism profession as did press scholar James W. Carey. From 1990-92 the Kettering foundation sponsored conversations with journalists about the state of their profession and how they could connect to a more deliberative public. Other institutions were eventually involved in public journalism efforts such as The Knight Foundation, The Poynter Institute of Media Studies and the American Press Institute (Rosen, 1994 :370-374).

One of the early experiments in public journalism involved the Wichita *Eagle* in Kansas under the leadership of Merritt Davis Jr. The purpose was to utilize newspaper resources to "discover" the public's issue agenda in order to better provide coverage and *enhance* citizen participation in politics. Approximately 500 residents were interviewed about their issue concerns then the paper matched these concerns with political candidates responses and stands on the issues during the 1990, 1991 and 1992 local, state and national elections. In addition the *Eagle* took the position that its citizens ought to vote and involved itself in voter promotion efforts. This two prong approach was entitled the Voter Project. It was an attempt to involve the people in issue selection, dialogue and candidate education all for the purposes of increasing voter turnout (Hoyt 1992: 45). The Wichita experiment spawned other efforts at public journalism.

The *Charlotte Observer* in conjunction with the Poynter Institute for Media Studies and WSOC-TV polled citizens to ascertain issues of importance to them. They then compiled a citizen's agenda and kept the focus upon this agenda during the 1992 elections. Voters and their concerns thus emerged as the focus of the campaigns (Rosen, 1994: 375-376).

In Spokane, Washington the *Seattle Times* has sponsored focus groups and conversations with the voters. Readers ideas were incorporated into newsroom discussions. In Olympia, Washington the *Olympian* has published such stories as, "... county infrastructure needs, new business and industrial development, and the quality of life in the area." (Stein 1994: 15). In fact the *Olympian* joined the Thurston County Regional Planning Council on a project to assess the needs of the county (Stein 1994: 15). As part of a series from its "Safer Cities" project the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* sponsored a reporter, Richard Chin, to live in Frogtown, a crime ridden section of St Paul, and report his observations. As Chin (1996: 2) noted:

> 'We don't get those stories spending our days in the office, talking by phone to our usual sources. We middle-class reporters don't live in neighborhoods like Frogtown. Unless we're going there to cover a crime, Frogtown is usually only glimpsed through the windshields of our cars as we commute home or head to an interview with someone who matters.'

Other experiments have included a partnership between the Charlotte Observer, WSOC-TV and radio stations WPEG and WBAV on a project entitled "Taking back our Neighborhoods/Carolina Crime Solutions Project." The "Public Agenda" Project was sponsored by the Tallahassee *Democrat*, WCTV, Florida State University and Florida A&M University. The purpose was to create a dialogue among citizens on issues that they deemed as important. (Fouhy 1994: 263).

The Pew Charitable Trusts, in October 1994, provided funding for the establishment of the Pew Center for Civic Journalism in Washington, D.C. (CQ Researcher 1996: 827). The creation of the center helped to provide legitimacy for the public journalism movement and badly needed financial support for civic journalism initiatives. The Pew Center, taking advantage of the World Wide Web explosion, participated in the establishment of Democracy USA a web site devoted exclusively to facilitating the discussion of civic journalism in helping to revitalize democratic values across the nation (see http://www.democracyplace.org). Edward Fouhy, former Washington bureau chief for both CBS and ABC news, agreed to serve to run the Pew Center for Civic Journalism (CQ Researcher 1996: 832).

The decision of the Pew Charitable Trusts to back the civic journalism movement represented a turning point in the civic journalism movement. National Public Radio, during 1994, instituted the National Public Radio Election Project which involved some 90 NPR affiliates in helping to identify issues of important to voters in communities across the country (http://www.cpn.org/sections/topics/journa.../civic_perspectives/civic_journalism.html). The Public Broadcasting System, during the 1996 presidential campaign, conducted the PBS Democracy Project (http://www.pbs.org/democracy/). The project resulted in the broadcast of numerous programs directed as exploring important public policy issues from the perspective of average Americans. PBS, for example, on September 20, 1996 broadcast *CITIZENS '96 Election Year Survival Guide.*" The production attempted to provide voters "helpful tips and detailed information to help voters analyze debates, decode political commercials and decipher campaign finances." (http://www.pbs.org/democracy/programs/).

Explanations for the Recent Rise in Public Journalism

The rise in public journalism cannot be understood without appreciating the monumental upheavals which have recently transformed American society. The 1960s and 1970s were decades of profound social, political and economic reforms. The Civil Rights, Women's and Environmental movements along with the Vietnam Protest movement profoundly transformed the domestic and international political landscape with a number of long term consequences. On the international scene, the increasing interdependence of the worlds economies brought forward a new series of international actors and policy challenges eventually culminating in the end of the Cold War. (Kehone and Nye, 1970: passim; Brown, 1974; passim; Nye, 1992:83-96; Rosencrance, 1992: 64-82). On the domestic scene, American politics witnessed upheavals and reforms such as the Watergate scandal and the consequent campaign finance reforms which led to greater autonomy for special interest groups and their PACs and weaker political parties (Lowi, 1969: passim and McClesky, 1989: introduction). The journalistic community responded to these events by adopting an investigative style of reporting with an emphasis on rooting out public scandals and following money trails in political campaigns (Drew, 1983: passim). The confluence of these reforms both domestic and international led to a sense of diminished American optimism in both public and private institutions (Lipset and Schneider, 1987: passim). The journalistic community was not immune to this trend. The catalytic event for a rethinking of the relationship between journalists and their public was the 1988 presidential election . The disgust with the relationship of candidates and journalists, which developed partly as a consequence of the wide ranging political and campaign reforms of the 1970s, led directly to the Wichita Eagle project under the direction of Davis Merritt Jr. (Rosen, 1994: 374). From 1990-1992 the Kettering Foundation sponsored conversations with journalists on the relationship of the public with the journalistic community. As Rosen (1994:371-372) notes, there were concerns which led to the public journalism movement. Journalists were concerned with a decline in newspaper readership. They noted the increasing gap between citizens and journalists. They were concerned about the increasing sense of political disaffection in the population. They noted the dichotomy of public reporting being housed within an industry devoted to private gain. All of these concerns led to a willingness on the part of some journalists to experiment and challenge some of the central tenants of modern journalism

The rise in public journalism was also shaped by the forces of technological and economic change. The dissemination of news was revolutionized by a number of technological developments. Satellite technology helped increased the immediacy of news coverage by television stations. The growth in the number of cable stations, coupled with the creation of a twenty-four hour news station, CNN, greatly increased competition in the news business. The network news organizations have all become acquired by large conglomerates, which resulted in major restructuring in news departments. Many news bureaus were forced to close down, and the content of programming was changed in order to increase ratings. (Ansolabhere, Behr, Iyengar 1993: 26).

This new competitive environment in the broadcast media contributed to the woes of the newspaper business, which faced chronic circulation problems. Newspapers lost advertising dollars and demographic surveys illustrated a drop in younger readers. As Fouhy (1994: 260-61) indicates, some newspapers responded by moving to sensationalize the news in order to appeal to this younger generation but others responded in a way that would enhance the "...civic life of their communities." Public journalists chose to directly confront problems arising from the declining sense of community in America. Aware that younger readers were increasingly drawn to broadcast news, partnerships were developed between newspapers, local broadcast stations and civic groups for experiments in public journalism.

Given these developments we now turn to the relationship between public journalism and public political knowledge.

PUBLIC JOURNALISM AND POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE

"Whether uninterested, uniformed or simply ignorant, millions of Americans cannot answer even basic questions about American politics" (Morin, 1996: 1). A recent national survey conducted by the *Washington Post*, the Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University starkly demonstrated that much of the American public lack the political knowledge necessary to fulfil the role of an active, engaged citizenry (Morrin, 1996).

In this part of the paper, we deal with three central issues connected with this low level of knowledge about American politics. First, we examine the current state of political awareness; second, we explore the media's responsibility for promoting political ignorance; and third, we review the prospects for increasing political awareness through public journalism.

The Current Level of Political Awareness of Americans

Entman (1986: 4) has stated that "...by most benchmarks the level of public is disturbingly low". His contention is corroborated by numerous surveys and research studies (see Bennett 1989; Kinder and Sears, 1985; Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1991; Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996). Table 1 displays the findings of the 1996 *Washington Post* survey pertinent to the topic of political knowledge. These data show that Americans lack basic awareness about both the structural characteristics of government and familiarity with the personalities, events, and issues on the contemporary political scene. Just over half of those surveyed were able to identify that the U.S. Supreme Court possessed final authority to determine whether a law is constitutional. Approximately a quarter of the sample knew that U.S. senators served six year terms.

Table 1-- Political Awareness of Americans

Question	Percent Answering Correctly
Can you tell me who was president when the Watergate scandal took place	86
As far as you know, is there a limit on the number of terms in office a president of the United States can serve, or not	81
Can you tell me which party- the Democrats or Republicans- has the most members in the U.S. Senate	62
Can you tell me which party- the Democrats or Republicans- has the most members in the U.S. House of Representatives	61
Can you tell me the name of current vice President of the United States	60
As far as you know, who has the final responsibility to decide if a law is constitutional or not	54
Can you tell me the name of the speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives	53
Which party do you think is more conservative- the Republican Party or Democratic Party	52
Can you tell me the name of the current majority leader of the U.S. Senate	34
During the past three years, do you think the number of people employed by the federal government has increased, decreased, or stayed about the same	28
As far as you know, is more of the federal budget now spent on Medicare, or is more spent on foreign aid	27

How many years is a single term in office for a U.S. senator	26
Can you tell me the name of the current chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court	6

Source: The Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University Survey Project 1996 --Why Don't Americans Trust the Government-- (The Kaiser Family Foundation 1996)

Citizens' knowledge of the current political environment is similarly low. It is perhaps startling that at a time when the public visibility of U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Majority Leader Dole was high that only about half of the sample were able to identify the former figure, and only a third, the latter. It is also significant to point that despite the publicity accorded to the Clinton administration's initiative to "reinvent" government and reduce federal employment, only 28% of those surveyed were aware that the size of the federal workforce had been reduced.

The Media and Political Information

Does the media have any responsibility for the low levels of political information possessed by the American public ? There is good reason to believe that this is the case. News organizations are heavily influenced by need to sell advertising space. The profit motive coupled with technological advances have shaped the content of the news in a number of important ways. First, news is presented in a personalized fashion. "In order to encourage audience interest and identification, journalists tend to explain events by reference to the actions of individuals rather than to institutional, historical, or other abstract forces" (Entman, 1989: 49-50).

