



Gateway Journalism REVIEW

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Inside this issue:

Replacing Enlightenment virtues with Dark Age fantasies

by William H. Freivogel

St. Louis group pushes back over privacy and health concerns of the 5G industrial revolution

by Don Corrigan

Quiet rooms investigation is a call to action for community news outlets

by Jackie Spinner

How a popular media bias chart determines what news can be trusted

by Beth Heldebrandt

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Growing Community Media: After four decades, a local newspaper company turns the page

by Sharon Bloyd-Peshkin

For the past 39 years, Wednesday Journal Inc. has served up weekly community newspapers, starting with its home base in the Chicago suburb of Oak Park, Illinois, and expanding to cover neighboring River Forest, Forest Park, Riverside, Brookfield and the Austin neighborhood on Chicago's west side. But for the past 10 of those years, advertising revenue has steadily declined, even while demand for the papers in print and online has grown.

By 2019, the company was no longer financially sustainable on the basis of advertising revenue and subscriptions to the paper editions alone. But instead of laying off reporters or shuttering its least profitable papers, Wednesday Journal chose to go a different route: The for-profit media company is going nonprofit, seeking to expand its coverage and persuade local communities to invest in the news they need.

"We don't have a God-given right to keep publishing and you don't have a right to expect a Breaking News Update in your email or a print copy in your mailbox — not if we all

just sit back and think of better days," wrote Dan Haley, publisher and editor, in a Sept. 11 editorial announcing the new nonprofit, Growing Community Media. That salvo was followed by further steps toward becoming a media organization that responds to what the community is wrestling with, including a facilitated discussion at a local café about what reporting on equity looks like, and what equity in reporting looks like.

"It's a mind shifting thing on our part," Haley explained at an October event called "Drinks and Dialogue: The Importance of Local Media," hosted by the League of Women Voters of Oak Park and River Forest. "It's no longer, 'We're the newspaper and we'll tell you what the news is,' but rather listening to what matters to the community."

Approximately 50 people showed up for "Drinks and Dialogue," packing the back room of a Forest Park restaurant and passing platters of loaded nachos as Haley and five other members of the Wednesday Journal staff talked about the coming transformation

and the work they do to cover the local communities.

"My view is that a good community newspaper is an essential way for a community to create its identity, to argue with itself, to define itself, to celebrate itself. There is no replacement for it," Haley said. He noted that with 13,000 subscribers to the free email list, "We know the interest is out there."

There are plenty of nonprofit news organizations around the nation — the Institute for Nonprofit News has 211 members — eight of them in Illinois. But it's rare for a for-profit news organization to transition to nonprofit status. In this, Wednesday Journal Inc. may be a harbinger of things to come; just two weeks ago, the IRS approved The Salt Lake Tribune's application to become a nonprofit after 148 years in business.

"What happened in Salt Lake is extremely important in that now you have a former metro newspaper saying to the community, 'If you want this newspaper to continue to



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exist, then the community as a whole has to support it,” said Jay Rosen, media critic and associate professor of journalism at New York University. And although Rosen applauds experimentation, including the turn to nonprofit status, he adds a caution: “I don’t think that just continuing to do exactly what you did when you were a commercial newspaper and now saying, ‘We’re a community newspaper,’ is going to be quite enough because if you are turning the newspaper into something that’s closer to a museum, a zoo, an orchestra, a library, rather than to a real business, then you have to show that you are operating primarily for the public good as opposed to, ‘We want to keep doing what we’ve always been doing and the community is going to pay for it.’”

That’s exactly what Growing Community Media is seeking to address with its facilitated conversations: transforming itself more explicitly into an institution that is dedicated to the public good, and convincing

the community that it has done so.

“The tricky part about that is that a lot of people operating under the professional model of commercial journalism define themselves as public service from the beginning,” Rosen said. “So from their point of view, there’s nothing to change. That’s going to be the murky territory that we’re going to have to navigate.”

By the end of 2019, the remaining shares of Wednesday Journal stock held by the 14 shareholders will go into Growing Community Media along with all the company assets. The goal is to raise \$400,000 a year from donations and foundation support and use it to hire reporters and to invest in two new beats: equity and sustainability.

Haley also intends to invest more in the Austin Weekly on Chicago’s west side—a community with a reputation for poverty and violence. “Mostly what it gets is shock and horror news,” Haley said. “That’s not the

Austin I know, or the Austin the Weekly has covered all these years. We want to cover normalcy — the reality of the community.”

That kind of ear-to-the-ground reporting on the experience of each community was a theme of the evening. Michael Romain, staff reporter for several of the weeklies and publisher of the Village Free Press in Maywood, talked about “being deferential to the people in the community because you guys are the experts about the place where you live.” When one attendee asked why the arts at one of the struggling local high schools don’t get much coverage, Haley replied, “That really goes to the normalcy.”

Like other media organizations, Growing Community Media also plans to “up our game digitally,” offering more news on social media platforms, more video and podcasts. “We are not going out of print. We love print,” Haley said. “But we will be expanding what we do.”

Attendees shared their appreciation for their local papers. One thanked Haley and the reporters for informing her about what was going on in town. Several promised to support the new nonprofit.

That will be important, Rosen said, because “we’re on about year 10 or 11 of the business model crisis in journalism” and as news organizations around the country shrink, shutter or are bled dry by mergers and acquisitions, “the people who care about their communities, including community foundations, are going to realize that something they used to take for granted as being taken care of by the private economy—which is local news—just won’t be produced by the market.”

A new Gallup/Knight Foundation study found that nearly half of Americans surveyed agreed that local newspapers are important, and that when informed about the financial challenges facing local news organizations, then they were more willing to support them.

Haley made that connection clear to those at the gathering. “Community journalism is at high risk, here and everywhere,” he said. “The future of community journalism is in the hands of people who live in these communities.”

“ The tricky part is that a lot of people operating under the professional model of commercial journalism define themselves as public service from the beginning.”

— Jay Rosen



Photo by Ignacio Calderon

Student protesters bang on the door outside the campus building where former Attorney General Jeff Sessions delivered a speech on Nov. 5 at Northwestern University.

Journalism failed the young editors and staffers at The Daily Northwestern – not the other way around

by Deborah Douglas

Too easy.

That's how fast the anger and confusion came from those who reacted negatively to the apology offered recently by the editor and staffers of The Daily Northwestern for their coverage of former Attorney General Jeff Sessions' campus appearance. But the extreme measure of removing well- and fairly sourced photos, removing a protester's name in a vital act of attribution and apologizing for good hustle was not the malpractice we'd like to imagine.

As Editor Troy Closson's Twitter thread revealed, it was a cry for help. Not a sniveling, weak-kneed cry stakeholders would like to imagine but one of leadership and a call to action to know better and do better in an environment where the news media's credibility and tactics are questioned

and diminished daily.

The real malpractice will occur if we, who do this work and believe in the democratizing force of journalism, don't listen to what these young journalists are trying to tell us about ourselves, our society. The real change that must occur falls on an industry that largely has failed to equip itself to navigate increasingly diverse environments because it maintains a terrible track record of writing and speaking across difference.

The orthodoxy of objectivity teaches us to block out the noise: But this approach has been revealed for the scam it is — a white, male, privileged, Western default worldview that doesn't center anyone who doesn't fit. This matters because the stories we tell become the world we are.

“ But this approach has been revealed for the scam it is — a white, male, privileged, Western default worldview that doesn't center anyone who doesn't fit.”

“ Journalists have shown an unwillingness to catch up to conversations and analyses of, say, the violence that plagues so many of our neighbors.”

“We cannot default to an assumption that journalism is a static and unyielding set of actions that shouldn’t be questioned,” tweeted Heather Bryant, director of Project Facet, a journalism collaborative. “Our work is to question everything, and that must include ourselves and our processes.”

This affair illustrates how audiences have come to regard journalists as an extractive force that is not truly interested in telling the full story of communities we serve. I’ve met many activists who view the Fourth Estate as a proxy for power more than a force for good and engagement with democratic ideals. The dangerous “no media, safe space” ethos runs so deeply certain communities can’t even fathom working with — or leveraging — the media, they are so sick of us.

Journalist Madeline Faber offers food for thought: “I wonder if there are cases where we further an ethic of care by silencing our demand for knowledge and closure. What happens to journalism when we finally admit that inquiry can be invasive?”

As managing editor of MLK50: Justice Through Journalism, our Memphis-based team focuses on the intersection of poverty, power and policy, and takes great pains to center the voices of people often rendered as chalk outlines — or not at all. When writing about the latest jobs numbers or corporate tax breaks, we’re prone to ask who is not included in the statistical breakdown, or how many of the jobs promised by corporate leaders will lead to middle-class jobs, not just any ol’ job?

In this time of great inequality, the answers frequently reveal how power is the greatest beneficiary in any civic, economic or social enterprise. The fix is in, but so much coverage refuses to engage social science tools and validate personal experiences to tell the whole, real story, complete with historical through lines that render people in the complexity they deserve.

With our fancy education, how many of us are even equipped to do so? Given the tendency to normalize the most horrific policies and practices of our society, likely not many. The news media, through uncritical tactics that fail to deeply consider fault lines, often functions as an amplifier for power, which is really a narrow sliver of our so-called audience.

Unlike The Daily Northwestern students, how many of us ever stop to take stock of our assumptions and make space for ideas that may challenge our orthodoxy? I admit, I cringe when I hear how people in activist circles talk about the media. I can’t help but critique how wrong they get what

we do and how we do it. But an expansive view would consider this a call for more news literacy because in all the confusion, audiences, even tender student-activists caught in the punishing swirl of social media and surveillance culture, are likely trying to tell us we need to do better by them and the communities they represent. Though The Daily staff overreacted, this is what they were attempting. Failing to do good journalism like wisely using a student directory to make contact isn’t the answer but answer, we must. And perhaps the answer is more transparency: telling and showing how we got the story and how those decisions were made?

We are all familiar with the image of a press scrum following a source up the courthouse steps, yelling questions and sticking microphones in their direction. It’s such a common motif, the imagery is frequently used in TV and movie dramas to move along plot lines. This is a mere performance aspect of getting the story. Increasingly, the best journalism — the kind that offers complex, authentic, contextual stories for everyone, according to University of Georgia’s Maria Len-Rios’ rubric for journalistic excellence, is the done with more deliberation over how journalists themselves show up as gatekeepers — and caretakers. Fortunately, journalism initiatives have surfaced to deal with extractive practices associated with reporting the news.

Just recently, Solutions Journalism Network, headed by David Bornstein and Tina Rosenberg of The New York Times Fixes blog, convened about 100 journalists in Utah. They’ve made complicating narratives, based on Amanda Ripley’s powerful essay, a priority by training journalists how to use conflict mediation techniques to peel back layers and get to the real motivations of people we cover. The goal is to show journalists how to ask deep questions and really listen, as if they care about more than clinching the quote or anecdote. Solutions Journalism itself seeks to implicate actors in their own narratives by showing what works in addressing social issues (local or beyond), how it works and highlighting the limits with insight and rigor.

