Digital Journalism
Communication 117/217
T/Th 3:15-4:45, Wallenberg 127
Stanford University
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Over the last two decades, shifts in media technologies, corporate structure and the organization of public life have combined to transform the practice of journalism. This course aims to explore these shifts, with an eye to seeing how they affect journalism's role in society. At the same time, the class will introduce you to the techniques of journalism in digital media and offer you conceptual and practical tools with which to join the fray. By the end of the course, you should have a clear sense of the various ways journalists have taken up digital media and a sense of how you might use those media yourself. You should also have a broad understanding of the ways in which recent social and economic developments have changed both the practice of journalists and the nature of the publics to which they speak.

Readings:

Pablo J. Boczkowski, *Digitizing The News: Innovation in Online Newspapers.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004.

Dan Gillmor, *We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People.* Cambridge, MA: O'Reilly, 2004.

Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel. *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect.* New York: Crown Publishers, 2001.

Course Reader: Available at the Bookstore.

Academic Computing Resources at Stanford: While this is an analytical rather than a skills-oriented course, you will be expected to have a basic familiarity with Stanford's resources for creating and posting materials to the web. These can be found online at http://academiccomputing.stanford.edu/pubs/index.html.

Assignments:

Conversion Exercise:

You will be asked to convert an existing, for-print story into a story for the Worldwide Web. You will post this story in your Stanford web space.

Two Critical Papers:

You will be asked to write two brief critical papers on one of several assigned topics drawing on course readings and our in-class examination of media. Please be aware that these need to be *analytical*, not journalistic, pieces of writing. Papers will need to deal with readings closely and skeptically, weigh opposing points of view, and present a compelling case for your own argument. What will determine your grade will be less the position you take than the sophistication and rigor with which you support it.

> Paper 1 Due: Tuesday, January 25

> Paper 2 Due: Tuesday, February 15

Final Paper:

You will be asked to choose a single media artifact, person, or organization. Drawing on readings from across the course, as well as original research, you will explore the ways that digital media and associated organizational forms shape your subject's relationship to the public.

> Written Proposals Due: Tuesday, February 22

> Papers Due: Hard copy, to my faculty mailbox, by 12 Noon, Thursday, March 17.

Grading:

Conversion Exercise: 10%

Critical Paper 1: 20%

Critical Paper 2: 20%

Final Paper: 30%

Participation: 20%

Expectations:

Participation:

You'll need to come to each class with the reading done and sufficiently digested for you to participate actively in discussion.

Writing:

Newsroom rules apply: Your work needs to come in on time and should represent your best work at every level. Assignments that come in late or with errors of fact, grammar or spelling will be penalized. As ever, the Honor Code applies as well.

Course Schedule:

Part 1: The Social and Technological Contexts of Digital Journalism: Hierarchy Meets Heterarchy

1: Tuesday, January 4:

Introductions: Where are we?

Key Question: Where is "news" in the digital environment?

2: Thursday, January 6

What Was Journalism? What was "the" public? What are digital media? What are its publics?

Readings:
- Darnton, Robert. "Writing news and telling stories." Daedalus 104.Spring (1975): 175-197.
- Boczkowski, *Digitizing The News*, Chapter 1.
- Bruno Giussani, "A new media tells different stories." First Monday 2.4 (1997). Available online at: http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue2_4/giussani/index.html

Key Question: How are journalistic routines, industry structures, and technology related to journalism's public role?

Part 2: Mass Journalism in Transition

3: Tuesday, January 11

A Taxonomy of Digital News:

Readings:
- Mark Deuze, "The web and its journalisms: considering the consequences of different types of newsmedia online." New Media & Society 5.2 (2003): 203-230.
- Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation*, Ch's 1, 11, 12
- Boczkowski, *Digitizing the News*, Ch. 3.

Key Question: What kinds of news forms have emerged in the digital environment? How do they shift mass journalism's relationship to its audience?

4: Thursday, January 13

Writing for Digital Media:

Readings:
- Chip Scanlan, "What is 'Narrative' Anyway?" Poynteronline, October 7, 2003: http://www.poynter.org/
- John Morkes and Jakob Nielsen, "Concise, SCANNABLE, and Objective: How To Write For The Web" Online at: http://www.useit.com/papers/webwriting/writing.html
- Amazoning The News (see site too: http://www.hypergene.net/ideas/amazon.html)

Resources for Web Design:
- http://www.webstyleguide.com/ A Web style guide put together by Yale University's Center for Advanced Instructional Media
- Vincent Flanders' legendary site, http://www.webpagesthatsuck.com/ with examples of all that can go wrong…
- Nielsen, Jakob. Designing web usability: the practice of simplicity. Indianapolis, Ind.: New Riders, 2000.