A second flaw in the presentation in the news relates to the fact that reporters are excessively reliant on official sources for their stories. The reliance on officials for stories can be attributed primarily to economics. It is simply easier and cheaper to turn to decision making elites for the content of news programming than to seek out non governmental sources and story topics (Entman, 1989).

Journalists adhere to professional norms which emphasize objectivity and "fairness" in reporting. In practice, this has meant that there is a lack of interpretation and critical analysis in news stories (Bennett, 1995).

Politicians have exploited this passivity on the part of the news organizations by employing techniques of news management. The central objective of officials "...is less to inform or enlighten than to find imagery that produces desired public responses" (Bennett, 1995: 88).

Critical reporting on politics certainly exists, but it tends to be more ritualistic than substantive in nature. Genuine investigative journalism is comparatively rare, particularly since the cuts in the size of the networks' newsrooms which occurred during the 1980s (Ansolabehere, Behr and Iyengar, 1993: 224).The critical element of news reporting tends to focus on the personal foibles of the incumbents in office, rather than the structural and institutional weaknesses of government (Bennett, 1995).

Political news tends to be presented to the American public in an episodic format. The characteristic feature of episodic news stories is "...on-the-scene coverage of 'hard' news in a fast-paced and visually compelling manner" (Ansolabehere, Behr and Iyengar, 1993: 52). Stories are generally reported to the public in a highly fragmented manner. The media may, thus, share responsibility for the well documented lack of political sophistication on the part of the American people (Bennett, 1995).

Campaign coverage has also been faulted for a variety of failings. Ideally, reporting on election campaigns should serve to educate the public on the issue position stands of candidates and their proposals for change. There have been numerous research studies which have shown that the network news organizations have failed to educate the public in this manner, preferring rather to focus on the horse race dimension of campaigns and the character issue (see for example Sabato, 1991; Patterson and Mcclure, 1976; Robinson and Sheehan, 1980; Ansolabehere, Behr and Iyengar, 1993).

A *Washington Post* poll conducted after the 1996 election determined that " ... after hundreds of millions of dollars in campaign spending, countless news stories, three nationally televised debates and hours of advertising on television and radio, Americans knew no more about how the two major presidential candidates stood on key issues when they voted then they did when the fall campaign began in September." (Morrin and Brossard, 1996: 1). The 1996 presidential election had done little to reverse the growing disenchantment of the American public with politics and the press.

Ultimately, the failings of the media in modern American society can be traced to the lack of civic content in news coverage. We are currently presented with a troubling paradox of "democracy without citizens" (Entman, 1989). The United States has the world's longest democracy; yet it has one of the lowest rates of voter turnout. In general, the media has done a poor job in providing members of the mass public with the basic facts which might promote active citizenry. A study by Luskin (1990) showed, for instance, that exposure to the network news has a negligible impact in increasing political awareness. The irony in all this, of course, is that we are in the midst of an information revolution, which should serve to elevate the level of public knowledge about the political process. The media is unlikely to succeed in increasing the level of political awareness unless it makes a serious attempt to reform itself. More than anything else this will require a shift away from the passivity of its current commitment to "objective" journalism and a return to the aggressive, critical, civic oriented journalism which characterized the Progressive era.

The Prospects for Increasing the Level of Political Information Through Public Journalism

There are several strong theoretical reasons for us to expect that the widespread adoption of the tenets of public journalism by media organizations would lead to a general increase in the level of political knowledge. First, public journalism emphasizes the reporting of issues during election campaigns. For example, a long standing media partnership between Wisconsin Public Television, public radio, and WISC, the CBS affiliate, has spawned the "We the People/Wisconsin" project. The project includes hosting town hall meetings, and focus groups, call-in radio programs, and live television special dealing with key issue concerns of voters (Fouhy and Schaffer, 1995). NPR, in conjunction with a number of newspapers around the country, also adopted this issue, community oriented, style of reporting to its election coverage. Apparently, there was enormous positive public feedback to these experiments (Fouhy and Schaffer, 1995).

Public journalism differs from the dominant model of journalism in that it focuses on the concerns of ordinary people, their issue preferences, and on the provision of information which is of practical importance to those who are interested in becoming actively involved in the political process. To that end, for example, the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* in Georgia reached out to its readers by conducting research on what they liked and disliked about their communities. They used this information to run a series of articles identifying community problems. The also organized a series of town meeting and smaller meetings to mobilize community opinion to place pressure on government to address people's concerns. They also created a civic organization "United Beyond 2000" to give a permanent institutional forum for those interested in advancing community interests (Rosen, 1992).

Importantly, public journalism does not accept the lack of popular participation as an immutable "given", but rather advocates the adoption of measures, such as sponsoring town meetings, to create an active, engaged citizenry, even where none currently exist (Rosen, 1992). There is an interactive dimension to public journalism which places emphasis on maintaining a dialogue with members of the community and encouraging citizens to talk to each other more about public affairs. One of the leading proponents of public journalism, Jay Rosen, argues that the media ought to "...become a support system for public life." (Rosen, 1992: 70).

The ethos of public journalism is, thus, very much in the tradition of communitarian democracy. The objectives of its proponents, such as fostering community connectedness, encouraging a public dialogue, and increasing civic involvement, coincide with this vision of democracy. The ethos of public journalism is based on the premise that the views of members of the public should be important in determining the direction of public life. This assumption lies at the heart of a democracy.

The empirical evidence about whether public journalism is actually achieving its objectives is fragmentary and impressionistic at this point. These findings have, however, been positive in nature. Research by Lemert (1981) showed that the presence of mobilizing information in news stories, such as providing the names and addresses of public officials, led to an increase in citizen activism. The Charlotte *Observer's* series on crime led to an increase voluntarism (Stein, 1994). The *Ledger-Enquirer*'s activities led to the creation of a new civic organization (Rosen, 1992). The voter turnout in the circulation area covered by the *Wichita Eagle* was over 10% higher in the 1991 local election than the rest of the state (Hoyt, 1992: 45). Other promising pieces of evidence have been turned up all around country. It does not appear that any other force is rushing into fill the information vacuum in the United States. Public journalism appears to represent the most promising means to promote increases in public awareness and political participation.

CIVIC JOURNALISM AND THE UNIVERSITY

It is clear that up until this point in time, universities and colleges have not played a major role in the expansion of the civic journalism movement. As discussed above, private foundations such as the Pew Charitable Trust and the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation has provided the seed money for a large number of civic journalism projects and have provided civic journalism training for journalists interested in pursuing civic journalism projects and partnerships.

Many opportunities exist for active journalists to learn the tools of civic journalism. The Radio and Televison News Director Foundation "provides resources for journalists, including funding, to assist startup projects." (Cy Porter, 1997: 3). The Pew Center for Civic Journalism "provides resources, including funding, for projects and training." (Cy Porter, 1997: 3). The Poynter Institute for Media Studies "teaches seminars on issues relating to broadcast and print journalism." (Cy Porter, 1997: 3). And the Kettering Foundation "partners with individuals and groups actively working on problems of communities." (Cy Porter, 1997: 3). The large increase in the number of media outlets entering into civic journalism projects provides strong evidence that their efforts have helped to overcome some of the opposition to the movement.

At the October 1997 meeting of the national conference of the Associated Press Managing Editors, Ketchum Public Relations Worldwide released results from a survey of "2,335 media executives at newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations across the country."(Sewell, 1997: 1). The media executives said that "journalists entering the 21st century must keep their educations up to date and journalism schools should offer integrated courses that stress basics but also state-of-the-art technology training and creative thinking." (Sewell, 1997: 1). At the same time, "more than 88 percent of the participants also said creative thinking and analysis will be necessary for successful communication professionals, and 51 percent said they would consider testing job applicants for creative thinking." (Sewell, 1997: 1) Equally significant, a majority of media endorsed "civic journalism" "as an important way to connect journalists with their audiences through taking part in community activities and sponsoring civic discussions."(Sewell, 1997: 1).

A closer examination of the survey reveals that media executives are sending mixed messages to individuals interested in pursuing media careers. On the one hand, entry level print and broadcast journalists need to acquire up-to-date technical skills. "Some three-fifths of those surveyed said journalism school graduates won't be hired unless they have state-of-the-art technological skills" (Sewell, 1997: 1). On the other hand, media executives want young journalists to be creative thinkers and become familiar with tools used by civic or public journalists.

What steps can a university take to help prepare young men and women become effective civic journalists? First, schools of journalism and mass communications could add civic journalism courses to their curriculum. Second, universities might require journalism and mass communication majors to complete a minor in political science, economics, sociology, economics or some other university program which might help graduates understand the problems faced by communities across the country. Third, universities and colleges might encourage school newspapers and radio stations to conduct their own civic journalism projects.

Although all of the above recommendations might help to prepare students for civic journalism, the fact remains that civic journalism requires individuals with an understanding of the problems faced by communities across the country and a sincere interest in finding solutions for the problems. In other words, civic journalists must believe they have a duty to help the communities they live in develop a consensus on how to resolve their most pressing problems.

Over the last decade, the higher education community has engaged in a debate over the appropriate role of the university in helping to prepare graduates for civic life. The January/February 1997 edition of *Change Magazine* devoted its entire edition to the subject of the role of higher education in rebuilding civic life. *Change Magazine* covers emerging issues in American higher education. Articles in the edition included "Higher Education and Rebuilding Civic Life, (Gamson, 1997: 10), "Civic Innovation And American Democracy," (Sirianni and Friedland, 1997: 14), "John Dewey--A Voice That Stills Speaks To Us," (Halliburton, 1997: 24), "Educating A Committed Citizenry," (Gabelnick, 1997: 30) "New Voices In University-Community Transformation," (Arches, 1997: 36), "Can We Rebuild Civic Life Without A Multiracial University?" (Bensimon and Soto, 1997: 42), and "Researching For Democracy &

Democratic Research." (Ansley and Gaventa, 1997: 46).

All of the articles present a common theme. Colleges and universities must do more to prepare their graduates to take on the responsibilities of citizenship. These impressive articles present a common theme. Higher education has a responsibility for helping to prepare their students as civic leaders and participants. "The challenge of educating a committed citizenry," writes Faith Gabelnick President of Pacific University, "is to change the societal and university paradigm from a strategy of competitiveness to one of collaboration, from a perspective of scarcity to one of sufficiency and inclusion, and from a stance that looks for expedient solutions to one that engages and commits to a series of values and a way of life." (Gabelnick: 1997, 30). President Gabelnick continues by describing various programs on college and university campuses across the country directed at helping students become involved in their communities. "It is an exciting time to be a student, and an exciting time to be a faculty member. Our educational landscape has been ignited by a "common fire" of civic involvement and change," writes President Gabelnick.