Trabian Shorters, CEO of BME Community, offers a powerful tool he calls “asset-framing,” which defines communities and people by their aspirations, not the worst thing about them or the terrible, bad thing we relish repeating. How this can work journalistically is by pulling our own coattails when we develop and pitch stories, write, shoot and film them, then package human

narratives for display.

So, when crafting a story about a marginalized community, we can pause and ask ourselves is this an “overcoming” trope? What is joy in this place? Is this a “fate” trope where we write about, say, gun violence in black and brown communities and frame the story as the inevitable result of “choice” without ever questioning the structures that provide the foundation and housing for these outcomes? Do we all have a “personal responsibility” trope in our back pockets, all worn and frayed from overuse from a lack of critical thought and inability to see the new and different in a people or an issue we’ve been staring at a long, long time?

Both Listening Post and Press On, a Southern movement journalism collective, also shows the critical work of bringing more humanity to this practice, as are others.

Right here in the Chicago journalism landscape, we have examples of how much we’re not seeing nor listening to all of the communities we purport to serve. Journalists have shown an unwillingness to catch up to conversations and analyses of, say, the violence that plagues so many of our neighbors. And where there’s power in naming, we’ve had journalists refuse to even consider how self labeling can serve as a humanizing component of existence while we lean on responsibility narratives that further marginalize. We fall on journalistic tropes on a daily basis, offending and erasing broad swaths of people, committing a type of violence that calls for narrative repair.

Now middle-aged and idealistic, I was once young and idealistic, fortunate to work with some of the smartest, most creative minds. A newsroom leader I’ll forever cherish encouraged our niche publishing team to stretch our thinking when creating new titles to narrate the lives of people at the intersection of many fault lines — be they immigration, gender, race/ethnicity or otherwise: This person implored us to make spectacular mistakes as a way of growing into our full purpose and potential. The Daily Northwestern apology falls in this category: It was spectacular but not at all in the ways our unstretched minds and worn-out modes would have us believe. The apology broke us — but in the right places so they — and we — can fully commit to evolving journalism in a way that respects our audiences so they can tell the difference and repair the trust gap that has us all on edge about this thing we secretly fear is on life support.

Leftist protesters pose historic challenge to campus free speech and press

by William H. Freivogel

Today's college journalists are caught in the vortex of an important national debate that threatens the vibrancy of free speech and free press on campus. Limiting the vigor of speech and the press damages society's capacity to hear the voices of protesters and undermines the university's role as a forum for open thought.

Here are the forces at play on student journalists:

Leftist protesters – often with social justice on their side – demand student journalists protect them from news coverage that could harm them. They demand photos and names of “marginalized” people involved in protests be withheld because they could be used for discipline or prosecution.

Conservative groups respond that they are the marginalized people on campus. It is the speech of conservatives, such as former Attorney General Jeff Sessions or former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, at risk.

“ ... professional journalists insist traditional verities of good journalism are not negotiable.”

Meanwhile professional journalists insist traditional verities of good journalism are not negotiable. Student journalists should not surrender to pressures to dilute the coverage of campus events by withholding photos and names.

These conflicting forces prompt student journalists to balance their sympathy for the justice of the leftists' causes – be they immigrant rights, LGBTQ rights or climate change – with the mission of publishing fair news coverage of campus events. This balancing act can seem especially hard in light of the history of mainstream media as the province of white men who didn't always recognize the whole story of society's injustices.

What gets lost in the debate is the damage a fettered press does to the community's ability to process the protesters' grievances. It keeps the press from fulfilling its job in a democracy by holding up a mirror to protests so the public can see.

As passionately as many protesters argue for withholding names and photos, it is counterproductive to their cause because the whole point of protest is to put one's body

and name behind a strongly held grievance and shout out to the world for change.

And when news organizations pull back their coverage by withholding names, photos and information, they risk the one thing most important to reporting – credibility that comes from serving as the community's independent eyes, ears and conscience.

Events nationwide

The Daily Northwestern coverage of a speech by former Attorney General Jeff Sessions defending President Trump's anti-immigrant policies brought the conflicting forces into especially sharp focus.

Those same forces are at play in the petition campaign by about 1,000 people against the Harvard Crimson for contacting the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency to get a response to protesters seeking ICE's abolition. Harvard's student government recently voted to condemn the Crimson for “actions or policies that endanger undocumented and immigrant students on campus” and to “commit to journalistic practices that do not put students at risk.”

Last February at Washington University in St. Louis, a group organized around the hashtag #ResistWhiteU protested at a diversity day on campus. They interrupted Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Lori White as she introduced the Day of Discovery Dialogue & Action to discuss diversity and inclusion, unfurling a protest banner in the balcony. Then they objected to the student newspaper, Student Life, publishing a photo of the protest. Protest leaders said, “We reject that we should cater to principles and ideologies that are rooted in our destruction in the name of ‘mutual respect, openness and tolerance.’”

And four years ago Melissa Click memorably tried to block photographers and videographers covering a public protest by African-American students at the University of Missouri. The communications lecturer was fired.

These are a few of the many examples at campuses around the country where leftists seeking special protection for “marginalized” students have clashed with student journalists employing traditional, ethical newsgathering methods. Whatever happened to the classical civil disobedience of Gandhi and King that involved taking accountability for protests even if that involved jail?

The trend poses today's most significant threat to collegiate press and speech rights and the college journalist's role as an

independent observer and reporter.

A First Amendment primer

The events at Northwestern are a First Amendment primer.

University President Morton O. Schapiro said Young Republicans had every right to bring the former attorney general to campus under school policy, although he questioned whether Sessions was the “right speaker” to invite – whatever that means. Leftist students had every right to protest until they forced their way through closed exits and began to disrupt the speech. At that point they surrendered the First Amendment protection.



The journalists of the Daily Northwestern went to work the way journalists do – publishing photos to social media, getting statements from student protesters and using university directories to contact protesters.

Then came a blistering response from the protesters who claimed their privacy had been violated and they had been put at risk of discipline. One student, Ying Dai, complained to student photographer Colin Doyle after a photo he had taken and posted showed her on the floor during the protest. She called it “trauma porn.” Doyle removed it.

Then came an extraordinary apology by the staff of the Daily Northwestern. The editors apologized for printing protester photos and names and for using campus directories to contact students involved. Within a few hours hundreds of posts – many from journalists who had graduated from Northwestern – blasted the young journalists for apologizing for doing journalism.

Troy Closson, the student editor, tweeted that as the third black editor in the 135 year history of the Daily Northwestern he felt a “lot of pressure.”

He described this stress as, “Being in this role and balancing our coverage and the role of this paper on campus with my racial identity – and knowing how our paper has historically failed students of color, and particularly black students, has been incredibly challenging to navigate.”

Writing in The Washington Post, Zach Kessel, a freshman at Northwestern, described the mood at the paper on the evening after Closson’s post.

“That night, staffers talked about how the ‘old media’ is dead, and that because most of the notable critics of the statement write for legacy print publications, the Daily must be doing something right. What I’m sure they meant is that the new era of journalism should account for the perspectives of people whose voices haven’t been heard in the past These are admirable goals. What

isn’t admirable is acquiescence. The Daily apologized for standard journalistic practices.”

Free Speech Movement

The events at Northwestern seem like a different world from that of 1960s when anti-war and civil rights leaders led the Berkeley free speech movement to guarantee free speech and activism for students on campus. A former movie star made a name for himself criticizing university officials for not cracking down on the Berkeley protesters. That movie star, Ronald Reagan, won the next race for governor of California.

By 1970 anti-war protesters began seeing college newspapers coverage as a threat in much the same way as today’s protesters at Northwestern. They knew university authorities, local police and the FBI wanted to use photos for discipline, prosecution and domestic intelligence gathering.

Continued on next page





Photo by Ignacio Calderon

Students protest outside a talk by former Attorney General Jeff Sessions on Nov. 5 at Northwestern University.

The issue came to a head at Stanford University where some radicals backed up their complaints about Stanford Daily photographs by throwing rocks at the photographers. To protect the photographers and to keep from becoming an arm of the police and FBI, the Daily adopted a policy to publish the most newsworthy photos regardless of whether they helped police identify protesters, but to destroy negatives of unpublished photos so police couldn't seize them.

The policy was tested after a violent demonstration at the medical center in April 1971 when police raided the newspaper office looking for evidence to use against protesters who had assaulted officers. In *Zurcher v. Stanford Daily*, the Supreme Court upheld the search, but Congress overturned the decision by passing the Privacy Protection Act requiring authorities to use less intrusive subpoenas rather than search warrants.

The Stanford events are a reminder that student journalists – like professional journalists – have long had to balance the effect of their work on the people they captured in their lenses, while also applying accepted journalistic practices to publish detailed, authoritative, believable news reports.

It's a good preparation for the life of a journalist. Think of the photographs and TV images that have changed the world. Images of Bull Connor's dogs and fire hoses attacking

“ The Stanford events are a reminder that student journalists – like professional journalists – have long had to balance the effect of their work on the people they captured in their lenses, while also applying accepted journalistic practices to publish detailed, authoritative, believable news reports.”

African-American children and teens who wanted to eat at Birmingham lunch counters. The “napalm girl” running from an attack on her village having torn off her burning clothes. The 14-year-old bending over the dead protester at Kent State after Ohio National Guard officers fired on war protesters.

Mary Ann Vecchio, the girl at Kent State, said for decades that the photo ruined her life. Kim Phuc, the 9-year-old burned by napalm, became a friend of AP photographer Nick Ut, and the 1972 photo helped change Americans' views of the war. She went on to become a Canadian and a United Nations worker helping war victims.

Some day the Northwestern students will think back on their searing experience with the Sessions coverage and apply the hard-learned lessons about being mindful of the subjects of their journalism but never apologizing for using the journalist's method of printing detailed, factual, truthful, independent accounts of events, without fear or favor.

William H. Freivogel is publisher of GJR and president of the board of Washington University Student Media, Inc. He worked on the Stanford Daily when the photo policy of destroying negatives was issued. His wife, Margaret, was editor when the policy was developed

What is lost if photos are pulled to save subject's pain?

by Abdon Pallasch

Imagine if the world had never seen that photo of a young Mary Ann Vecchio screaming out in raw emotional pain over the body of Jeffrey Miller, shot dead moments earlier by National Guardsmen at Kent State University in 1970.

Student journalist John Filo's iconic, Pulitzer-winning photo arguably helped hasten the end of the Vietnam War.

The protest at Kent State on May 4, 1970, was just one of many protests around the country as President Richard Nixon appeared to be moving the war into Cambodia. But the senseless killing of four protesters and the visceral anguish that gushes from Vecchio's pleading face in that photo were among the forces that helped crystalize Americans' opposition to prolonging the losing battle in Vietnam that had cost so many lives.

David Crosby showed Neil Young the photo and within weeks Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young's Ohio anti-war anthem was climbing to No. 14 on the charts: "Tin soldiers and Nixon coming. We're finally on our own. This summer I heard the drumming. Four dead in Ohio."

Young told VH1 it was Filo's compelling photo of Vecchio that inspired the song: "That girl leaning over the other kid in a pool of blood, and a look of, 'Whaaa? What? How could this have happened?' You know it's shock ... grief," Young said.