Key Question: How can you "tell a story" in digital media?

5: Tuesday, January 18

Telling Personal Stories in Digital Media:

Readings:

- Philip E. Agre, "Find Your Voice: Writing For a Webzine" Available online at: http://polaris.gseis.ucla.edu/pagre/zine.html (AVAILABLE ONLINE ONLY)

Web Resources:
- Center for Digital Storytelling web site: http://www.storycenter.org
  - see especially: http://www.storycenter.org/canada/storytelling.html

- WBEZ Chicago, "This American Life"
  - see http://www.thislife.org/

Key Questions: What innovative strategies have journalists used to bring non-journalists into the storytelling process? How have they used digital media to do so?

Due: Conversion Exercise

6: Thursday January 20

Organization, Technology and Multi-Mediated Storytelling:

Readings:

Bozckowski, *Digitizing the News*, Chapters 5, 6 and 7

Key Questions: As pre-digital media organizations adopt digital media, how do organizational issues and new technologies shape the work they do?

7: Tuesday, January 25

Speedy Networks, New Gatekeepers:

Readings:
- White, David Manning. "The 'gate keeper': a case study in the selection of news." Journalism Quarterly 29.4 (1956): 383-390.
- Harper, Christopher. "Journalism in a digital age." Democracy and New Media. Eds. David Thorburn and Henry Jenkins. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003. 271-280.
- Hartley, John. "The frequencies of public writing: tomb, tome, and time as technologies of the public." New Media and Democracy. Eds. David Thorburn and Henry Jenkins. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003. 247-269.

Key Questions: How do the ways that digital media increase the speed of news production and enhance the use of networks as news producers challenge pre-digital journalistic ideals?

Due: Critical Paper #1

8: Thursday, January 27

Show Me the Money: Networked Technology and Financial Concentration:

Readings:
- Cohen, Elisia L. "Online journalism as market-driven journalism." Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media 46.4 (2002).
- McChesney, Robert. "So much for the magic of technology and the free market: the world wide web and the corporate media system." The world wide web and contemporary cultural theory. Eds. Andrew Herman and Thomas Swiss. New York and London: Routledge, 2000. 5-36.

Key questions: How do financial pressures shape the potential of online journalism to serve the public? Do new media free us from the problems of media conglomeration?

9: Tuesday, February 1

Metajournalism:

Readings:
- Powell, Walter. "Neither market nor hierarchy: network forms of organization." *Research in Organizational Behavior* 12 (1990): 295-336. Available at: http://www.stanford.edu/~woodyp/powell_neither.pdf
- Barabási, Albert-László. *Linked: the new science of networks*. (Cambridge, MA: Perseus, 2002). "Small Worlds" and "Hubs and Connectors," pp. 41-64

Web Resources:
- Mediachannel: http://www.mediachannel.org/
- Freedom Forum: http://www.freedomforum.org/
- Jim Romenesko at Poynter: http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=45
- Poynter: http://www.poynter.org/
- Editor and Publisher: http://www.editorandpublisher.com/editorandpublisher/
- Matt Drudge: http://www.drudgereport.com/

Key Question: What role do networks of individuals, think tanks and other intermediaries play in shaping the news?

10: Thursday, February 3

"Personal" journalism: Pundits, Freelancers and Public Intellectuals:

Readings:
- Dan Gillmor, *We The Media*, Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 12

- John Rockwell, "Conversing on the arts by clicking a mouse", *New York Times*, July 9, 2003

Web resources:
- Bloggers of your choice
- Spinsanity: http://www.spinsanity.org/
- Dave Weinberger: http://www.evident.com/

Resources for Bloggers:
- Blood, Rebecca. The Weblog Handbook. New York: Perseus, 2002.
- Publishing, Editors of Perseus. We've Got Blog. New York: Perseus, 2002.

Key Question: What's the difference between a blogger, a journalist, a pundit and an intellectual? Or is there one anymore?

Part Three: New Publics, New Journalistic Forms:

11 Tuesday, February 8

Rethinking "The" Public:

Readings:
- Schudson, Michael. "Click here for democracy: a history and critique of an information-based model of citizenship." Democracy and new media. Eds. Henry Jenkins, David Thorburn and Brad Seawell. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003. 49-60.

- Agre, Philip E. "Growing a democratic culture: John Commons on the wiring of civil society." Democracy and New Media. Eds. Henry Jenkins and David Thorburn. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003. 61-67.

- Fraser, Nancy. "Rethinking the public sphere: a contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy." Habermas and the Public Sphere. Ed. Craig Calhoun. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1991. 109-142.