Universities and colleges have taken up the challenge of citizenship education in a number of ways. For instance, the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs, University of Minnesota and the Walt Witman Center at Rutgers University are attempting to engage their universities and the nation in a dialogue regarding the importance of "renewed citizenship and effective public work." (Sirianni and Friedland, 1997, 20). The Center for Human Resources at the Heller School of Advanced Studies in Social Welfare at Brandeis University and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1995 established the Civic Practices Network to share civic innovations around the country. (Sirianni and Friedland, 1997, 20) The CPN makes available on the World Wide Web the "broadest array of tools that can be utilized by innovative practitioners, policymakers, and ordinary citizens in every arena." (Sirianni and Friedland, 1997, 21). Other universities include civic education elements in their general education programs.

THE UNIVERSITY AND THE TOOLS OF CIVIC JOURNALISM

The most effective role a university or college can perform in helping to prepare students as effective civic journalists is to provide students the opportunity to become more involved in community life. In other words, colleges and universities need to encourage students to leave their class rooms and dorm rooms to gain a better understanding of the hopes and fears of a cross section of those who live around them and who are not part of the immediate university community.

Educational Record devoted its Summer/Fall 1997 edition to "College & character: preparing students for lives of civic responsibility (King, 1997: 7-44). A number of the articles in the edition, emphasizes the importance of colleges and universities taking responsibility for the moral development of college students (King, 1997: 87-93).

Service Learning and Public Journalism

A common feature of college and university character development programs has been the establishment of service learning programs (Jarpsz, 1997: 83). University sponsored service learning programs help college students find volunteer positions in public, private and non profit organizations that operate various programs designed to help to deal with a wide variety of problems in their communities. College students may work as tutors in elementary schools or community shelters (Berson, 1993: 30). More recently, advocates of service learning have begun to stress the direct relationship between service learning and civic education (Clark, 1997: 164).

One can make a persuasive argument that service learning programs can constitute an important part of any university program designed to help students prepare to be effective civic journalists. Numerous opportunities exist for college students to work in public schools, criminal justice organizations, non-profit social service agencies, environmental organizations and other community organizations. Such assignments provide students the opportunity to gain a much better understanding of how communities behave and how difficult it is to solve problems such as poverty, poor educational performance and substandard housing.

A number of studies have found a strong relationship between service learning activities and the development of a sense of civic responsibility among college students (Sax and Astin, 1997, 28).

Civic Journalism Internships

In addition to encouraging students to participate in service learning projects, journalism and mass communications programs should encourage students to complete civic journalism internships. More and more newspapers, radio stations and television stations are participating in civic journalism projects (Porter, 1997: 5-6). This fact provides students more opportunities for journalism and mass communication internships. At the same time, journalism and mass communication programs have a long history of students doing internships in various types of media organizations. Yearly, thousands of journalism and mass communication students complete media internships. For example, *Peterson's Guide to Internships* list hundreds of journalism internships for college and university students (*Peterson's:* 1997). A 1996 survey of journalism students who had completed an internship found that all of those surveyed believed that colleges should require students to complete internships. (Hilt, 1996: 36).

Because the civic journalism movement grew out of concern over inadequate media coverage of the 1988 presidential election, journalism and mass communication programs should encourage students to complete internships which give them the opportunity to cover political campaigns. During the 1996 election, a significant number of television stations launched election projects directed at improving the coverage of issues and candidates. (Porter, 1997, 4-6). These projects typically involved carefully surveying individuals in their communities to determine the issues that concerned them. Election projects also sponsored town meetings to provide potential voters to express their opinion and to meet with candidates.

The Radio Television News Directors Foundation and the Poynter Institute has devoted considerable time and resources to helping journalists improve media coverage of elections (Potter, 1997). The Political Coverage Project of the Radio Television News Directors Foundation has brought together a resource that news directors can use to improve their coverage of elections. (http://www.rtndf.org/rtndf/96/index.html).

Election coverage internships can prove extremely valuable in helping journalism and mass communication students learn to cover elections using civic journalism methods. For instance, Project Vote Smart has successfully collected information on some 13,000 local and state officials. The non-profit public interest organization relies heavily on volunteers and interns to collect the information and make the information available on the World Wide Web (http://www.veto-smart.org/about/help/nip/). Much like advocates of civic journalism, Project

Vote Smart argues that voters cannot make informed decisions without accurate information on the candidates and the issues. Project Vote Smart has numerous internship opportunities for interested college students. National Public Radio also provides college students excellent internship opportunities.

General Education Reform and the University

The demand from students, parents and prospective employers have placed tremendous pressure on universities and colleges to permit students to take a larger percentage of their course work in pre professional areas. The majority of full-time undergraduate students now major in business, journalism or mass communication, education and engineering. Most colleges and universities continue to see a smaller and smaller number of liberal arts majors. Major and minor trends has contributed to increased student resistence to liberal or general education programs which students often regard as irrelevant (Weeks, 1996: 50-3).

A recent Kettering Foundation study on the political life of college students presents a complex picture of the attitudes of college students towards politics and civic participation (Mathews, 1997: 15). "Despite charges that undergraduates are preoccupied with personal self-interest," writes President of the Kettering Foundation David Matthews, "the study revealed that the younger generation is no more uncaring than the older generation is apathetic. In fact, students care a great deal" (Mathews, 1997, 15). However, the survey found college students "more cynical than their elders about the way the political system operates-and far more pessimistic about their ability to reform it" (Mathews, 1997, 15). And the survey found college students "particularly put off by the tone of what they hear in politics--by the ideological extremes and negative tenor of what appears to be a grossly adversarial system with no regard for fair play"

(Mathews, 1997, 15).

What can colleges and universities do to persuade their students that their participation in politics can make a difference. David Mathews argues that colleges and universities need to change the way they teach students about politics and government. Specifically, Mathews argue that colleges need "more contact with the democratic public, with those citizens who are creating a place for themselves in politics, who are political actors serving the larger public interest, who are building rather than escaping from communities, and who are addressing causes rather than simply alleviating symptoms (Mathews, 1997, 17).

Much like the concern that led to the establishment of the civic or public journalism movement, concern that students are leaving colleges and universities with little interest in civic participation has led colleges and universities to engage in serious debate over what they can do to prepare their graduates to active civic participants. *Educational Records,* an influential higher education journal, devoted its Fall/Summer issue to the subject of "College & Character: Preparing Students for Lives of Civic Responsibility" (College & Character, 1997, 1-100). All of the articles stress the importance of colleges and universities taking responsibility for fostering the development of a sense of civic responsibility in their students.

CONCLUSION

Once considered a fad, strong evidence now exists that "civic journalism" methods have gained much wider acceptance in traditional media outlets. Hundreds of media outlets have established home pages which permit the public to comment on current issues and talk directly to reporters and editors. (PilotOnline, 1998) A growing number of media outlets have participated in "civic education" partnerships funded by private foundations such as the Pew Center for Civic

Journalism. (Pew Projects, 1997)

The paper also argues that the civic journalism movement and civic responsibility movement now taking root on college and university campuses across the country have many common features. Both movements seek overcome the cynicism of citizens to politics as usual. Both are searching for ways to persuade citizens that they can make a difference.

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Missing the Link: Citizen-Based Journalism Intent Rather than Election Coverage Content Affects Public Trust in Media

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ABSTRACT

Effects of citizen-based journalism content on public trust may be overshadowed by the attitude change gained by involving the public in the news process. This study explores the persuasive effects of a newspaper's intent to conduct citizen-based journalism. In a 1996 election study of 20 markets, intent to conduct citizen-based journalism, newspaper content, and trust were measured. Long-term results showed that intent to conduct citizen-based journalism increased trust in media independently of newspaper content.

Missing the Link: Citizen-Based Journalism Intent Rather than Election Coverage Content Affects Public Trust in Media

Citizen-based journalism stormed into newsrooms in the early 1990s as a revolutionary philosophy of newsroom management. The goals of this revolution were to reconnect newspapers with the communities they serve and invigorate public involvement in the democratic process. The concept itself is still in the developmental stage, remains poorly defined, and differs widely in practice among the 200 U.S. news organization currently practicing citizen-based journalism.[1] Citizen-based journalism [1] has its critics, who, among other things, criticize it as a gimmick to increase circulation.[2] To be sure, increasing citizen involvement in the community should result in more citizens reading the newspaper.[3] However, there is much more to this revolutionary philosophy than building circulation. It involves a change in newsroom attitudes toward the community, the news gathering process, and a shift away from cynicism toward cooperation. It is, above all, a sincere attempt on the part of its practitioners to rebuild deteriorating communities, and shore up a fading participatory democracy.

Newspapers have been faced with declining readership, ad revenues, and public trust since the 1950s.[4] Davis "Buzz" Merritt, Jr., considered a pioneer in newsroom application of citizen-based journalism, was critical of the cynicism and confrontational nature of traditional journalism. To save journalism from itself, Merritt believed it needed a new philosophy emphasizing the newspaper as a tool to aid in the betterment of the community through greater citizen involvement.[5] According to this philosophy, newspapers should assume a major role in persuading citizens to actively participate in their community and in the democratic process.

[1]Citizen-based journalism is also referred to as public journalism, civic journalism, community journalism, and communitarian journalism.