"It's up to historians to decide whether it helped end the war," said Jerry Lewis, professor emeritus of sociology at Kent State who dodged bullets that day as a young professor. "It helped bring awareness to the tragedy of the war because Kent State is Middle America."

The photo also "ruined" Vecchio's life, she said for many years – though in recent years she has come to appreciate the role her image played in ending the war.

Protesters at Northwestern University convinced The Daily Northwestern to take down photos and pull names off quotes because they felt the Daily's coverage of a protest against former Attorney General Jeff Sessions earlier this month invaded their privacy.

"Some protesters found photos posted to reporters' Twitter accounts retraumatizing and invasive," the Daily's editors wrote in their extraordinary apology. "Those photos have since been taken down."

The capitulation by student journalists studying at one of the premiere journalism schools in the United States has provoked a backlash from working journalists who found the self-censorship anathema to everything they learned in journalism school and practiced in the field.

"This was happening in a public space – this wasn't a private little thing, right? So, what's the issue?" asked John Filo, the student photojournalist whose picture has come to symbolize the tragedy of the Kent State shootings. "This flabbergasts me. It's in a public spot. Hey, 'Were you there?' That was



Photo by Ignacio Calderon

Students protest outside a talk by former Attorney General Jeff Sessions on Nov. 5 at Northwestern University.

part of the reporting. In journalism today, we play these games: 'alternative facts.' What really bothers me is Northwestern has such a great journalism school."

After winning the Pulitzer Prize for his photo of Vecchio, Filo went on to a photo-journalism career that took him to the Associated Press, Sports Illustrated, the Philadelphia Inquirer, the Baltimore Evening Sun, Newsweek and CBS, where he now is vice president of East Coast photography on the corporate side.

Vecchio had a much rougher time after the photo's publication.

A 14-year-old runaway from Florida, Vecchio sold her story to a reporter for the price of a bus ticket to California. But her father recognized her in the photo and had authorities detain her and send her back to their less-than-ideal home in Florida. She ended up in a juvenile home.

Whether reuniting a 14-year-old runaway with her family is "ruining" her life is in the eye of the beholder, but just imagine had the technology been there in 1970 for Vecchio to tweet a message to then-journalism student Filo to take down that "trauma porn" photo that would change her life.

That photo arguably changed the course of American history. It helped bring into focus the costs of the Vietnam War. The War killed 58,000 American soldiers and wounded 150,000. More than 3 million Vietnamese soldiers and civilians were killed. The war cost the United States \$1 trillion in today's dollars.

The picture was worth a thousand words. But Filo has had 49 years to think about how his photo affected Vecchio's life.

"Initially she said the photo ruined her life," Filo said. "I felt bad for a long time."

Vecchio married, moved to Nevada and waved off reporters who sought her out. Only in the last two decades has she started attending the commemorations at Kent State and speaking about her role.

"I feel sorry for her because she's asked to explain the power of the picture and she can't explain it – very few people can," said Lewis, who has attended the commemorations with her.

Filo has shared the stage with Vecchio at those commemorations and their relationship is good now, he said.

"It wasn't until 25 years later was that I able to talk to her," Filo said. "The last time we spoke, she understood it had to be done."

"We didn't do anything wrong. Just voicing our opinions on this lawn," Vecchio told attendees in a 2007 commemoration. "It's been very emotional every time I come back. I can't forget. I don't want you to forget."

Would Filo have done anything differently? No.

"The question I get asked a lot is: 'Would you have presented that photo if it was your brother? Your mother?' And the answer is Yes. If I was a journalist, I can't hold that photo back. That was part of the reporting. 'Would you offer that to the world again?' Yes. As a photographer, I take on the responsibility for the newspaper or whoever I am reporting for, reporting what I witnessed. Every time you go out, you try to make the best photo ever. I don't think you're there to take the biggest historical moment – that's for history to decide."



St. Louis group pushes back over privacy and health concerns of the 5G industrial revolution

by Don Corrigan

We are on the brink of a totally new era, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, one that builds and extends the impact of digitization in unanticipated ways. An essential piece of this puzzling future is the 5G technology — the next generation of Internet connectivity.

If you believe all the hype, 5G will usher in

a new epoch with driverless vehicles cruising down smart highways; with remote robotic surgery happening around the digital clock; with all your household appliances talking to each other through enhanced connectivity.

The 5G Revolution is expected to be up to 100 times faster than current wireless



technology. Most important, perhaps, from the perspective of the average consumer, this new electronic speed through the cyberspace ether will mean downloading a two-hour movie on a smartphone in less than five seconds.

The Trump Administration has been opening the anti-regulatory floodgates to try to overwhelm anything that might slow the 5G technology from being developed and implemented in the United States. The administration thinks it's crucial that the Chinese do not get there first with 5G, wherever "there" might actually be in the astonishing global connectivity competition.

Not everybody is gaga about the increase in Gs. Pentagon intelligence officials are worried about its impact in hiking cyber-crime and cyber-terrorism. Civil libertarians are worried about an enormous invasion of privacy in a Brave New World of 5G. And, then, there are regular folks with health concerns related to an increase in electromagnetic radiation set loose upon the planet.

Robert Spalding, a former senior director for strategic planning at the National Security Council, told Sue Halpern of *The New Yorker* that the possibilities for cyberspace warfare in the future are more

“ 5G is not just for refrigerators. It’s the farm implements, it’s airplanes, it’s all kinds of different things that can actually kill people or that allow someone to reach into the network and direct those things to do what they want them to do.”

— Robert Spalding

than perplexing. Hackers have already breached the control center of a municipal dam system, stopped an Internet-connected automobile headed down an interstate, and sabotaged multiple home appliances — even before the introduction of 5G.

“5G is not just for refrigerators,” Spalding told Halpern. “It’s the farm implements, it’s airplanes, it’s all kinds of different things that can actually kill people or that allow someone to reach into the network and direct those things to do what they want them to do. It’s a completely different threat that we’ve never experienced before.”

Surveillance Threat

If the enormously enhanced cyber attack threat with 5G technology doesn’t get a rise out of you, then consider the Big Brother surveillance threat.

This new technology is specifically designed to handle billions more connections, as well as an exponential increase in video streaming. That’s primarily about smartphone users downloading and enjoying content on their handheld devices. But what comes down, can also go up.

Once 5G is in place, it will become an expanded venue for live streaming uploads. Smartphones will then be able to show everything happening around you as well as what’s happening inside you — all in real time.

Clearly all the ramifications for those who want to live privately and confidentially are disturbing. As more friends, enemies, marketers, politicians and government agencies engage in continuous live-streaming activity, privacy will be harder

Continued on next page

**“ I made my feelings known, but I
was a voice crying in the wilderness.”
— Darryl Barker**

to preserve. And as each year goes by, the ability to opt out of the new technology will become virtually impossible.

Never mind the potential for massive invasions of privacy with the new 5G technology, and never mind the heightened threat of cyberattacks with the new technology, Darryl Barker of St. Louis has become an activist with serious health concerns related to the increase in electromagnetic radiation from the introduction of 5G.

Barker, who lives in the St. Louis suburb of Kirkwood, first became alarmed by the presence of electromagnetic frequency (EMF) radiation in local schools due to high-powered Wi-Fi routers and devices used in some schools. Barker raised the alarm about wireless effects at Kirkwood School District board meetings.

“I made my feelings known, but I was a voice crying in the wilderness,” Barker said. “Most of the other parents did not want to hear about it. Parents are just as addicted to their cell phones as their kids now, and don’t want to know about low-level radiation effects.”

“Californians are much more sophisticated about the problem and are raising the issue, maybe because so many Silicon Valley scientists are there,” Barker added. “Missouri is behind in being conscientious about public health. Look at how many people still smoke cigarettes in Missouri.”

STL for Safe Technology

This past summer, Barker and other St. Louis residents started STL for Safe Technology and began planning public meetings around the region to raise awareness of the potential health effects of the increasing technology surrounding us. The group celebrated what they view as an important court victory in August.

“Our new group wants to spread the word about the ill effects of cellphones, ‘smart electric meters,’ and now the ‘5G Revolution’ that is coming at us,” said Pat Tocco of Kirkwood. “We are not being told about the 5G technology that is going to invade our lives.”

“Doctors and scientists in Europe are much more concerned about the effects of 5G technology and Europe is holding 5G Awareness Days,” Tocco said. “In the United States, most people don’t even know it is

coming. They don’t know the health impacts coming because of it.”

The 5G technology will require installing small cell tower antennas inside buildings and on millions of utility poles. Deploying all these wireless relays so close to one another, and subsequently, so close to human bodies, has elicited concerns.

In Europe, 200 scientists and doctors have called for a moratorium on 5G technology until more is known about its low-level radiation effects. In the U.S. Congress, several Senators have slammed the FCC and FDA for pushing ahead with 5G without assessing health risks, privacy issues and cyber security.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., has warned about health risks as well as the unthinkable surveillance potential of millions of cell relays and sensors. He noted that telecom companies are already selling all kinds of wireless data to marketers and other corporations.

An Appeals Court ruling in the District of Columbia overturned an FCC decision to allow wireless carriers to install new 5G cell towers without environmental review or historic preservation considerations.

The decision by the FCC would have allowed wireless carriers “to jam thousands of 5G towers in virtually every neighborhood in the country” without impact reviews, according to the Environmental Health Network and the new STL for Safe Technology.

Skeptics of 5G also were recently encouraged the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal from the cell phone industry challenging the Berkeley Cell Phone Right to Know Ordinance. That 2015 ordinance requires retailers to post a notice warning people of possible health effects from carrying a cell phone in pants, a shirt pocket or bra. The 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals turned down the First Amendment challenge from the industry and said the health issues were “substantial” and the ordinance was not inaccurate.

“Unfounded Paranoia”

Defenders of wireless technology and the new 5G Revolution call concerns by grassroots groups around the country as just “unfounded paranoia.” They label the medical studies that are cited by organizations, such as STL for Safe Technology, as just so much

“pseudoscience” and science fiction.

Proponents of the technology argue that the EMF emissions are similar to what the sun sends out naturally. They also insist that wireless involves low-level, non-ionizing radiation that is virtually harmless. They note that people have been living with microwaves, cell phones and Wi-Fi routers for years.

“Most of the rebuttals of our concerns come from people associated with the industry,” said Barker of STL for Safe Technology. “It’s the same pattern we saw from the cigarette industry. First there is total denial of any ill-effects, and then they say all the studies are suspect or are inconclusive about the effects.”

The St. Louis group is up to several hundred members after being founded this summer. The organization tries to move its awareness meetings around the St. Louis region with events in Clayton, Rock Hill and Webster Groves.

“We are both encouraged and discouraged since our work began to inform the public about this urgent, wireless technology related health issue,” Barker said. “There are possibly a hundred groups like STL for Safe Technology around the United States, but we are not getting major press coverage regarding our concerns.”

“We are networking with other groups, but as our group is a result of volunteer time dedicated by local residents, our progress is partly dependent on our ability to devote time to the issue,” he said. “Our mission right now is to create awareness with our public meetings.”