Web resources:
- MoveOn.Org: http://www.moveon.org/
- Howard Dean's Campaign Site: http://www.deanforamerica.com/
- City of Palo Alto: http://www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/
- Acción Zapatista: http://studentorgs.utexas.edu/nave/

Key Questions: What kinds of "publics" are emerging in and around digital media? What might the role of journalism be in a world of multiple publics?

12 Thursday, February 10

New Communities, New Routines: The Alternatives:

Readings:
- Eliasoph, Nina. "Routines and the making of oppositional news." Critical Studies in Mass Communication 5.December (1988): 313-334. (good take on how alternative routines at KPFA shape different kinds of news it makes)
- Leon V. Sigal, Sources Make The News, in Manoff & Schudson, *Reading the News,* pp. 9-37
- "Indymedia.org: A New Communications Commons" Dorothy Kidd in McCaughey, Martha, and Michael D. Ayers. Cyberactivism: online activism in theory and practice. New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 47-70.
- "Emerging Alternatives: Edging away from anarchy: Inside the Indymedia Collective," Gal Beckerman, CJR 2003

Key Question: How do the politics of community news producers, news routines and new technologies interact?

13 Tuesday, February 15

Guest Lecture:

Pablow Boczkowski, *Digitizing the News*

Due: Critical Paper #2

14 Thursday, February 17

Identity Media:
- Gamson, Joshua. "Gay media, inc.: media structures, the new gay conglomerates, and collective sexual identities." Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice. Eds. Martha McCaughey and Michael D. Ayers. New York: Routledge, 2003. 255-278.
- Steven McLaine, "Ethnic Online Communities: Between Profit and Purpose" Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice. Eds. Martha McCaughey and Michael D. Ayers. New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 233-254

Web Resources:
- Black Planet: http://www.blackplanet.com/
  - Also home to MiGente.com and AsianAvenue.com
- Alternet http://www.alternet.org/

Key Questions: How does the perception of shared identity serve to organize discourse on the Web? How do journalists interact with these new forums?

15 Tuesday, February 22

News Communities:

- Rheingold, Howard. "A slice of my life in my virtual community." <u>High noon on the electronic frontier: conceptual issues in cyberspace</u>. Ed. Peter Ludlow. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992/1996. 413-436.
- humdog. "pandora's vox: on community in cyberspace." <u>High noon on the electronic frontier: conceptual issues in cyberspace</u>. Ed. Peter Ludlow. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996. 437-444.
- Coate, John. <u>Cyberspace innkeeping: building online community</u>. January, 1998 1992, 1993, 1998. Available: <u>http://www.sfgate.com/~tex/innkeeping. February 15 2001</u>.

Key Questions: How do network forums work? What roles do they play in the creation and circulation of news?

Due: Written Pitches for Final Papers

16 Thursday, February 24

Guest Lecture:
Carlos Dada, Editor, *El Faro*

Review El Faro before coming to class:
http://www.elfaro.net/

Review Final Paper Proposals

17 Tuesday, March 1

Reputation Economies and Information Networks:

Open Source News
- Howard Rheingold, *Smart Mobs*, "The Evolution of Reputation"
- Gary Rivlin, "Leader of the Free World" Wired 11.11 (November, 2003)
- Thomas Goetz, "Open Source Everywhere" Wired 11.11 (November, 2003)
- Cass Sunstein, "The Daily We" *The Boston Review*, Summer, 2001. Online at: <u>http://bostonreview.mit.edu/BR26.3/sunstein.html</u>

Web Resources:
- Slashdot: News for Nerds: <u>http://slashdot.org/</u>

Key Question: How are the dynamics of open source production processes affecting the ways journalists serve the public?

18 Thursday, March 3

Code as Law

Readings:
- Lawrence Lessig, <u>Code: and Other Laws of Cyberspace</u>. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1999: Ch. 1, "Code is Law" (3-8), Ch. 6 "Cyberspaces" (63-84), Ch. 7 "What Things Regulate," (85-99).

Web Resources:
- Googlenews
- Ebay.com

Key Questions: How are social processes being written into and performed by computer code? What are the implications of this process for journalists?

Due: Critical Paper #2

Part Four: Journalism's Public Role, Revisited

19 Tuesday, March 8

What is journalism for, now?

Readings:
- Kovac and Rosenstiel, *The Elements of Journalism*, pp. 9-110

Key Question: Given the new organizational, economic and discursive forms associated with network technologies, can journalists still serve a single public?

20 Thursday, March 10

Journalism in a Global Key

Readings:
- Kovach and Rosenstiel, The Elements of Journalism, pp. 111-198
- Volkmer, Ingrid. "Beyond the global and the local: media systems and journalism in the global network paradigm." <u>Democracy and New Media</u>. Eds. Henry Jenkins and David Thorburn. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003. 309-330.

Key Question: Can digital journalists serve local and global audiences at the same time?