Merritt said that newspapers were obliged to "do our journalism in ways that are calculated to help public life go well by engaging people in it."[6]

Citizen-based journalism also received support from the academic community. Jay Rosen, who pioneered public journalism from the academic side, echoed Merritt's sentiments. Rosen stressed the media's role as the support system for citizen involvement in the democratic process, referring to it as "an antidote to disconnected communities and the publics' growing disgust with news people and politicians."[7]

The philosophical changes espoused by Merritt and Rosen are rooted in the concerns expressed by Daniel Yankelovich that the political process was becoming a playing field of the elite. Traditional journalism relies heavily on experts, spokespersons, and political elites in its reporting on politics. According to Yankelovich, this emphasis can lead to a rift between the general public, the media, and the political elites. Citizens disconnect from the democratic process as they begin, more and more, to feel as though they are no longer part of the system, and their opinions do not matter. The media, adept at bringing issues to the public's attention, widen the gap by flitting from issue to issue without pausing to consider the importance placed on any given issue by the public. News media create further public cynicism by failing to provide the amount and duration of coverage that would allow citizens to fully understand and work through the issues, eventually reaching public judgement.[8]

Consequences of public disconnect and increased cynicism include public apathy toward elections, less community involvement, loss of trust in institutions, and loss of social capital. These symptoms are increasingly evident in recent years. Election participation has declined steadily over the past two decades. Participation in Presidential elections dropped to 50 percent in 1988, and dipped below 50 percent in the 1990s. This drop was from a high of 63 percent in 1960. Voting in U.S. Congressional elections fell to 33 percent in the late 1980s.[9] On the other hand, Ladd contends that voter turnout in Presidential elections has remained fairly constant since 1932. Using United States Bureau of the Census data, Ladd reports that in 1992, about 56 percent of those Americans eligible turned out to vote in the Presidential election. This represents a decline of seven percentage points from a high mark of 63 percent in 1960, and Ladd argues that the numbers do not support the notion of widespread decline in political participation.[10] Nevertheless, it is commonly held that political participation, which is not necessarily reflected by voting data, is on the decline.[11]

A second symptom of civic disconnect is loss of social capital. Putnam analyzed Roper Center poll data and found that in 1993 less than 15 percent of Americans participated in civic meetings. In addition, Putnam noted declines in memberships in churchs, fraternal organizations, and other social groups, including bowling leagues.[2] Loss of social capital is further reflected by a drop in the number of people polled who felt that most people could be trusted. Analyzing data from the General Social Survey, Putnam reported a 19 percent drop from 1960 to 1993 in the percentage of Americans that felt most people could be trusted.[12]

Public disconnect with the political process is further shown by an increasing level of cynicism toward government. According to The Harris Poll, a national poll conducted annually since 1966, in 1998 12 percent of Americans reported a great deal of confidence in Congress and 17 percent reported a great deal of confidence in the executive branch of government. These

[2]Putnam's findings are disputed by Ladd who believes Putnam has misinterpreted the data. Ladd presents data showing increased membership in PTA and no substantial change in group memberships from 1975 to 1994. *See* Ladd, "The Data Don't Show Erosion," 5-21.

figures represent a drop of 30 and 24 percentage points, respectively, since 1966. Similar results were obtained by Putnam, who reported Roper Center poll data showing that in the 1990s, 75 percent of Americans stated that they do not trust the government.[13]

Trust in media has also backpedaled. The Harris Poll results for 1998 showed a drop of 15 from 1966 in the percentage of Americans expressing a great deal of confidence in the Media (14 percent in 1998 compared to 29 percent in 1966). Similarly, a 1994 Times Mirror study showed that 71 percent of those polled believed that the news media were an obstacle to issue resolution in America.[14]

The above data show that Americans have lost interest in the political process, lost trust in each other, in government, and in the media. Certainly, the media cannot be the whipping boy and accept all the blame. However, traditional political reporting, with its focus on conflict, horse races, and dependence on experts and political elites, has contributed to Americans' increasingly cynical outlook toward government and the news media. What then, could public journalism offer as an alternative to traditional reporting in the hopes of reversing the trend?

Merritt wanted to form a journalism whose content avoided traditional focus on horse race polls rather than issues; emphasis on candidates' criticisms and negative campaigning, which he thought deterred the voting public from understanding the issues.[15] Rosen has also called for a shift away from traditional journalism content. Rosen stated that conventional journalism, in addition to emphasizing conflict and polarizing issues, tended to "exalt experts and public opinion over citizens and public judgment."[16] Fouhy and Schaffer say that one of the primary initiatives of citizen-based journalism should be to help citizens listen and talk to each other.[17] Meyer listed six goals of public journalism, one of which was to foster deliberation, meaning that news media should encourage community members to "make that earnest attempt at reciprocal understanding" of each others viewpoints.[18] It would follow, then, that newspapers following the tenets of citizen-based journalism should strive to provide in-depth coverage of issues, move the focus away from horse race polls, and increase the number and prominence of citizen references. On the non-content side, citizen-based journalism should strive to involve citizens in the news gathering process, in the political process, and in the community.

Early efforts at applying public journalism led to some promising results. Following the People Project[3], conducted in 1990 by the *Wichita Eagle*, Wichita State University, KSNW-TV, and KNSS radio, a survey indicated that reader satisfaction with the *Eagle* increased by 12 percent.[19] Meyer and Potter, in their 1996 election study conducted across 20 media markets, showed that newspaper intent to conduct citizen-based journalism resulted in more coverage of hard issues and less reporting on horse race polls. In addition, they showed that intent to practice citizen-based journalism was related to long term trust in media. However, Meyer and Potter were unable to connect newspaper election coverage content with changes in citizen attitudes toward the media, the government, or each other.[20] Content of the 1996 election study was defined by coverage of hard issues minus coverage of horse race polls. Further study of the data analyzed by Meyer and Potter has failed to link other content variables with citizen attitudes.[4]

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[3]The People Project, among other things, produced voter guides, devoted extensive coverage to issues, encouraged voter participation, provided information on how people could become involved through volunteering, sought public input as to what issues were most important to the community, and avoided focusing on experts and politicians as story references. The People Project was an expansion of the Voter Project, conducted by the *Eagle* and KAKE-TV.

[4]Unpublished data produced by graduate students in Prof. Meyer's seminar. Content variables studied included percentage of stories mainly about candidates' criticisms of each other, and frequency and prominence of citizen references--neither produced any significant effect on public trust.

An important aspect of the People Project, and also involved in other citizen-based journalism projects, is direct citizen involvement. In the Voter Project, which was the forerunner of the People Project, citizens were surveyed and focus groups conducted in order to identify issues readers deemed most important. The People Project relied on in-depth interviews and public input through phone calls, faxes, and letters to identify the critical issues.[21] In the most recent Your Voice Your Vote campaign, the *Raleigh (N.C.) News & Observer* used surveys to identify issues readers wanted the newspaper to cover in reporting of the 1998 election. The *Charlotte (N.C.) Observer* in 1992 not only concentrated coverage on voter-identified issues, but was watched over by a citizen panel, and had reporters ask questions at news conferences that were sent in by citizens.[22] News councils, which allow direct public feedback regarding newspaper coverage of an issue, are another example of methods used by newspapers to get direct public input into the news process.[23]

An unexpected fallout of this heavy dose of citizen participation in news gathering might be a variation of the Hawthorne effect. This effect could also explain why content effects on citizen attitudes appear to be a missing link. The Hawthorne effect [5] is named after a series of experiments conducted in 1927 at the Hawthorne works of the Western Electric Company. The experiments were designed to measure worker response, in the form of increased production, to various changes in the work place, such as rest periods, shorter days, and lunch breaks. Throughout the experiment the six workers were consulted continually by experimenters about

[5]For a detailed description of the Hawthorne experiments, see Homans, George C. (1963). "Group Factors in Worker Productivity." In *Sociological Research I: A Case Approach.* Matilda White Riley, ed. New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, Inc.

the changes. Their comments were requested, and some changes that did not meet their approval were abandoned.

A serendipitous finding had occurred. The response of the workers was not related to the change in working conditions, but to the mere fact that they knew they were part of the experiment. Productivity increased throughout the length of the experiment, even when conditions were returned to the original. This increase was not the result of changes in working condition, but the result of the fact that the workers had been consulted about the experiment, felt it was important, and knew the company was interested in the research. Productivity increases may have resulted from an attitude change of the workers based on the interest the company and the researchers showed toward them.

This form of persuasion can be adapted to explain changes in public attitudes toward newspapers practicing citizen-based journalism. Most public journalism campaigns involve direct public input as to what the newspaper should cover. Surveys, focus groups, roundtable discussions with the editor, letters, email, and similar tools are used to get the public to tell the newspaper what issues to follow. These processes may have an unexpected side effect, which resembles the Hawthorne effect, in that the mere action of seeking citizen input may persuade the public that the newspaper cares about them and is interested in their opinions. This in and of itself may result in changes in attitudes toward the media, regardless of well the actual output of the newspaper follows citizen-based journalism principles.

Persuasion involves changing audience attitudes, resulting in a desired change in behavior. Attitudes are "orientations of the mind" that exert influence on behavior.[24] Citizen-based journalism as a practice may be a form of persuasion. One of the goals of citizen-based journalism is to increase public involvement in the community, which is the desired change of behavior. This change can be achieved by increasing public trust in government and in the media, which is the desired change in attitude. The question, then, is whether changes in attitude are wrought through changes in newspaper content, which would be akin to a persuasive message, or through intent to practice citizen-based journalism, which changes attitude by offering the public the opportunity to be involved in the process. Perhaps this point is best illustrated with a hypothetical example.

A newspaper professing to practice public journalism could fulfill its obligation to encourage voter participation by taking out a full page ad urging citizens to vote, colorfully detailing the importance of participation in the democratic process, and listing registration and voting sites for the upcoming election. A second public journalism newspaper conducts surveys, sponsors open forums, and otherwise actively seeks the community viewpoint as to what the pressing issues are in the election. Based on the Hawthorne effect, one would expect the citizens served by the second newspaper to show greater trust in the media than the citizens served by the first newspaper, regardless of how well either followed citizen-based journalism tenets regarding election coverage content.

It is the contention of this paper that the process of carrying out citizen-based journalism produces a stronger effect on public trust in the media than the strength of citizen-based journalism content. Content effects on public attitudes, though possibly present, are overshadowed by effects resulting from intent to do public journalism. This paper will study the effects of citizen-based journalism intent versus citizen-based journalism content on short term changes in media trust and on long term attitudes of the public toward the media.

The following hypotheses will be tested:

(1) Citizens in markets with strong citizen-based journalism intent, but weak citizen-based journalism content will show similar levels of trust in media as citizens in markets with both strong citizen-based joùrnalism intent and content.

(2) Citizens in markets strong in citizen-based journalism intent, regardless of content, will show greater levels of trust in media than citizens in markets choosing not to participate in citizen-based journalism.

(3) Citizens in markets strong in citizen-based journalism content, regardless of intent, will show similar levels of trust in media as citizens in markets weak in citizen-based content, regardless of stated intent.

(4) Citizens in markets strong in citizen-based journalism intent will show greater levels of trust in media than citizens in markets with weak intent to conduct citizen-based journalism, regardless of strength of citizen-based journalism content.

RESEARCH METHODS

Data were collected by Meyer and Potter for their study of the effects of citizen-based journalism during the 1996 election.[25] For this paper, only the data used will be described. In each of 20 markets (see Table 1 for a listing of the markets), five newsroom workers were surveyed regarding the intent of the newspaper to conduct citizen-based journalism. The sample was purposive in that it sampled a known range of media markets in order to get variance in traditional versus public journalism practices.[6] The five workers selected were those most likely

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[6]Some markets had previously expressed, publicly, either disdain or support for public journalism practices. Other markets were known to have a previous commitment to public journalism.

to cover the 1996 campaign. Response rate was 69.5 percent. In each case, the original survey was mailed June 10, 1996. The survey was followed by a post-card reminder, a second questionnaire to non-respondents, and finally a third questionnaire via certified mail to those that failed to respond to earlier mailings.