Theadora Scarato, MSW, executive director and policy analyst for the Environmental Health Trust (EHT), spoke to STL for Safe Technology in November. Her EHT campaign offers information on the health hazards of wireless communication as it exists in the 2nd through 4th generation cell phone technologies, as well as Wi-Fi, smart meters, wireless toys, wireless computer use, and many other products using wireless frequencies, specifically marketed toward children, as well as the potential harm now being introduced by the 5G technology rollout.

Environmental Health Trust

Scarato of EHT told the St. Louis group that wireless companies, with the blessing of state legislatures, are trying to put up

small cell antennas everywhere. They don't want residents trying to stop these installations by saying they don't want them in their neighborhood. She said 21 states now have passed bills taking away a city's authority to regulate 5G.

Cities could say that they want the antennas to be a couple hundred feet from homes, but the state bills remove that kind of intervention. It's all so companies don't have to deal with a city that doesn't want small cell towers next to homes, mounted on power poles, or located in people's front yards, according to Scarato.

Another speaker for the STL for Safe Technology was Raymond Francis, an MIT trained chemist and expert on proactive health care, who was invited to present in September at a Webster Groves meeting.

Francis was attacked after the meeting as a perpetrator of baseless conspiracy theories. Alex Chosid, a St. Louis attorney, accused Francis of being a charlatan who ignores that "5G technology is much less harmful than already harmless radiation we are surrounded by."

Chosid said there is no scientific consensus on any charges that 5G technology will damage health.

"There is no scientific consensus regarding 5G technology because it has never been studied in the U.S.," responded Francis. "We will be exposing millions of people to a technology that has never been tested for safety."

"We will be exposing millions of people to a technology that has never been tested for safety."
— Raymond Francis

"Thousands of studies do show that existing cell phone technology is causing cancer, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, infertility and mental disturbances — such as depression," Francis added. "Long-term cell phone users have the highest incidence of brain cancer. Children who use cell phones before age 20 have a four-fold increased brain tumor risk."

Barker said Americans should not rely on attorneys or politicians to inform them about health care risks from wireless technologies. He said most lawmakers in Congress have not weighed in on possible health issues, because there is too much campaign cash at risk from corporate benefactors.

"A report from the Center for Responsive

Politics shows that Missouri Sen. Roy Blunt was the third highest benefactor of wireless lobbying money, accepting \$1.283 million in campaign contributions from the wireless industry," Barker noted. "But just about every member of the U.S. Congress has accepted money."

'I lost my son'

Sheilah Mitchell, a member of STL for Safe Technology and a Richmond Heights resident, arranged the Webster Groves presentation by Francis.

"I lost my son, Adam, to testicular cancer," Mitchell said. "He carried a cell phone in his pants pocket through grade school, high school and after college. If you take the time to read all the studies, you know what that can do to you."

"I became acquainted with Dr. Francis's work and he is trying to spread the word," Mitchell added. "He has a PhD from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and has several books out on public health issues. I trust what he has to say."

Webster Groves' Dave and Diane Sperber also are members of STL for Safe Technology. The couple became interested in the EMF issue after a smart meter for reading electric usage was installed at their home. They said they suffered many of the effects listed as possible consequences of low-level radiation. Those effects include:

- sleep disturbances, insomnia
- anxiety and depression
- dizziness, concentration loss
- loss of appetite and weight loss
- skin burning and tingling
- bouts of nausea and fatigue

"My husband and I both suffered from adrenal fatigue. I was breaking out in hives and had angiodema," said Diane Sperber. "All the medical tests we took came up with nothing. Then I saw a YouTube video about the effects of utility smart meters on people."

"We were sleeping three feet from where the meter was installed," She said. "We fixed that with a radiation shield. We unplug our Wi-Fi when it's not being used. We stay away from cell phones when possible."

"We've addressed our issue and we are better, but we want other people to know what is going on," Sperber said. "Smart meters transmit information all the time about your use of electricity. And this coming 5G technology is really frightening because it will be all pervasive. I hope people coming to our meetings can increase their awareness."

It's Purely Anecdotal

Proponents of 5G transmission, and the wireless technology preceding it, are skeptical of reports of cancers, brain disorders and leukemias that have been attributed to EMF exposure. They express sympathy for those suffering illnesses, but contend that these personal cause-and-effect stories involving EMFs are purely anecdotal.

Barker said his group would welcome some independent studies on the effects of 5G technology and more press about it. Members are frustrated that they are

shrugged off as part of some "tin hat crowd" telling conspiracy stories.

"STL for Safe Technology feels that attacks on our group, and the journalists who attempt to cover our concerns, are attacks based on either ignorance of the proven science that wireless technology carries harmful health effects; or, that these attacks on our message originate from the wireless industry."

"The attacks are coming from the industry, or supported agents, or members of financially threatened industries, or businesses whose intent is to deny and ridicule the proven science that wireless technology carries health risks," Barker said.

Barker noted that older people are more receptive to the message of STL for Safe Technology, because they've seen too many instances when safety assurances regarding toxic materials or pollutants later turned out to be false with the result that innocent humans have paid a heavy price.

In the St. Louis region, those safety assurances of the past have involved production of lead contaminants, dioxin waste spread over large areas, low-level radioactive waste dumped into neighborhood creeks and buried in porous landfills.

"Young people should think twice about the technology they are so close to."
— Darryl Barker

"Young people should think twice about the technology they are so close to," Barker said. "Personally, I attribute the entire population's attitude toward wireless technology hazards as one of short-term thinking and emotional dependency on the technology."

Barker said too many people insert their personal lives into their devices with little or no regard for privacy. He said people feel empowered in an artificial, short term sense by wireless technology, and since the health effects are not always readily observable, they do not respond to threats that are not immediate or apparent.

"STL for Safe Technology's hope is to inform people so that those who are receptive to the safety information about wireless and the coming 5G might better protect themselves and their loved ones," Barker said.

"Local governments, school officials, politicians are not responsive," added Barker. "It will require protests by local citizens for appropriate action to be taken. Given that so many of their constituents love their technology, local officials are not going to go out on a limb on these issues now."

'Quiet rooms' investigation is a call to action for community news outlets

by Jackie Spinner

Monica Seals didn't waste time. Within 24 hours after the nonprofit ProPublica Illinois and the Chicago Tribune published an investigation revealing the widespread practice of putting children into solitary confinement in school districts in Illinois, the Centralia radio reporter pressed local officials for answers.

Seals, news director at the Withers Broadcasting station in the Southern Illinois town, wanted the Kaskaskia Special Education District to explain its use of seclusion rooms at the Bridges Learning Center, which used seclusion 1,288 times in the 15 months of school that ProPublica-Tribune reporters examined. According to the analysis of Bridges' records, 72% of the seclusions were not prompted by a safety issue as required by law. The school district did not respond to the Chicago-based reporters by the time of publication.

After the story broke, the director of the Kaskaskia district issued a statement defending its training and adherence to state and federal law, which Seals included in a story for X95 FM, where she works. "I'm definitely following up on the story," she said.

Illinois law requires schools to file a report when a child is put in seclusion, but it does not monitor it, and parents are often not notified when it happens to their child, according to the investigation.

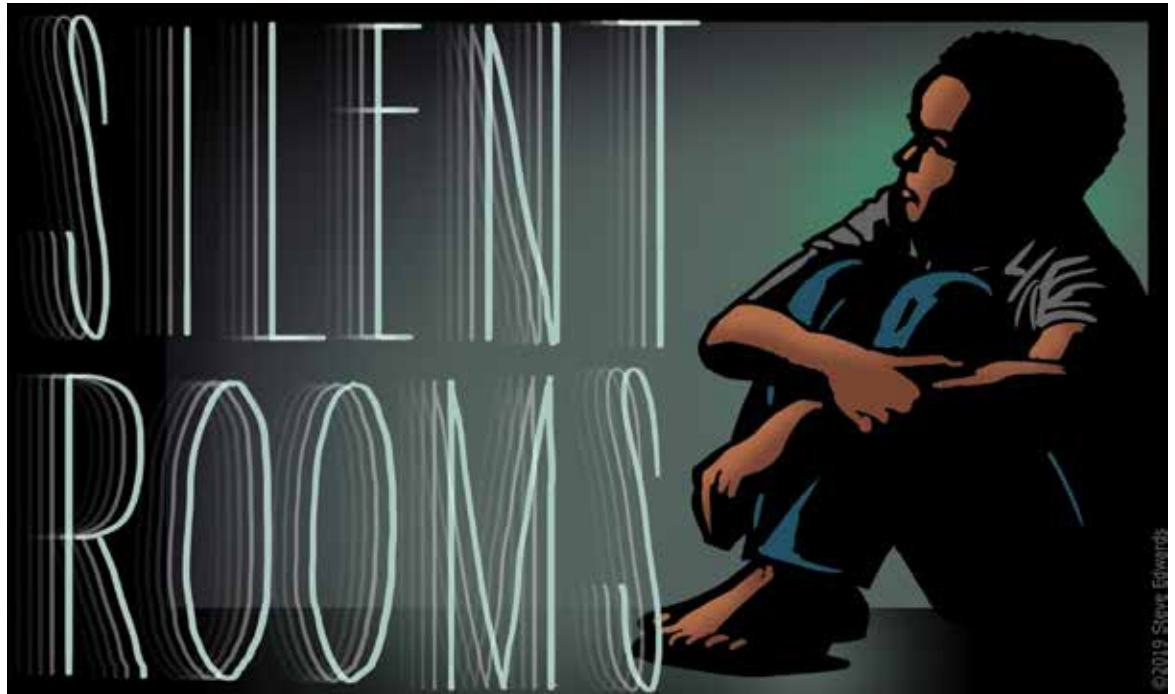
The day after the year-long investigation was published, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker called for emergency action to halt their use. The state school board began drafting rules that would prohibit students from being left alone during a timeout, and at least one state representative introduced legislation to stop the practice altogether.

"The thing exploded like a bomb," Mark Baldwin, executive editor of the Rockford Register Star, said of the investigation. "I haven't seen that in a while."

In the days after its publication, local reporters and news organizations around the state began to follow the breaking story, analyzing a database on ProPublica's website to determine if problems had been reported in their area.

"Our public school districts seem to have clean hands," Baldwin said, adding that the action by the governor "kind of jumped the story before we were even able to run the original."

Nonetheless, the Gatehouse-owned paper



will continue to report and ask questions in its circulation area in northwestern Illinois, Baldwin said. "To me the killer fact there is that the schools must report the use but no one has to look at them."

ProPublica and the Tribune published the investigation under a creative commons license, enabling news organization to reprint it under certain conditions. "We do hope that reporters — and parents — will use this work as a starting point to conduct their own investigations and gather information about what's happening in their communities and to their children," said Louise Kiernan, editor-in-chief for ProPublica Illinois.

Some of the children — whose accounts were mostly detailed in reports obtained through the Illinois Freedom of Information Act — were kept in small, locked rooms as punishment for infractions such as ripping up a homework paper or refusing to get out of the car. Many of the children were disabled and being punished essentially for their disabilities, including autism and ADHD.

"I'd rather die. You're torturing me," one child said while in seclusion.

"Please, please, please open the door. Please, I'll be good. Open the door and I'll be quiet," another child begged.

The accounts are hard to read, as ProPublica acknowledged in a follow-up story after the investigation.

They also were hard to get, with many school districts refusing to turn them over, said Jodi S. Cohen of ProPublica and one of the lead reporters on the investigation. "We were stonewalled, and it wasn't just smaller communities. It was different

school districts throughout the state that stonewalled us."

Cohen said it would be "amazing" if local reporters stayed on the story. She noted that ProPublica was already working with the Belleville News-Democrat on a follow-up. "This is actually the first of several stories we have planned," she said. "There will be more. This is just the beginning."

David Penticuff, the managing editor of the Morning Sentinel in Centralia, said he put a reporter on the story right away and asked for a tight turnaround. He is new to the family-owned paper and to Illinois, having spent 20 years at a community newspaper in neighboring Indiana. He said the seclusion story will be a good test for some changes he wants to implement in the newsroom to respond more quickly and thoroughly to breaking news.

But it won't be easy, he noted, given the time and resources that ProPublica and the Tribune put into the original story. That isn't something smaller news organization can easily duplicate.

"The information they gathered obviously had a lot of public records requests, individual student reports," he said. "We are just starting. We need to get on top of this and do our job."

Nick Miller, president of the Southern Illinois Editorial Association and editor of the O'Fallon Weekly, said it is imperative for parents to come forward to help local journalists when they confront local school officials about their use of seclusion rooms.

"You need to have local support," he said. "You need to have complaints. There has to be some engagement in the community."

Woman reporter portrayed as tired trope in new Eastwood film 'Richard Jewell'

by Tracy Everbach

In the new film "Richard Jewell," reporter Kathy Scruggs (played by Olivia Wilde) meets an FBI source (played by Jon Hamm) in a bar. She presses him for information on a suspect in the Atlanta Olympics bombing.

The FBI agent gets annoyed with her persistence. She puts her hand on his upper thigh, leans in, and he whispers the information: "We're looking at the security guard."

Then she asks him if he wants to get a room or go to her car. "This is happening?" he asks. "Yeah, this is happening," she replies.

This scenario never happened, friends, family members and former co-workers told the *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*, where Scruggs was a police reporter.

In 1996, Scruggs broke the story the FBI was investigating security guard Richard Jewell. But she never had sex with her sources to get information. Scruggs died in 2001 at age 42, so she cannot defend herself over the Clint Eastwood-directed film, which opens Dec. 13 in theaters. The AJC has asked for a disclaimer to be placed on the Warner Bros. film, explaining it falsely portrays the newspaper and its employees.

The screenplay, written by Billy Ray, is based largely on a Marie Brenner-authored *Vanity Fair* story, "The Ballad of Richard Jewell." Nothing in the 1997 original story mentions Scruggs trading sexual favors for information. Brenner describes Scruggs as a devoted police reporter with a "hard edge" who got a scoop from her sources and reported it.

Olivia Wilde depicts the character as a dogged reporter who is loud and assertive and at one point hides in the backseat of Jewell's lawyer's car, which also never happened. Though the film's title is "Richard Jewell," it's really the story of an eccentric lawyer defending his innocent rube client against the evil FBI and nefarious media.

The portrayal of Scruggs follows a long line of unfair depictions employing a tired, old trope that women use sex to get ahead. The film offers a misogynistic view of women journalists, but also makes all journalists look bad, as if we breach ethics on a daily basis. Reporters are consistently shown in packs, harassing and hurling questions and accusations at Jewell, his lawyer, and even his poor mother (played by Kathy Bates).

Emily White, a communications director for a Texas school district, studied film representations of women journalists from the 1930s to present-day while in her master's program. She found that films feature female journalists according to "male-driven ideals." From Sally Field's character in "Absence of Malice" in the 1970s to Kate Mara's character in the recent "House of Cards," women in movies breach ethics — in these cases by

having sex with sources.

"In reality, no journalist does that," White said in an interview. "It's the most far-fetched behavior for a journalist."

She said such portrayals damage all journalists' reputations, especially in a climate in which they are routinely demonized.

"Tons of studies that show how the public has lost faith in journalism, especially since the 2016 election," she noted. "When you see depictions in entertainment, they are implanted in your mind: the media begins to look unethical. But the vast majority of journalists are doing their best, minimizing harm, following ethical codes and reporting the news."

Olivia Wilde has defended her portrayal of Scruggs, saying she never intended to insinuate that journalist had to use her sexuality to get information (even though that is what the character does). Wilde also added the perplexing comment, "it's sort of a misunderstanding of feminism for women to be pious and sexless." Her comments conflate ethics and sexuality.

Still, Wilde is not responsible for this slandering of a woman; the director (Eastwood) and the writer (Ray) are. The film, which could have been a compelling portrayal of an innocent man accused of an awful crime, instead is a black-and-white evil vs. good story, with journalists and the FBI as villains.

Sam Rockwell, who plays Jewell's lawyer, Watson Bryant, seems to be reprising his role as George W. Bush in "Vice," judging by his accent. The rogue lawyer wears cargo shorts and backward baseball caps and has a bumper sticker in his office that reads "I Fear Government More than I Fear Terrorism."

At the end of the film, when the true bomber, Eric Rudolph, is caught by the FBI and pleads guilty, no one mentions that he is a white supremacist domestic terrorist who bombed abortion clinics and a lesbian bar in the name of religion.

"Richard Jewell" could have been a great and nuanced film about the dangers of getting an investigation wrong and causing harm to a man and his family. The journalists could have been shown discussing the ethics of publishing information from law enforcement sources that turns out to be inaccurate — conversations frequently had in newsrooms. The film also could have made the point that the AJC in 2011 was cleared by the Georgia Supreme Court, which ruled that the articles reported the truth at the time they were published. Instead it maligns a dead journalist, repeats sexist tropes, and makes a complex issue into a simplistic yarn that recycles negative platitudes about journalists and FBI agents.

Year three of Trump's assault on truth

This is a series of opinions on President Donald Trump and his assault on the truth, written by Gateway Journalism Review's publisher William H. Freivogel. You can read the series on our website.

Replacing Enlightenment virtues with Dark Age fantasies

by William H. Freivogel

At the end of year three and on the verge of impeachment, Donald J. Trump is destroying Enlightenment principles that undergird American Democracy and the First Amendment — the faith that science, reason, facts and empiricism can triumph over ignorance, superstition, lies and darkness.

Our model democracy, our free press, our professional government, our world-class scientific establishment are based Enlightenment values that grew out of the Renaissance as civilization escaped the Middle Ages.

Democracy is based on the principle that ordinary men and women are able to understand the world and formulate beliefs about governance as well as kings and queens and nobles.

The First Amendment is based on the belief that truth triumphs over lies and defeats falsehood on the battlefield of ideas.

The modern press is based on the belief that professional reporters can sort fact from fiction and faithfully and fearlessly report the truth.

Government and the modern civil service are based on the Enlightenment belief that experts, such as those in the State Department, can sort through mountains of information and data compiled by diplomats and government experts to formulate intelligent policy.

Science is predicated on the Enlightenment belief in

empiricism and the ability of disinterested scientists to discover unpredictable, uncomfortable truths — that the sun doesn't orbit the earth, that splitting of tiny atomic building blocks of existence could end existence, that our scientific search for a comfortable life may heat the planet and make it uninhabitable.

The progress of civilization is based on belief that as people apply reason to learn more and throw off the superstitions and barbarities of the Dark Ages they recognize the common bonds of humanity. They understand the importance of international law and human rights to the welfare of the world's people and turn away from nationalism's gravitational pull toward destruction.

Yet Trump's know-nothingism threatens every petal of this great flowering of the Enlightenment that provided the fertile garden in which our nation was born.

Trump has created a fantasy world at odds with the real one. In his world, Ukraine and Democrats interfered with the 2016 presidential election, not Vladimir Putin and Russia. Nevermind Trump's loud entreaty, "Russia, if you're listening" or his son's "I love it" at Trump Tower, or convicted campaign manager Paul Manafort's sharing of internal polling data or dirty trickster Roger Stone's conviction for lying about his contacts with Julian Assange and the leak

of a trove of Russian-hacked Clinton-campaign emails.

In Trump's fictional world, impeachment, like the Russia investigation, is a hoax. Trump extorted and bribed the leader of Ukraine in plain sight and declared it "perfect." He demanded a "favor" — investigating Biden and CrowdStrike — in return for a White House meeting and eventually \$400 million in military aid. Quid pro quo. Political dirt in return for \$400 million. It doesn't get much starker.

Dirt for aid.

In Trump's fictional world, the premiere news organizations publish "fake news." The news media are enemies of the people. This even though the disclosures in the "failing" New York Times and "Amazon" Washington Post have turned out to be true. Trump's first of many national security advisers, Michael Flynn, had lied about his dealings with the Russians. Trump tried to get FBI Director James Comey to spare Flynn and then fired Comey for disloyalty. Trump tried to fire Special Counsel Robert Mueller. Trump's lawyer tried to persuade personal lawyer Michael Cohen to lie to Congress about continuing negotiations to build a Trump Tower Moscow into the 2016 general election campaign.

Yet Trump loves and courts Sean Hannity and his debunked conspiracy theories. Not

surprisingly, an InfoWars host, Owen Shoyer, disrupted the opening of House impeachment hearings on Dec. 9 yelling Trump was innocent and Democrats guilty of treason. This is the same "journalist" who claimed the Newtown massacre of first graders didn't happen and the parents lied about it.

The InfoWars view of treason is like Trump's. To the president, the traitors are the whistle-blower who tipped Congress to Trump's shakedown of the Ukrainian president, and Rep. Adam Schiff, who led the House Intelligence Committee's investigation that led to impeachment.

In Trump's fantasy, his lawyer Rudy Giuliani and the Three Amigos are the reliable experts on Ukraine. After all Rudy even believes the president's Ukrainian conspiracy theory. The Washington Post didn't have enough Pinocchios to describe how false "CrowdStrike" is, that debunked conspiracy that had Trump muttering about how "They [Ukraine] have this server, right? From the DNC, Democratic National Committee." It took the NSC Russia expert Fiona Hill to point out this was Putin propaganda that the president and his allies are spouting.

In Trumpworld, the State Department and NSC professionals are tiresome as the "fake" news organizations.



Take former Ukrainian Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch, whose parents fled the Soviet Union and Nazis. She was “bad news,” Trump said, after he removed her following a smear campaign by Giuliani. And when she testified to the House, Trump tweeted real-time witness intimidation: “Everywhere Marie Yovanovitch went turned bad. She started off in Somalia, how did that go?”

Anyone visualizing Black Hawk Down was in the wrong decade. Yovanovitch was a low level officer in the late 1980s without policy influence, and the helicopter was shot down in 1993.

What a contrast between the professionalism and courage of the diplomats on the one hand and Giuliani and his amigos and indicted Ukrainian companions caught on a plane out of the country.