Intent of the newspaper to conduct citizen-based journalism (CBJ intent) was calculated from seven items, listed below. Respondents rated their intention to do each item on a three-point scale, with 3 indicating their organization was very likely to do it; 2 indicating that it had not been decided; and 1 indicating a low likelihood of doing it. The average score was then calculated for each newspaper. Actual CBJ intent results and rankings, relative to other markets, are in Table 1. The seven items were:

(1) Sponsor one or more public forums on issues
(2) Use polls to establish the issues coverage will focus on
(3) Conduct focus groups as a means to establish voters' concerns
(4) Form citizen panels to consult at different stages of the campaign
(5) Seek questions from readers for use when interviewing candidates
(6) Base reporting largely on issues developed through citizen contact
(7) Provide information to help citizens get involved in the political process other than voting.

It is worth noting that five of the seven items involve some form of actual involvement on the part of citizens, the remaining two items involve newspaper content.

Based on philosophies and goals reviewed in the public journalism literature, CBJ content was calculated by adding the percent of stories mainly about hard issues with percent of stories with any mention of citizen references, and then subtracting the percent of stories substantially or mainly about horse race polls. About 44 percent of the variance in content was explained by intent to do citizen-based journalism. Results of the calculation and rank, relative to other markets, is included in Table 1.

Table 1 - Scores and rankings for intent to conduct citizen-based journalism, and scores and rankings for citizen-based journalism content. Groupings are nonparticipants (nonpar), nonperformers (nonperf), promise keepers (promkeep), and those in denial (denial). Formation of the groupings is discussed in detail in the research methods. Ranking of 1 is lowest, 20 is highest.

	CBJ Intent		CBJ Content		
Market	Score	Ranking	Score	Ranking	Group
Birmingham	1.79	5	11.18	8	denial
Little Rock	1.20	2	2.39	1	nonpar
Atlanta	2.03	7	11.53	11	denial
Rockford	2.62	13	6.15	3	nonperf
Chicago	2.31	10	13.08	14	denial
Des Moines	2.18	9	7.84	4	nonperf
Wichita	2.70	16	18.68	17	promkeep
New Orleans	1.71	4	5.28	2	nonpar
Port. (ME)	2.72	18	12.84	13	nonperf
Boston	2.64	14	9.16	6	nonperf
Grand Rapids	1.00	1	11.21	9	denial
Minneapolis	2.67	15	20.82	18	promkeep
Raleigh	2.51	12	12.49	12	promkeep
Charlotte	3.00	20	25.61	20	promkeep
Port. (OR)	2.72	18	16.88	16	promkeep
Columbia	2.37	11	13.26	15	denial
Austin	1.93	6	11.51	10	denial
Houston	1.44	3	9.04	5	nonpar
Norfolk	2.89	19	24.48	19	promkeep
Richmond	2.14	8	9.93	7	nonperf

The number of nonparticipants = 3; nonperformers = 5; promise keepers = 6; in denial = 6.

Actual citizen-based journalism content (CBJ content) was calculated based on content analysis of campaign coverage over a seven-week period prior to the election. A sample of 10 issues was collected for each market on random days during the seven-week period. There were a total of 1,873 stories analyzed. Stories were ranked from 1-4 for each of the content variables. A ranking of 1 = no content, 2 = minimal, 3 = substantial, and 4 = mainly.

Trust in media is based on pre-election (August 1-11) and post-election (November 6-17) surveys of at least 50 citizens in each of the 20 markets--defined as living in the home counties of each newspaper as listed in *Editor & Publisher*. A total of 1,012 citizens were interviewed in August, 1,030 in November. The November survey consisted of 623 citizens that had been interviewed in August and 407 new interviews, which served as a control for interview effects. Media trust was calculated by indexing answers to two of the questions, listed below.

14g--*I'm going to mention some people or things that could be blamed for the way the political process works. I'd like you to tell me how much blame each of the following deserves:* ***a lot, a little, or none at all****. How about...(g=the media).*

38--*Would you say the news media are pretty much run by* ***a few big interests*** *looking out for themselves or that they are run* ***for the benefit of all the people****.*

One point was given for an answer of **a little**, and two points given for an answer of **none at all** for question 14g; one point was given for an answer of **for the benefit of all the people** for question 38. The possible range of the trust in media variable was 0-3. The two questions were significantly correlated (correlation coefficient=.288, $p \leq 0.01$).

Index results from August were subtracted from November in order to study short term shifts in media trust. The shift variable was collapsed into three categories, "gained trust" had any positive shift value, "no change" had a shift value of 0, "lost trust" had any negative shift value. Long term results were based on analysis of categorized index values in August and November. Data were collapsed into two categories--high trust included values of 2 and 3, low trust included values of 0 and 1. All trust results were based on panel data (623 respondents surveyed both times). Frequencies for shift in trust, August, and November index values are in Appendix 1.

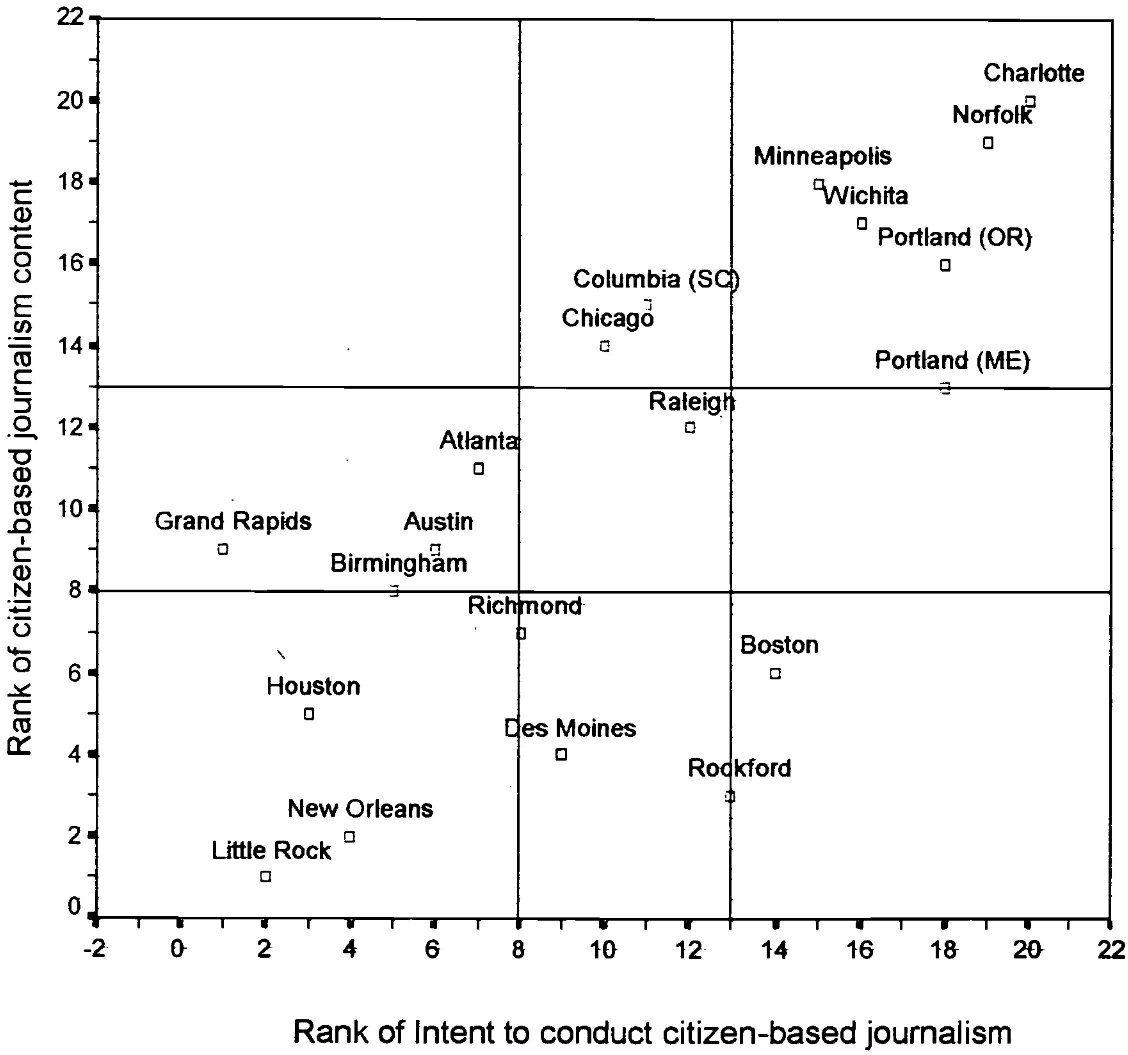
Newspaper markets were divided into four groups in order to test the hypotheses. The markets in the lower left section of Figure 1 are nonparticipants. Those in the upper right are promise keepers. Markets in between are either nonperformers or in denial, based on whether their content was ranked lower than their intent (nonperformers) or whether content was ranked higher than intent (in denial). Actual group designations are in Table 1. Groups were calculated by comparison of intent and content rankings. Rankings were split into three categories--1-7, 8-13, and 14-20. Nonparticipants (nonpar), were those ranking in category 1- 7 for both intent and content. Nonperformers (nonperf), were those ranking in one of the higher categories, 8-13 or 14-20, in intent, but in a lower category in content. Those in the upper two ranking categories that stayed within their category in both intent and content were classified as promise keepers (promkeep). If a market's categorical ranking in content was ahead of its categorical ranking in intent, it was considered to be in denial (denial) of its intent to conduct citizen-based journalism.

Four comparisons of these groups were used to address the hypotheses. These comparisons were done first for the shift in media trust variable, to address short-term effects, and then carried out on the August and November categorized media trust variable, to address long-term effects. Comparisons were:

(1) nonperformers versus promise keepers.
(2) nonparticipants versus high intent (mean of nonperformers and promise keepers)
(3) low content versus high content (low = nonparticipants and nonperformers; high = promise keepers and in denial)
(4) low intent versus high intent (low = nonparticipants and in denial; high = promise keepers and nonperformers.

Comparisons involved analysis of percentages across categories, therefore crosstabs with Chi square measure of significance was used to test results.

Figure 1 - Comparison of ranking of intent to conduct citizen-based journalism versus rank of content that reflects citizen-based journalism during coverage of the 1996 election. Calculations of intent and content are described in the methods.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Short-term results show support for the hypothesis that promise keepers and nonperformers would show similar levels of gain or loss of media trust. Results also show that there is no difference in the short-term change in media trust based on content. However, the results fail to support the contention that high CBJ intent would show gains in public trust of media while nonparticipants or low CBJ intent would either remain the same or show significantly less gain in public trust in media.