The professionals in addition to Yovanovitch included Ambassador William B. Taylor, a West Point graduate and one-time member of the 82nd Airborne, Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, whose family fled the Soviet Union and

who earned a Purple Heart in Iraq, Dr. Hill, from Britain who has made a career of containing Putin and tried to set Trump and House Republicans straight as they parroted Putin talking points.

These are all professionals loyally serving American foreign policy and President Trump until the president’s shakedown agenda turned into what former NSC Adviser John Bolton called a drug deal where Giuliani was a grenade “who’s going to blow everybody up.”

Meanwhile, beyond the facts directly relevant to impeachment, Trump continues to embrace dictators across the world from the Saudi Crown Prince implicated in murdering and dismembering a Washington Post journalist, to the leaders of Turkey, North Korea, Brazil and the Philippines.

Trump has happily surrendered America’s role as a champion of human rights around the world. The president pardons those facing military justice for war crimes. He gives Turkey the go-ahead to invade Syria and attack Kurdish allies who did all

the dying in the war against ISIS. Russia rushes into the American void.

And as the world began to take climate change seriously, Trump exited the Paris Climate Accord and continues to deny the overwhelming consensus of climate scientists that man-made global warming is an existential crisis. In pique at being denied Time’s Person of the Year honor, he stoops so low as to bully Greta Thunberg, a 16-year-old climate activist from Sweden.

Trump almost certainly will be impeached but not removed from office. He could even be reelected because a willfully blind minority that includes 42 percent of American voters live with Trump in this fantasy world of presidential tweets and misinformation. And Republicans in Congress follow like sheep.

It’s a world in which the president’s blunt repetition of crude slogans — fake news, hoax, witch hunt, coup, Deep State, nasty woman, low IQ, FBI scum — masquerade as discourse. And when repeated over and over to a credulous audience of adoring

supporters, these mindless slogans drown rational argument based on fact.

We face a stress test for our democracy, a stress test for modernity, a stress test for the three centuries of Enlightenment progress that has coincided with the life of a nation built on Enlightenment ideals of Franklin, Jefferson and Madison.

Whether Trump can drag the nation backward into selfishness and division will depend on an idea at the center of the Enlightenment — that ordinary men and women can discover truths that kings and potentates were blind to and that people can employ empiricism and rationality to banish the darkness of ignorance, superstition, lies and unjust power.

The survival of Enlightenment values in this country created upon Enlightenment ideals, is a matter of monumental importance to the world and it is in the hands of the American people.

How a popular media bias chart determines what news can be trusted

by Beth Heldebrandt

The headline on a recent article in The Palmer Report suggested that its writer had landed a scoop. “Turns out Donald Trump directly sabotaged the U.S. military mission against Baghdadi,” it read. The subsequent analysis piece written by the blog’s founder, Bill Palmer, a self-described political journalist, went on to accuse President Trump of nearly sabotaging the military operation in northern Syria that targeted and killed Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in October.

But it did so without facts and no original reporting, and just a little digging around on the Internet would have confirmed that, in spite of its growing influence — a lawmaker cited it in a CNN interview — The Palmer Report is a liberal blog that pushes out anti-Trump articles.

As a media analyst for Ad Fontes Media, I regularly am assigned these types of “news” articles to rate them for bias and reliability. There are many things to consider when making these determinations, and it’s no easy task, even for me, as a longtime journalist.

It’s no wonder that the general public has a difficult time in deciding which news sources they should trust, as a recent Stanford University study noted in its examination of media literacy. I, too, have found myself overwhelmed by the various “news stories” flooding my social media feeds. But I know how to verify them. Most readers simply share the articles as fact without following a few simple tips to look at the “about us” section, check comments or do a reverse image search, as media literacy experts have suggested.

Gauging the reliability of a publication is not merely a problem for U.S. news consumers, as Gateway Journalism Review associate editor Zahed Arman writes in the fall issue of the magazine. It is an international problem.

Ad Fontes Media Inc.

“ Although we rate sources independently, regular conference calls allow us to share our thoughts and experiences, and Otero [the chart creator] has used this feedback to adjust the process in order to gain the most accurate and useful results.”

is an offshoot of the Media Bias Chart created by patent attorney Vanessa Otero from Denver. Ad Fontes means “to the source” in Latin; Ad Fontes looks at the source of the report. Otero was so alarmed by the spread of information from unfamiliar sources during the months leading up to the 2016 presidential election that she used her experience in legal analysis to rate various news sources on their quality and bias.

Media bias chart

Otero compared the media landscape to the American food landscape. “We love junk food and we love junk news. And they are both wreaking havoc on our individual and collective physical and mental health, and having detrimental effects on our whole society,” she wrote in explaining Ad Fontes. Otero’s efforts to analyze the media, then, are similar to the nutrition label on our food. “I assert that we should at least have some idea of what we are getting into before putting it into our brains.”

Her Media Bias Chart made an immediate impact and was shared more than 20,000 times on Facebook. Otero received lots of feedback, from those who argued the placement of particular media on the chart to those asking her to rate more and more media sources.

The popularity of her project led Otero to create Ad Fontes Media Inc. in 2018 with the mission of “making news consumers smarter and news media better.” Earlier this year, she launched the first multi-analyst content analysis,

employing 20 people who rated 1,800 articles and TV news shows. These analysts represented a variety of backgrounds, from teachers to lawyers to business executives.

I was lucky enough to be chosen to participate. I had been using the Media Bias Chart in my journalism class for a few semesters, so I jumped at the chance to be a part of the process.

From March to June this year, our team of analysts ranging from educators to attorneys to technology workers rated about 370 articles and 17 TV news shows each. Each article and TV show was rated on its “quality” and “bias” by at least three analysts with different political views (right, left and center). This was designed to minimize the impact of the analysts’ personal biases on the results.

The “bias” rating, demonstrated on the Media Bias Chart on the horizontal axis, ranges from most extreme left to neutral to most extreme right. The “quality” rating (which has now been renamed “reliability”), demonstrated on the chart’s vertical axis, rates sources on a scale from original fact reporting to analysis, opinion, propaganda and inaccurate/fabricated information.

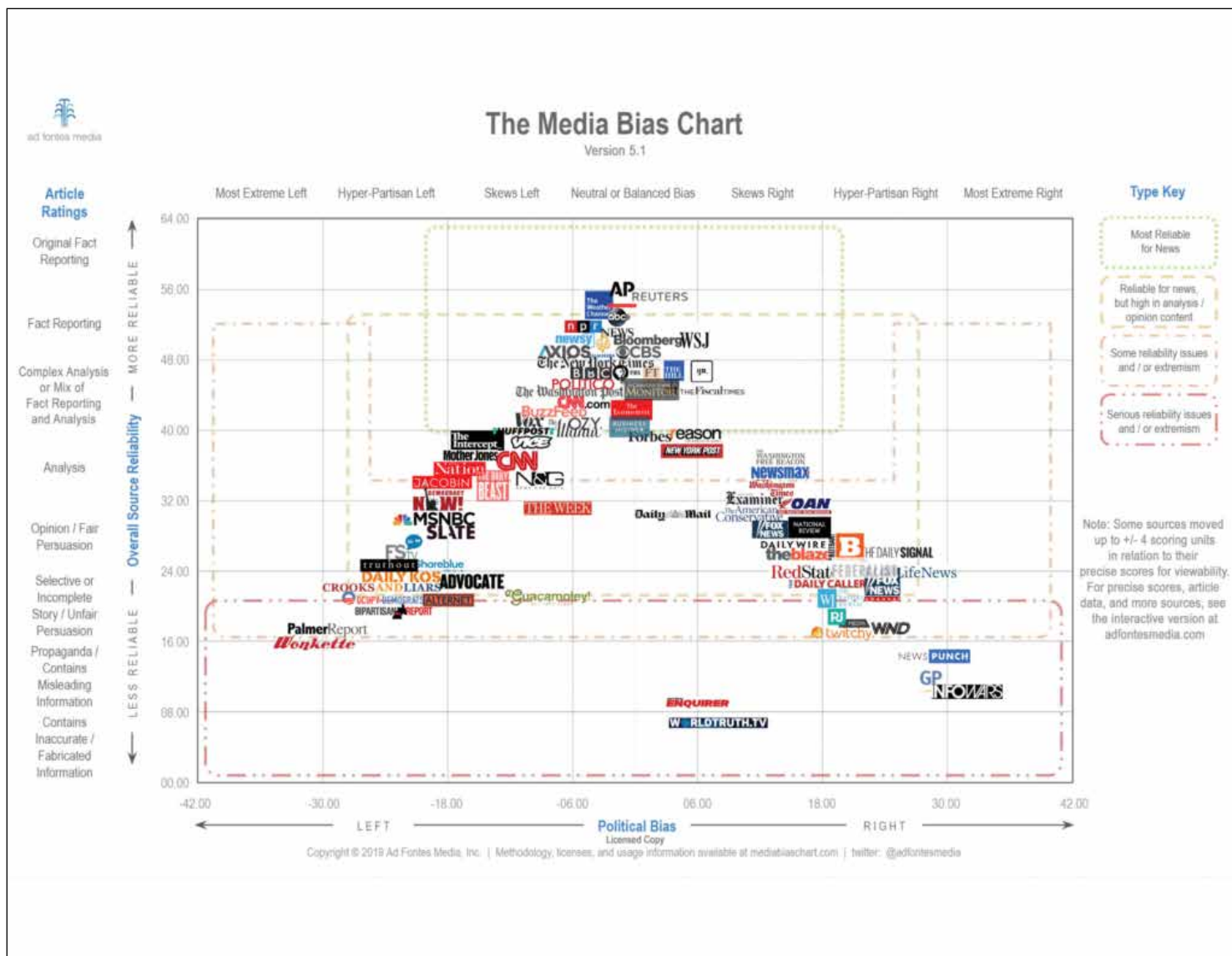
The results of our in-depth content analysis were published in August as an Interactive Media Bias Chart, version 5.0 from Otero’s original. (The interactive chart is 5.0. The static chart has been updated and is now version 5.1). This

interactive version allows you to read the articles that were analyzed and to view specific media sources individually to see where they appear on the chart.

As analysts, we consider a variety of factors when rating a news article. Although we rate sources independently, regular conference calls allow us to share our thoughts and experiences, and Otero has used this feedback to adjust the process in order to gain the most accurate and useful results.

To determine its reliability score, we consider the article’s veracity (Is it true and easily provable? False and easily disprovable? Subject to debate?) and expression (Is it presented as fact, opinion or some combination of those?). And we consider the article’s headline and graphics (i.e., are they truthful or misleading?). We add each of these scores to the chart on a sliding scale, with the average of those creating the article’s overall reliability score.

To determine an article’s bias score, we consider its language (Are there personal attacks? Does it use partisan political terminology such as “snowflakes” or “deplorables?”) and its political position (Is it neutral or does it represent the talking points of a particular political party?). Finally, a comparison score is considered, based on how this article presents information compared to other stories from other sources on the same topic. We add each of these scores to the chart on a sliding scale, with the average of those



Courtesy of Ad Fontes Media Inc.

creating the article's overall bias score.

The media sources rated most reliable and least biased, then, appear at the top and center of the chart.

So, where did that Palmer Report article rate on the chart? With few facts, unsupported opinions and an accusatory headline, it was rated on the line between "opinion/fair persuasion" and "selective or incomplete story/unfair persuasion" on the reliability scale. Calling President Trump "obnoxious and borderline maniacal" and displaying liberal viewpoints in comparison with other articles on the topic, it was rated "hyper-partisan left" on the bias scale.

With a constantly changing media landscape, our work is not done. The content analysis continues, as a team of nine rates articles each week. Media sources are added to the chart

regularly (The Independent, Newsweek, CNBC, Epoch Times and The Root will be added soon). Version 5.1 of the static chart, with better visibility of media sources, was released in early November.

Like me, Ad Fontes analyst Steven Specht first became involved with the Media Bias Chart when he used it with his students at the University of Florida. "I was very frustrated at the quality of articles turned in by students during current event assignments," he said. He uses the Media Bias Chart for students to do a self-assessment of their top five sources based on their placement on the chart and then made a rule that sources needed to come from the green box at the top of the page.

His work as an analyst to help determine the placement of those sources on the chart, Specht said, has been a learning

experience for himself, as well. He shares his experiences as a media analyst in his blog at stevenspecht.com.

"I have enjoyed learning about new sources and about the dirty tricks used by some organizations to make their articles appear better than they really are, and I think that we are slowly devising a 'best practices,' so to speak, as a result of that," he said.

Mary Ann Taylor, a blogger and college English teacher in Dallas, seized the opportunity to be a media analyst after a post about media bias led her to the Ad Fontes chart.

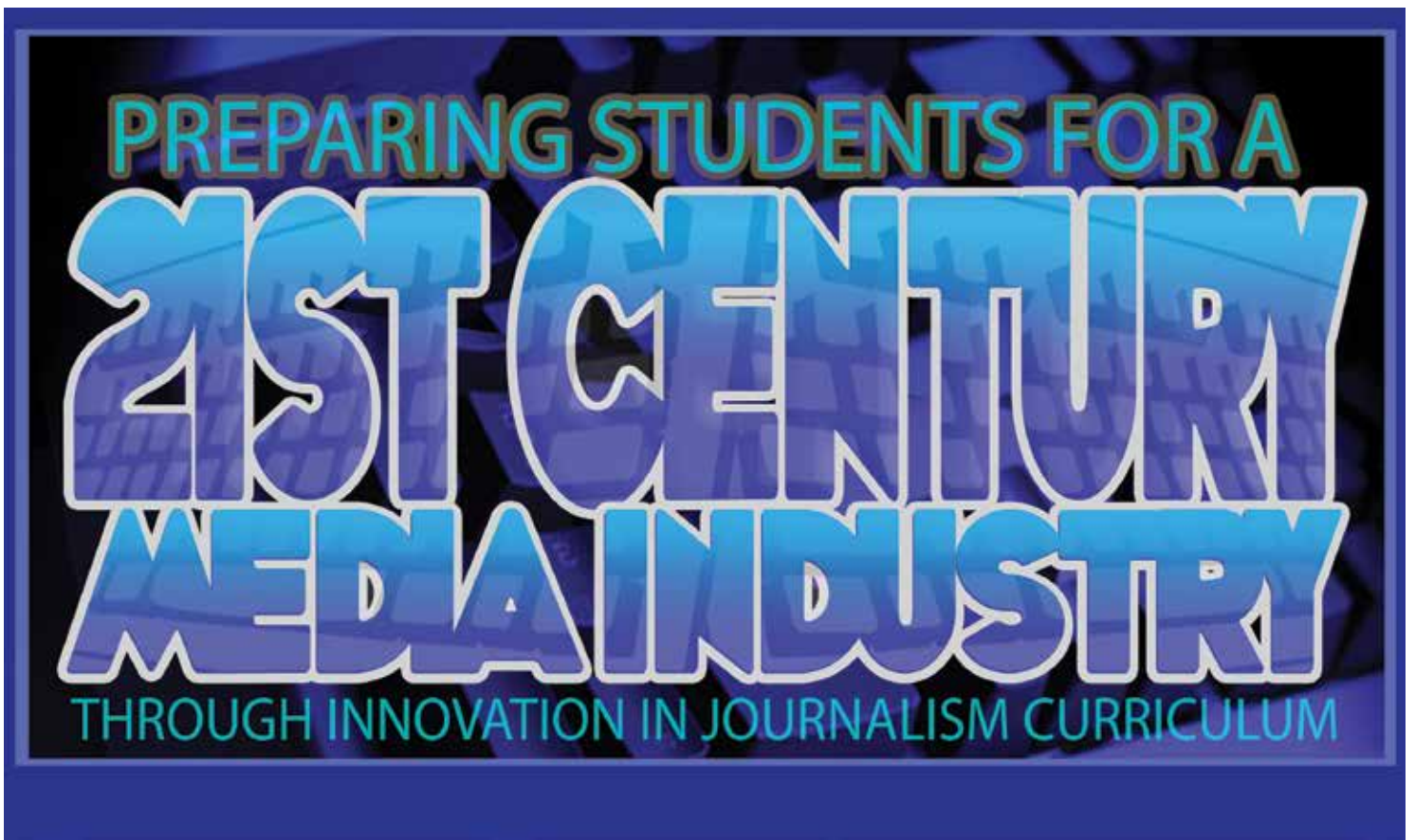
"Although I read fairly widely, I was not reading broadly. News sources are more diverse than I realized," she said. "Yes, there is often clear bias, but there is also more fact reporting in a variety of places."

Otero has described her work as helping people to

become "info fit." "If more people choose to become info fit, we can make a difference in our politics and in our personal relationships with our fellow citizens," she said.

To make progress toward this goal, Ad Fontes has launched its new Content Analysis Rating Tool (CART) Media Literacy Software. This allows educators teaching junior high through college to train students how to rate news articles using the same tools as our team of analysts. The students are able to compare their results with ours as they become increasingly media savvy. The first subscriber will begin using the software in January.

"Ad Fontes may be on the cutting edge of educating a new generation to think independently, no small task and potentially a way forward to save us all," Taylor said.



Helping students prepare for future: How journalism educators innovate

by Ensung Kim

Journalism educators face growing demands as they prepare students for a 21st century media industry. Teaching future journalists no longer means just teaching journalistic values and skills such as writing, editing, and ethics. Producing entry-level journalists means helping students develop social media and audience engagement skills, web/multimedia skills, teamwork, and the ability to work under pressure and tight deadlines, according to a recent study analyzing job openings by the top 10 newspaper and broadcast journalism companies in the U.S.

These changed demands aren't surprising when one considers how news production, dissemination and consumption have changed in the U.S. in the past 20 years. With the explosive growth of social media and mobile devices, the journalism industry has witnessed unprecedented changes in the ways people engage with news: Roughly one-third of adults in the U.S. reported that they went online for news in 2010, but by 2015, 63 percent of Twitter and Facebook users called each platform

a source for news. In 2018, social media sites such as Facebook surpassed print newspapers as a primary news source for Americans.

The journalism industry has responded to these changes in a big hurry. Although news organizations initially focused on merely establishing a social media presence, news outlets have quickly moved to using social media tools in gathering and disseminating news, engaging with audiences, and developing revenue sources. Journalists themselves have evolved along with this trend. The traditional division of journalists' specialties is long gone; today, an individual journalist takes and edits photos, records audio, and produces videos in addition to reporting and writing news stories. They use metrics to monitor audience responses, and follow social media to spot newsworthy trends.

In this dynamic, some of the leading innovation educators have chimed in to share their experiences with integrating innovation into journalism curricula.

Innovation is more than embracing technology

To many, innovation is often technology-driven. For journalism educators, however, innovation involves much more than embracing the latest technological development. Sally Renaud, who served as chair of the journalism department at Eastern Illinois University until 2018, said one has to look at the "big picture" in order to better understand innovation in journalism. She believes that journalists already know how to report news and tell stories, but the bigger question is whether it can be paid for. "News organizations," she said, "have always been searching for ways to ensure journalism can be financially sustainable."

Aleszu Bajak, who manages Northeastern University's Journalism Innovation and Media Advocacy graduate program, agreed that innovation is not just the following technology itself. "Innovation is young journalists' mindset to stay open, curious, and looking outwards," he said, adding that one should look "beyond the

walls of journalism for inspiration on the methods and formats to tell stories.”

Mark Berkey-Gerard, chair of the journalism department at Rowan University, emphasized that innovation is continuous. “Innovation is not a place you get to,” he said. “You’re continually looking for new ways to get information and stories that the public wants and needs and constantly looking for the best and the most impactful way to deliver stories to them in a meaningful way.” In that sense, innovation is philosophical. Nathan Carpenter, director of Convergence Media at Illinois State University, put it this way: “Innovation involves changing the relationship between journalism, institution and society as a whole.”

Innovation in journalism programs takes a couple of forms: technology-based and content-based. At one level, most — if not all — journalism programs have developed and implemented courses designed to help students acquire technological competency. Requiring all journalism majors to take a multimedia journalism course is quite common in many programs. An increasing number of journalism programs is offering courses such as data journalism, data visualization, analytics, metrics, video production, audience engagement, coding and web development with significant focus on cutting-edge technology. Some programs are making efforts, although still at a very early stage, to incorporate even artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality, or augmented reality into journalism curricula.

At another level, journalism programs are trying to teach students innovative ways to think about what kinds of stories they would tell their audience. Holly Wise, a professor at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Texas State University, called her course teaching solutions journalism an innovation of content rather than technology. “It’s teaching students how to practice a new form of news gathering and framing of the content,” she said.

How are journalism programs embracing innovation?

Journalism programs today clearly recognize the need for change. While journalism educators have long discussed convergence, multimedia journalism, and entrepreneurial journalism, today, their curricular discussions are dominated by social media, analytics, AI, and virtual (or augmented) reality. “Although shift comes slowly in academia, I feel that it passed the tipping point,” Berkey-Gerard said, “Everyone has come to grips with the change and are trying to figure out how to adapt faster and innovate faster.”

Educators are also contemplating how to ensure that journalism innovation is not solely focused on technological advances. Nathan Carpenter, director of Convergent Media at Illinois State University, said a concerted effort is being made to develop curricula that helps students identify

disinformation. “We try to teach students to better report trends and issues on social media,” he said. “Students don’t always know when and why a trend on social media matters.” At Eastern Illinois University, journalism and non-journalism students are learning how to discern truth from rumors in courses such as News, Information and Media Literacy and Truth, Lies and Social Media.

While all journalism programs recognize the need for innovation, some schools are progressing faster than others. A study based on interviews with 70 deans and directors of journalism programs in public and private universities in the U.S. reported “some significant gaps in efforts to innovate ... including a reactive mid-set and general lack of strategic approaches to innovating.” Those interviewed for this report frequently shared this view as well. “As a whole, they are not keeping up with the shift,” Bajak said. He argued that journalism programs are not producing students with enough skills for positions above entry level, such as assistant or associate editor positions. He feels that many graduates are not ready for what job descriptions are demanding.