There was no significant difference in trust gained or trust lost from August to November between the promise keepers and the nonperformers (Table 2). Recall that the nonperformers and promise keepers both had high CBJ intent rankings, but the nonperformers failed to follow through on that intent with strong CBJ content. Results from Table 2 tend to support the hypothesis that it is the intent to practice public journalism, as reflected in the high level of items relating to actual citizen input discussed in the methods section, rather than actual coverage content that increased citizen trust in media. It is interesting to note that for both categories, the same percentage of citizens lost trust in media as gained trust (Table 2). Further exploration of the short-term data, though, fails to support the contention that intent, and not content, affect public trust in the media. Results in Table 3 show that four percentage points more citizens gained trust, and three percentage points fewer lost trust in the high intent markets versus the nonparticipants; however, these results were not significant.

Table 2 - Comparison of nonperformers (Nonperf) with promise keepers (Promkeep) for shift in media trust from August to November (Shift).

Shift	Nonperf	Promkeep
Gained trust'	24	22
Lost trust	24	22
No change	52	56

Values in the Nonperf and Promkeep categories are percentages. Percentages within a column not adding to 100 are the result of rounding.

Table 3 - Comparison of nonparticipants (Nonpar) with the mean of nonperformers and promise keepers (High intent) for shift in media trust from August to November (Shift).

Shift	Nonpar	High intent
Gained trust	19	23
Lost trust	20	23
No change	62	54

Values in the Nonpar and High Intent categories are percentages. Percentages within a column not adding to 100 are the result of rounding.

Table 4 addresses the effects of citizen-based journalism content, independent of citizen-based journalism intent, on changes in public attitude toward the media resulting from the seven weeks of election coverage. There was no significant difference in those that either gained or lost trust between the low content and high content markets (Table 4). The effects of citizen-based journalism intent, independent of actual content produced, are presented in Table 5. There was a five percentage point difference in those that gained trust in the high intent markets, but this result was not significant (Table 5).

Table 4 - Comparison of markets that reflected a high content of citizen-based journalism articles (High content) with markets reflecting low citizen-based journalism content (Low content) for shift in media trust from August to November (Shift). High content is the mean of promise keepers and those in denial. Low content is the mean of nonperformers and nonparticipants.

Shift	Low content	High content
Gained trust	22	20
Lost trust	23	24
No change	56	57

Values in the Low content and High content categories are percentages. Percentages within a column not adding to 100 are the result of rounding.

Table 5 - Comparison of markets with strong intention to conduct citizen-based journalism (High intent) with markets that had weak intentions to conduct citizen-based journalism (Low intent) for shift in media trust from August to November (Shift). High intent is the mean of the promise keepers and nonperformers. Low intent is the mean of the nonparticipants and those in denial.

Shift	Low intent	High intent
Gained trust	18	23
Lost trust	24	23
No change	59	54

Values in the Low intent and High intent categories are percentages. Percentages within a column not adding to 100 are the result of rounding.

Media trust did not significantly shift as a result of seven weeks of coverage of the 1996 election. Intent to conduct citizen-based journalism in coverage of the election also failed to produce any effect on citizen trust in the media. This is not an entirely surprising result. The premise of this research is based on persuasion theory, specifically the persuasive effect of seeking public involvement as opposed to relying on persuasive messages to bring about a change in attitude. Research in persuasion has indicated that attitudes are enduring, that is they can be changed, but only over a long period.[26] Cynical attitudes toward media developed by exposure to decades of cynical, conflict-based traditional journalism are unlikely to change as a result of exposure to seven weeks of election coverage. An interesting area for future research might be to compare attitudes toward the media of readers that began their newspaper habit with a public journalism newspaper versus readers in the same market that have been reared on traditional journalism, but currently are exposed to citizen-based journalism. Perhaps cynicism toward media is not the result of age, but the result of the philosophy of the newspaper one grows up with.

Long-term results provide support for all three hypotheses used to test the idea that involvement of citizens in the process, reflected by intent to conduct citizen-based journalism, resulted in improved attitudes toward the media independently of whether the newspaper's content reflected the ideals of citizen-based journalism. Comparing nonperformers with promise keepers and comparing low content markets with high content markets showed no difference in citizens level of trust in the media (Tables 6 and 7). Comparing nonparticipants with high intent markets and comparing low intent markets with high intent markets did produce significant different levels of trust in media (Tables 7 and 8).

Citizen's trust in media in August and November did not significantly differ between promise-keeper markets and nonperformer markets (Table 6). Actually, the nonperformers showed somewhat greater levels of high media trust than the promise keepers, 26 percent versus 21 percent, but this result was not significant. Table 6 results offer proof of the persuasion by involvement hypothesis. Lack of a content effect is supported by results shown in Table 7. There was significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) greater trust reported in August in the high intent markets versus nonparticipant markets. High intent markets had 23 percent of their citizens in the high trust category while nonparticipant markets showed 13 percent. November results showed a similar trend with 22 percent of the citizens in the high trust category for high intent markets, and 15 percent in the nonparticipant markets, but these results were not significant.

Table 6 - Media trust in August and November for nonperformers and promise keepers. Trust categories are Low (index values of 0 and 1) and High (index values of 2 and 3). Values are percentages.

Month	Media Trust Category	Nonperf	Promkeep
August	High	26	21
	Low	74	79
November	High	23	22
	Low	77	78

Table 7 - Media trust in August and November for nonparticipants (Nonpar) and the mean of promise keepers and nonperformers (High Intent). Trust categories are Low (index values of 0 and 1) and High (index values of 2 and 3). Values are percentages.

Month	Media Trust Category	Nonpar	High Intent
August**	High	13	23
	Low	87	77
November	High	15	22
	Low	85	78

**Chi square significant at the 0.05 probability level.

Results from Tables 8 and 9 provide further support for the persuasion through public involvement hypothesis. In Table 8, trust in media is compared between markets that scored low in public journalism content and those that scored high, regardless of the market's actual intent. There is no significant difference in the level of public trust in media between these two categories in either August or November. On the other hand, when low intent is compared with high intent, regardless of actual content, there is a difference in public trust in media. In August, there was a difference of five percentage points between the low and high intent categories in those expressing high levels of trust in the media. This result was significant at the 0.10 probability level. November results showed a seven percentage point difference for those with high levels of trust in the media between the two categories, and this result was significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 8 - Media trust in August and November for those in markets that had content strongly reflecting citizen-based journalism (High Content) and those in markets with weak citizen-based journalism content (Low Content) independent of citizen-based journalism intent. Trust categories are Low (index values of 0 and 1) and High (index values of 2 and 3). Values are percentages.

Month	Media Trust Category	Low Content	High Content
August	High	21	21
	Low	79	80
November	High	20	19
	Low	80	81

Percentages within a column, with each month not adding to 100 are the result of rounding.

Table 9 - Media trust in August and November for those in markets that reported strong desire to conduct citizen-based journalism (High Intent) and those in markets with weak desire to conduct citizen-based journalism (Low Intent) independent of citizen-based journalism content. Trust categories are Low (index values of 0 and 1) and High (index values of 2 and 3). Values are percentages.

Month	Media Trust Category	Low Intent	High Intent
August*	High	18	23
	Low	82	77
November**	High	15	22
	Low	85	78

*Chi square significant at the 0.10 probability level.
**Chi square significant at the 0.05 probability level.

Long-term results show what short-term results didn't. There was a positive effect on media trust resulting from intent to involve citizens in the coverage of the 1996 election. There was no effect on media trust resulting from actual coverage of the election. Results found in this study, though, are not strong enough to suggest that the persuasive effects of actual citizen involvement is the end-all explanation for differing levels of media trust.

The results do indicate, however, that there is some persuasive effect resulting from heavy citizen involvement in setting the agenda for election coverage, which is reflected by intent to conduct citizen based journalism. The data further show a lack of content effects. It is feasible, then, that content effects are indeed overwhelmed by persuasion through involvement effects. Meyer and Potter also reported a significant relationship between increased long-term trust in media and citizen-based journalism intent, and they too failed to find the link between content and public attitude toward media.[27]

Lack of content effects have other explanations as well. Public attitude toward the media may change as the result of attitude changes by newsroom staff toward the community, the news reporting, and the news gathering process. Bare found that management's commitment to citizen-based journalism did, in fact, result in attitude changes in the newsroom staff regarding their outlook on news values and the place of the newspaper in the community.[28] Changes in management and newsroom philosophy would not necessarily be reflected in newspaper election coverage content, nor would they necessarily be reflected by citizen-based journalism intent.

Pre-existing community attitudes and values may hold the greatest promise in linking citizen-based journalism practice to changing public attitudes. It is likely, given the enduring nature of public attitudes, that the level of trust in the media, the government, and social capital were well established before the news media began a public journalism program. In fact, the presence of these attitudes in the community may have inspired the media to adopt citizen-based journalism in the first place. The effect sought, then, becomes the cause.

Putnam showed that in one region of Italy, the northern half, social capital and trust in institutions pre-existed at greater levels than in the southern regions. The pre-existing conditions made for a smoother, more prosperous transition to democracy for the northern region.[29] Similarly, greater pre-existing levels of trust in media would provide a firm foundation for a transition to citizen-based journalism, which may provide an incentive for newspapers to start a public journalism program. Greater backing by the public should result in a more successful public journalism program. Success to the newspaper would be increased circulation. Increased community involvement by the public is one of the keys to increasing newspaper readership.[30] Success for the public would be a newspaper that becomes a part of the community, reflecting community values, helping the public work through issues, and providing a forum for public expression.

Results should not be interpreted to suggest that a newspaper can simply proclaim its intent to conduct citizen-based journalism and that will make the public trust it more. It is probable that newspapers scoring higher in intent had to actually carry out some of the projects mentioned. Whether or not the promise keepers and nonperformers actually did any of the seven items listed in the methods was not measured in this study. The nature of the items themselves, though, do lend credence to the persuasion through participation idea. Five of the seven involved actual citizen involvement, while only two involved content. Practices that engage citizens in the news gathering process will not necessarily be reflected in content, but would be reflected in intent. Perhaps a future study could specifically address the persuasive effects of citizen involvement tactics used in public journalism programs. By its definition, citizen-based journalism should involve a heavy dose of community involvement beyond getting public input in the news process. It would also be interesting to study the persuasive effects of a newspaper's involvement in the community. For instance, would public trust in the media improve as a result of news media sponsoring community events, or initiating a crime prevention program? These programs, like practices that include public input into coverage decisions, would not necessarily be reflected in newspaper content.

It is also likely that those markets with strong intent to practice citizen-based journalism had been doing so longer than the seven-week period during which newspaper content was analyzed. Persuasion theory suggests that attitudes, such as trust in media, are enduring and therefore would likely be swayed more by a long-term commitment to citizen-based journalism as opposed to picking up any effects of content, based on seven weeks worth of election stories. It should be noted, however, that intent was calculated based on coverage of the 1996 election and may or may not reflect any long-term commitment to public journalism.

CONCLUSIONS

The persuasive effects of involving citizens in the news gathering process, as reflected by measurement of citizen-based journalism intent, provided at least a partial explanation as to the missing link, which is effects on citizen's trust in media by citizen-based journalism content, in studies of public journalism. Intent to conduct citizen-based journalism was shown to produce long-term improvement in public trust of media while there was no apparent effect related to citizen-based journalism content. Overall, however, the lack of effects on citizen attitudes remains an enigma. Perhaps, as suggested by persuasion theory, attitudes are enduring and the public will require longer exposure to citizen-based journalism before it begins to lose the cynicism and mistrust that have built over time. Content effects may also be overshadowed by other effects, such as changes in newsroom attitude, and newspaper participation in community events. Such things won't necessarily be reflected by newspaper content. Public attitudes may be set at pre-existing levels. Communities with greater trust and social capital may have inspired the local paper to adopt public journalism, changing the effect to the cause.

Appendix 1 - Frequency tables for media trust in August (TRMEDA), November (TRMEDN), and the shift from August to November (TRMEDS=TRMEDN-TRMEDA). Frequency for the categorized shift variable is also included (TRMEDSC).

Actual Indexed Values

Value	TRMEDA	TRMEDN
0	281	293
1	212	210
2	117	106
3	13	14

Shift Values

Value	TRMEDS
-2	23
-1	123
0	350
1	108
2	17
3	2

Value	TRMEDSC
-1	146
0	350
1	127

Where -1 represents any negative shift, 0 represents no shift and 1 represents any positive shift.

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Connection vs. Distance

Teaching public journalism

Author's note: This suggested bibliography and pair of lectures on public journalism are intended for use as part of a college-level course in public-affairs reporting. They arose from questions the author had about the ethical and operational "roots" of public journalism. They are arranged as a lesson plan.

Length of unit: Two contiguous 1.5-hour class periods

Placement in public-affairs reporting class schedule: Within first three weeks

Recommended reading:

For instructors:

Charity, A. (1995). Doing public journalism. New York: Guilford Press.

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Yankelovich, D. (1991). Coming to public judgment: making democracy work in a complex world. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Other materials (optional):

"Civic journalism" and "Civic journalism: It's more than just good journalism." 30-minute videotapes by Pew Center for Civic Journalism.

Potter, Deborah, et al. (1996). Poynter election handbook: New ways to cover campaigns. St. Petersburg: Poynter Institute for Media Studies

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FIRST UNIT

The history of objectivity and the seeds of civic journalism

As Theodore Glasser tells us (1984), objectivity as the goal of journalistic writing grew out of two beliefs. One was pragmatic: It was thought that advertisers would be happier with a newspaper that didn't pick sides, except on the editorial page. The other was idealistic: If scientists could try for objectivity in their blind pursuit of experimental truth, then why couldn't reporters pursue truth with a similar sense of higher purpose?

The drive for objectivity coincided with the birth of the penny press in the early to mid-1800s, as publishers sought to reach more people than were reached by the earlier, higher-priced papers. The interest, of course, was to make up the difference in revenue through advertising rates. But to attract the larger audiences, and to interest advertisers, reporters for these papers were trained to go for the political middle of the road. It wasn't that editors tried to avoid making waves -- those first penny newspapers were quite sensational (Emery), rather like television news in sweeps periods. But the intent was to become efficient -- which meant attracting readers and not repelling advertisers (Glasser).

The concept received a tremendous boost from the birth of wire services, which had the same desire -- to attract the maximum number of customers, in this case, newspaper publishers. As the efficiency of reporting "just the facts, ma'am," demonstrated its ability to attract readers -- suggesting that it was, therefore, more democratic -- the effort became established practice. It was cemented into place by the growing popularity of science and the Scientific Method (Emery, Glasser).

The practice was institutionalized in part by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, who in a dissenting opinion in 1919 revived the phrase "the marketplace of ideas," written by John

Milton centuries earlier. Publishers used the phrase together with the First Amendment to argue that their survival was a constitutional privilege (Glasser).

Objectivity received direct judicial recognition in Edwards vs. National Audubon Society in 1977, in which The New York Times claimed that it had not libeled a scientist by reporting attacks against him and others by officials of the Audubon Society. The federal appeals court agreed, saying that in providing "neutral reportage," "We do not believe that the press may be required to suppress newsworthy statements merely because it has serious doubts regarding their truth" (Glasser).

Glasser, in an article in The Quill of February 1984, helps prepare the way for civic journalism by determining that, "Objective reporting virtually precludes responsible reporting, if by responsible reporting we mean a willingness on the part of the reporter to be accountable for what is reported." He adds that the Edwards case "illustrates the unfortunate bias of objective reporting -- a bias in favor of leaders and officials, the prominent and the elite."

Glasser's conclusion is equally worth quoting: "Objectivity is largely a matter of efficiency -- efficiency that serves, as far as I can tell, the needs and interest of the owners of the press, not the needs and interests of talented writers and certainly not the needs and interests of the larger society."

But what is ironic is that Glasser lays the perpetuation of objectivity at the feet of the conglomerates that have come to monopolize ownership of mass media. It is ironic because two of the more prominent newspaper chains, Knight-Ridder and Gannett, have done much to further the cause of civic journalism (Merritt, Silverman). Their past chairmen, Alan Neuharth of Gannett and the late James Batten of Knight-Ridder, helped drive their organizations toward a more reader-oriented journalism (Batten called it "customer service," and Neuharth termed it "reader-driven journalism") (Dennis & Merrill).

The Wichita Eagle's editor Davis "Buzz" Merritt Jr. arguably was the first professional to formulate tactics of public journalism and put them into action (Rosen). Knight-Ridder's Eagle, Akron Beacon Journal and Charlotte Observer all have been lauded for their special public journalism efforts. On the Gannett side, the aim has been to enhance reader participation across the board through the corporation-wide program News 2000 (Silverman).

Glasser also appears to overlook the work of the Commission on Freedom of the Press just after World War II. The commission, in its report published in 1947 (Schramm 1963), listed five concepts that readers required of newspapers:

> "That the press be accurate; it must not lie. It means, also, the commission says, that the press must identify fact as fact and opinion as opinion. . . .
> That it serve as 'a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism.' . . .
> That it project 'a representative picture of the constituent groups in society.' . . .
> That the press be responsible for 'the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society.' . . .
> That the press provide 'full access to the day's intelligence.' " (87-91).

It is that second point, calling on newspapers to serve as a forum (and not merely a repository for letters to the editor), that seems to presage the formulation of public journalism.

Jay Rosen, a professor at New York University and director of the Project on Public Life and the Press, a support group for public journalism, notes as a beginning of the movement in print a column by Buzz Merritt just after the 1988 general elections. Rosen says Merritt was disgusted by the way in which the media were manipulated by presidential campaigners, and surprised to learn that voter registration remained high, even though voter participation was dropping. In his column in the Wichita Eagle, Merritt said that the "arrangement, a 'mutual bond of expediency,' was satisfying only to the campaign professionals who had learned to profit from it." Rosen quotes this excerpt from Merritt's column about the "false sense of motion" generated by the campaigns:

> "While your man is standing still, make sure he says nothing of substance. Then say something pungent but pointless, preferably about the opponent, and jump on a bus or plane for the next stop. The trailing pack of journalists has no choice but to hastily rip out a new lead or a sound-bite and race for the next stop, fearful, despite all recent evidence to the contrary, that something might occur on the next tarmac or courthouse square." (Rosen)

Merritt formulated a new plan for campaign coverage in time for the 1990 Kansas gubernatorial campaign. Some of the things done then have become standards: The issues of the campaign are determined through consultation with the public; the candidates are asked their positions on those issues, and their rhetoric focusing on those issues is examined and reported; and campaigners are accompanied on trips, and their activities reported, but any lack of substance is noted as well as any substance (Rosen).

Merritt's next innovation came in 1992, with the Eagle's "People Project," spurred by abortion rights marches in the summer in Wichita that no one on his newspaper staff had predicted. Learning through 192 intensive interviews with Wichita residents that people had grown cynical about most public institutions, and that no amount of traditional public affairs reporting would eliminate the feeling that democratic politics was no longer useful because institutions were out of control, Merritt and his staff, as well as local broadcasters, put together a ten-week package of articles, events and "idea exchanges" with the intent of convincing residents "that at least some public problems were actionable, and that the actor didn't have to be government" (Rosen).

Prof. Judith Sylvester of Louisiana State University has compiled the general elements included in most civic journalism projects to date: "1) newspapers, working with at least one radio or television station, attempt to activate citizens to solve one or more specific problems facing a specific community; 2) newspapers sponsor focus groups, community forums, town meetings and surveys to identify these problems; and 3) newspapers and broadcast media coordinate coverage to create awareness of these problems and to report in solving them" (1998).

Max Jennings, editor of the Dayton Daily News, has been focusing more on daily, non-political journalism, like Gannett, and says he wants his reporters practicing public journalism on every story (1997). He lists the major "sins" of standard journalism as detachment and being conflict-oriented. Both are upheld in the Edwards vs. Audubon Society ruling of 1977.

Jennings would say that public journalists should not report an event simply because it appears newsworthy; reporters must be aware of all of the effects of a story, not just whether it was sensational and, therefore, newsworthy. The conflict orientation is clear: An official of the Audubon Society accuses five scientists of being paid by the pesticide industry to lie about the effects of DDT. The scientists are given a chance to respond. The reporter is not concerned about the truth of the allegations, only that the allegations were made.

Jennings and Merritt believe strongly that reporters and editors should work toward shared areas of understanding, what Jennings has called "middle ground" (1997) and "quiet inner voices" (1996) and Merritt calls "core values." Call them what you will, Jennings describes them as those things people can agree on. Merritt goes into a bit more depth. To him, they are:

> "the beliefs and priorities that rest beneath people's opinions. . . . The process of defining what is uncompromisable in people's core values automatically identifies what areas are available to be part of solutions. For instance, even pro-life and pro-choice absolutists can agree that lessening the need for abortions in the first instance is a desirable and mutual goal. This can lead to solutions organized around education and/or the adoption processes, values on which both sides have a chance of finding agreement." (Merritt)

Discussion questions: Do you agree with "Buzz" Merritt and the others that there is a problem with the political system that can be assisted by journalists covering government beats? What other ways can you think of that might help solve the problem?

In defense of public journalism, some of its proponents say that its use does not preclude an objective outlook. In view of what Prof. Glasser says, what do you think?

Suggested activity: Show Pew Center's "Civic Journalism" videotape.

SECOND UNIT

A new paradigm, just good journalism, or an unhealthy trend?

James Fallows explained the problem in a speech. He told those gathered for dinner at the 1996 James K. Batten Symposium on Excellence in Civic Journalism that he had not heard of public journalism until he was putting together his book, Breaking the News. He said he had been looking for solutions to what he saw as the problem of modern journalism and discovered the movement -- and liked what he learned about it. Fallows said:

> "These journalistic reformers were saying: Let's find new ways to deal with the fundamental problems that seem to be driving us away from our audience, from our public, and from the causes that originally brought us into that business. . . . I had expected many of (the editors and retired editors of our leading newspapers) to receive the public journalism concept as I did -- as a source of varied, potentially valuable suggestions for rejuvenating our craft. You can imagine my surprise to find that this is sort of the puff adder's nest of modern journalism, where you stick your hand in and the puff adders come out from all corners of the swamp." (1996)

There is some small debate about the roots of public journalism. Part of the problem is, as Kuhn suggests, that paradigmatic change does not follow an orderly process through a particular profession (1970). "An apparently arbitrary element, compounded of personal and historical accident, is always a formative ingredient of the beliefs espoused by a given . . . community at a given time" (p. 4). So although we may trace a thread that seems to "connect the dots" from philosopher to editor to professor to reporter, the truth of the cause of the change may have nothing to do with it. Kuhn says that as a new paradigm becomes accepted, "its assimilation requires the reconstruction of prior theory and the reevaluation of prior fact" (p. 7). In other words, to borrow a phrase from sports, "hindsight is 20-20."

One view is that public journalism's roots emerged from the discourse ethics of Juergen Habermas, a German philosopher. Antje Gimmler described Habermas' principle of universalization as validating behavior only if "all affected can accept the consequences and the side effects its general observance can be anticipated to have for the satisfaction for everyone's interests" (1997). Gimmler says this also sets up Habermas' normative implications behind argumentation, which she summarizes as: "equal participation of all who are affected; the postulate of unlimitedness, i.e., the fundamental unboundedness and openness concerning time and persons; the postulate of freedom from constraint, i.e., the freedom, in principle, of discourse from accidental and structural forms of power; and the postulate of seriousness or authenticity, i.e., the absence of deception and even illusion in expressing intentions and in performing speech acts" (p. 3). The idea here is that people must be allowed to enter into argumentation as equals and without limitations even in time to give any conclusions authenticity and power. Another scholar has suggested that, based on Habermas' theories, the definition of newswriting involving public journalism should be changed to "communicating with citizens" from "giving information to an audience" (Dykers). In fact, both Rosen and Merritt argue that journalists should stop thinking of readers as consumers of news and begin thinking of them as citizens.

Before Habermas, however, there was John Dewey, who in the mid-'20s wrote that "the inquiry which alone can furnish knowledge as a precondition of public judgments must be contemporary and quotidian." This echoes cleanly through Yankelovich's book on "public judgment" (1991). Dewey continued, in his book "The Public and its Problems," "What has been said about the formation of ideas and judgments concerning the public apply as well to the distribution of the knowledge which makes it an effective possession of the members of the public. Any separation between the two sides of the problem is artificial" (Boydston 1984, p. 348).

Amitai Etzioni, a social philosopher, has since 1983 proposed a "Communitarian" agenda that includes as one of its prime tenets that "claiming rights without assuming responsibilities is unethical and illogical" (1993). He extends this into journalism, which he says claims the rights provided by the First Amendment but admits few, if any, responsibilities.

Clifford Christians and colleagues John Ferre and Mark Fackler further the cause of communitarianism in journalism in their book Good news (1993). Their position is:

> "If one understands the nature of history, language, and our personhood as cultural beings, the sacredness of human dignity is inescapable. We experience this universal truth in the second order, but these are cultural inflections of a universal first order nonetheless. And once we enter the first order through universal human solidarity, we recognize that it entails additional proto-norms -- justice, stewardship, and reciprocity, for example. We recognize further that universal norms reflect our deepest commitments, our world views, and make it necessary for us to debate and clarify our world views in the public arena. Our goal is not to abolish differences in world views, but to ensure that they contribute constructively to the master norm of universal solidarity." (p. 16)

Arthur Charity, in Doing Public Journalism, says the movement is almost entirely journalist-driven, yet cites books written in the 1980s by Benjamin Barber, E.J. Dionne, John Gardner, David Mathers, Richard Harwood, Michael Perry, William Schmitt and Robert Putnam as major influences. Fallows notes that the columnist David Broder of The Washington Post has spoken out strongly in favor of the tenets of public journalism, if not the movement by name. "Buzz" Merritt did not publish a book until 1995, but he had written articles in the trade press. Jay Rosen of NYU also had published mainly articles until 1993 and the printing of Getting the Connections Right: Public Journalism and the Troubles in the Press.

Rosen, who along with Merritt and Lisa Austin recently released the book, Public Journalism: Theory & Practice (1997), places the focus of the public journalism process on "framing," or the method of choosing how an issue will be presented in a story. He suggests that:

> "What our philosophy says so far, is that framing is not only an art but one of the important democratic arts. Done well, framing in journalism should proceed from and support certain values: the values of genuine conversation, broad participation. deliberative dialogue, public problem-solving; the values of inclusion, civic responsibility, cooperative and complementary action; the values of caring for the community, taking charge of the future, overcoming the inertia of drift; finally the value of hope, understood as a renewable resource. These are things public journalism is 'for,' and as a philosophy it doesn't apologize for that stance." (p. 14)

Charity considers the chief source of the process of public journalism to be a book by the pollster Daniel Yankelovich -- Coming to Public Judgment: Making Democracy Work in a

Complex World (1991). Yankelovich was interested in seeing what he called "public opinion," a shallow and changeable set of opinions shared by a group, brought to a more carefully considered level, which he called "public judgment." He found three types of journalism useful in bringing people's opinions to the level of judgment: consciousness-raising, "working through," and resolution.

Charity also provides a chart based on Rosen's writings. The chart contrasts the beliefs of public journalists with those of conventional journalists.

"Public journalists believe:	Conventional journalists believe:
Something basic has to change, because journalism isn't working now.	The traditions of journalism are fine; if anything needs to improve, it's the practice.
In such a climate, experimentation and creativity are imperative; old habits, however "sacred," may have to go -- though change must always be guided by ethical core values and an understanding of how democracy works.	Experimentation threatens to cross the line into unethical behavior, bias, and carelessness about standards. Besides, experimentation is usually a synonym for fad.
Citizens may well want to participate more intelligently in public life, but they find too many hurdles in their way.	The media and political life provide ample opportunity to participate; if people stay out or merely complain, it's their own choice.
Citizens deserve a bigger place in the newspaper itself. Papers should never "dumb down," but must reorient themselves around citizens' concerns.	News is a profession; journalists write newspapers, readers don't. Inviting citizens to judge what's news, making them the subject of coverage and the like are inherently dumbing down -- a form of pandering.
Public life should work, and journalism has a role in making it work.	It would be nice if public life worked, but it's beyond our role to make it work and it's dangerous to think we can." (Charity, p. 10)

Another interesting source is Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning, published in 1992 by W. Russell Neuman, Marion R. Just, and Ann Crigler. In it, the three show through survey research methods how people reach decisions about political issues, and how the media affect this process -- and could affect it more.

The arguments against public journalism as a change from traditional journalism range from comments by David Hall, editor of The Plain Dealer in Cleveland -- "what we're talking about is improving the quality of our reporting. Call it what you want" (Hernandez) -- to one by Prof. John Merrill of the University of Missouri -- "The journalist should cover the parade, not march in it" (Dennis & Merrill).

Hall was saying that, except for survey work, what journalists try to do every day is give readers the information they need. He has not been opposed to running survey-based articles -- The Plain Dealer produced a series before the 1996 elections called "Voters First" that was similar to the Wichita Eagle's first foray into the public journalism realm. But his argument is similar to that of Richard Aregood of the Philadelphia Daily News, who says public journalism is not new to better newspapers (Steele).

William Woo, former editor of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, said in a speech in 1995:

> "Yes, we have been isolated, detached, arrogant, disconnected, narrow in our definitions of what's news and what isn't. We have thrived anaerobically, in airless environments. Damn right that we should listen to the public. But should the consensus of the town meeting automatically become our agenda, not merely in editorial support but in the expenditure of resources that determine what other stories do not get covered?" (Steele)

Leonard Downie, executive editor of The Washington Post, attacked both the process and the "core values" of public journalism, saying, "Too much of what's called public journalism appears to be what our promotion department does, only with a different kind of name and a fancy evangelistic fervor" (Case).

Max Frankel, former editor of The New York Times, suggests that, until the philosophy of public journalism discusses not only what it is "for," but also what it is "against," he'll have none of it. (1998). Frankel admits some concern for the state of journalistic reporting today, suggesting that the public includes under that label the works of Jerry Springer, Seymour Hersh and Oliver Stone. But he says that as long as reporters stick to a simple definition of news ("news must be new") and resolve that it must be important or interesting, or both, then it is not necessary to determine what journalism stands for. And Professor Merrill sums up:

> "Public journalism "urges the press, through coverage of the community, to become engaged in solving community problems. This notion confuses journalism with community organization, a social work concept. Flaws in the public journalism argument are assumptions that better and more engaged content will stave off circulation declines for newspapers, something for which there is no good evidence; and that journalists should be activists taking positions on community issues, an action that would lose them any claim to impartiality and would sacrifice credibility." (Dennis & Merrill)

But we should end on this thought: If public journalism represents a new paradigm, then we should return to Thomas Kuhn's work and consider what else he says about the emergence of new paradigms: "The invention of . . . new theories regularly, and appropriately, evokes the same response from some of the specialists on whose area of special competence they impinge. For these men, the new theory implies a change in the rules governing the prior practice of normal science. Inevitably, therefore, it reflects upon much scientific work they have already successfully completed" (p. 7). Thus, the reaction is one of defensiveness rather than consideration.

Discussion questions:

Public journalism appears to differ from other recent changes in the newsgathering process in that it involves an entire philosophy, as well as a technical process. Why do you think that is? Do you think it is necessary?

Critics say civic journalism is either "social work," marketing or pandering. How would you characterize it and why?

If you were hired by a newspaper that was using techniques of public journalism in reporting, what would be your first question for the city editor? Can public journalism work no matter who is editor? Or must the editor be unusually ethical to control such a process?

Suggested activity: Discuss contents of "Civic Journalism: Six Case Studies"

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