How students are coping with innovation

Journalism educators said that they have observed three tendencies in students’ responses to innovation. First, students are invariably excited about innovation in journalism, but their competency varies greatly. They’re interested in learning social media, mobile journalism, and creating multimedia, multi-platform packages. While many students seem to be familiar with web development, a large number of students has a hard time thinking numerically for topics like data journalism. Journalism educators, Bajak suggested, should help students determine where they best fit into increasingly diverse job positions.

Second, while students are experts at using social media for personal uses, they aren’t really thinking about using social media journalistically. Educators found that approaching social media legally, ethically, and professionally is not something that students do naturally. “When students produce media products, they are in independent or personal production modes. They are not so much journalists, but (they are) personality driven like YouTubers or TikTok celebrities. They aren’t coming from (a) citizen journalism point of view,” Carpenter said.

Finally, many students still approach journalism in a traditional way. Wise said that innovation in journalism is a “paradigm shift” for students, as many students still associate journalism with writing. Berkey-Gerard noticed the same from his students: “Students tend to imitate what they perceive as the way news is done,” he said. “The first instinct is to replicate a traditional newspaper, because that’s what they can see and what they can imitate. When I say

‘Let’s rethink the student newspaper,’ that’s really scary for them.”

Challenges and strategies for innovation

As is true with most innovations, integrating journalism innovation into curricula is challenging. Journalism educators face both individual and institutional obstacles that include personnel issues, administrative hurdles, and technological difficulties.

Almost all interviewees for this article called the slow pace of academia the number one challenge for incorporating innovation into journalism curriculum. Technology is changing faster than ever, but things move slowly in academia. “This is not an issue for some institutions. Across the board, they all have this issue, and it hinders the ability for schools to navigate and teach courses,” Wise said. It also takes time to obtain faculty buy-in. There are always those who resist change, and many changes occur in the time it takes to get faculty members on board with a new idea or technology. Another complication is mismatching personnel. It’s difficult to find faculty who have industry experience to teach the latest technologies while possessing a strong academic background at the same time.

In addition to structural issues, journalism innovation poses technological challenges. Carpenter explained: “First of all, trying to maintain software that lets you do social media listening has become unaffordable. Second, social media platforms are increasingly holding back academics’, researchers’, and general public’s access. And, third, keeping up with all of this takes constant effort to learn new things — coding and programing, (an) ability to collect data, etc.”

In the face of these challenges, journalism educators continue to search for solutions and strategies to integrate innovation into curriculum. Berkey-Gerard said individual faculty members should surround themselves with other professors who already work on implementing innovation to come up with ideas and strategies. Whether the interaction is online or through conferences, being a part of a community of people who’re trying to do the same thing is “inspirational,” he said. Wise advised that individual faculty members should innovate their curriculum “even if it is just one unit, one module, or one learning objective.”

These educators called for budget and funding at the department, college, and university level. Attending conferences to stay up-to-date, bringing professionals to train faculty on new technologies, and rewarding excellence among students and faculty are all necessary elements to bring innovation to journalism programs. “We’ve got to find ways to reward faculty and students,” Berkey-Gerard said. “It can’t be just extra work.”

Ohio newsletter seeks to amplify Midwestern voices

by Nika Schoonover

The Midwest is often referred to as “flyover country” by coastal elites who travel across the nation. It’s meant as a derogatory term to dismiss the states between New York and California.

But a new digital newsletter from cleveland.com in Ohio is embracing the term ahead of the 2020 presidential election, naming itself The Flyover as it delivers news on important issues discussed in the Midwest, the presidential candidates as they travel within the Midwest and how they address these issues. Cleveland.com is a news and information site in Ohio that delivers to 9.9 million users on a monthly average. The site is mobile-friendly and is active on both Twitter and Facebook.

The series launched just ahead of the second round of Democratic debates July 30 in Detroit. Previous to the Flyover, the team published the weekly Capitol Letter newsletter. As of July 31, it had 8,500 subscribers. They intend to use the same strategy for the Flyover.

It focuses on seven states: Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan and Iowa. Seth Richardson, chief political writer for the newsletter, emphasized that “these are the states that are going to determine who the next president is going to be.”

“ This is a realization that it’s a different culture from the coasts. There’s this unity among those states.”

— Seth Richardson

Some of his recent stories covered increasing economic anxiety in the Midwest and the possibility of an initiative in Pennsylvania to reduce carbon emissions.

Brian Calfano, associate professor of political science and journalism at the University of Cincinnati, said the Midwest will be essential in the 2020 election. He said the most



Photo by Photo by Phil Roeder via Flickr

A new digital newsletter from cleveland.com in Ohio is named “The Flyover.”

Richardson visits about 35 websites a day from all over the Midwest to create a “one-stop shop” for news pertinent to the region. The Flyover covers issues on ethanol, biofuel waivers, labor, manufacturing and deindustrialization. The idea is the states within Middle America generally agree on the issues that should be paid attention to.

“This is a realization that it’s a different culture from the coasts,” Richardson said. “There’s this unity among those states.”

important states to watch are Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin.

Calfano said forerunners in those states are essentially polling above incumbent President Donald Trump, well above the margin of error. The exception is Kamala Harris who, although still polling above Trump, is within the margin.

“It doesn’t bode well for an incumbent,” Calfano said.

In the past, Ohio had been the essential swing state for elections. In recent years the state has swung further right.

“Those days are gone,” Calfano said. “The Republican Party has solidified its gains in the state.”

He said the reason for this can be attributed to the Democratic Party moving further left, which has turned off many rural and suburban voters. The major cities in Ohio still lean left, but not enough to create a strong balance with the rural areas in the state, he added.

Calfano recently conducted a study based on the premise of “common ground.” The study was done on 500 Cincinnati-area residents who were exposed to two stills of a television news

story with a script. One version had no mention of the phrase “common ground,” while the other did use the term.

Jeff Blevins, chair of the Journalism Department at the University of Cincinnati, said the findings were particularly interesting in Ohio because it is this “microcosm of the United States.”

“You’ve got rural and urban in close proximity, at the same time, people who have a lot of the same problems,” he said.

Calfano said that the study was trying to test if political news stories placed in the context of “common ground” had an effect on how people think about media. He said that one of the major things journalists have been struggling with are “positive stories.” These stories are easy for the reader to connect with because they somewhat achieve this notion of “common ground.”

The Flyover also strives to reach to readers outside of the Midwest.

“This isn’t just for the people in these seven states, because it is such an important part of the country it’s for people everywhere,” Richardson said.

Survey: Readers trust community newspapers more than national news outlets, social media

by Nick Forsythe

Readers trust their community papers more than any other news outlet, according to a recent survey from the National Newspaper Association.

The survey, conducted annually for the National Newspaper Association by Susquehanna Polling and Research of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, found that national network TV came in closely behind community papers. Social media ranked the lowest.

Kate Richardson, managing editor for Publisher's Auxiliary, a publication of the newspaper association, said the survey results reflect that community newspapers still have a crucial place in journalism, although on a trustworthy scale of one to 10, both community papers and network TV were roughly in the middle.

"Community newspapers are still the most trusted source of information because the reporters and editors are also residents in the communities that they cover," Richardson said. "The residents of these communities know these reporters and can see them serving as their watchdogs on a daily basis."

The survey also found that most community newspaper readers exercise their right to vote, with 85% of readers saying they are "very likely" to vote in upcoming elections, compared to 73% of non-newspaper readers. Community newspapers were also rated the most trustworthy as a source of information on political candidates running for office.

"Journalism is not rocket science, but you have to do it right," said Matt Paxton, publisher of The News-Gazette in Lexington, Virginia. "We feel a sense of responsibility to get the story right and present it in a fair and balanced way. We encourage people to get involved and to respond. The reader knows when you are being authentic or not."

When it comes to explicitly seeking out information on candidates running for public office from the federal to the local level, 68% of respondents turn to national network TV news "very or somewhat often," then followed by community newspapers at 61%, and then cable TV news at 58%. Only 42% of respondents seek out direct mailing or newsletters from candidates/political parties, 38% get their information from radio, 33% from metropolitan newspapers, and



Photo by Photo courtesy of The Monitor-News

Reed Anfinson, the publisher of the Swift County Monitor-News, in Benson, Minnesota, said it is essential for the future of community newspapers to find a sustainable revenue model and take the feedback of their readers to heart.

the lowest being social media, with 29% of respondents receiving their news from there.

Readers and non-readers agree that it is essential for the public to have access to their local government with an average rating of 8.23, on a scale of 1 to 10, for readers and 7.88 for non-readers.

"We give the readers the information they need to make an informed decision, which means they are then more likely to vote," said Matt Adelman, publisher of the Douglas Budget in Douglas, Wyoming. "If larger publications want to gain the public's trust, they can no longer be everything to everybody. They need to take a step back and decide what their core mission is and let everything else go. It's pointless to try and please everyone."

Of the respondents, 79% agreed community newspapers "provide valuable local shopping and advertising information." A quarter rated their community newspaper as their primary source of information regarding local stores, which is higher than all other outlets, with social media being the closest behind at 17%.

"Community newspapers have a proven history of trustworthiness when it comes to this kind of information," Adelman said. "Everything we do, from stories to advertising, is hyper-local. People know us and trust us because they grew up with us."

Reed Anfinson, the publisher of the Swift County Monitor-News, in Benson, Minnesota,

said it is essential for the future of community newspapers to find a sustainable revenue model and take the feedback of their readers to heart.

"Publications need to seriously take the opinions of their readers into account and do so in a public way," Anfinson said. "It takes a different level of engagement to read a paper than to turn on a program or skim a headline from your social media feed. That's why it's so important to find a revenue model that will sustain our newsrooms and encourage people to continue to want to pick up their community paper."

One solution to sustain community newspapers is the pay-per-article method, where readers can pay a minuscule fee to have access to their community newspaper stories online. But readers overwhelmingly reject that, with 89% saying they would not be willing to pay even 50 cents per article.

Perhaps because many get the content for free, the dilemma for publishers, readership levels are holding steady, with 64% of respondents saying they continue to read their community newspaper in print, online, or both.

"You can often know more about what is happening in the world, than your own backyard," Anfinson said. "That's why community newspapers are so important."

The official survey results can be downloaded from nna.org.

The new Knight-Wallace Midwest Fellowship

by Nick Forsythe

The University of Michigan's Wallace House is expanding its program with the addition of two fellowships targeting Midwest founders, editors and senior reporters who are focused on local and regional news.

The new Knight-Wallace Midwest Fellowship was created to combat shrinking and disappearing newsrooms in the Midwest, said Wallace House Director Lynette Clemetson.

"There are numerous challenges facing Midwest newspapers," Clemetson said. "Among them, the shift to digital and social news consumption and the expectation that content should be free."

A recent report from the Knight Center and the University of North Carolina found that one in four newspapers in the U.S. has shut down or merged since 2004. Since then, over half of newspaper jobs have been terminated.

The Midwest Fellowship is funded by entrepreneurs Dug and Linh Song. The Midwest Fellows will join the rest of the Knight-Wallace fellows in receiving a \$75,000 stipend, health insurance, international travel and access to classes, seminars and workshops.

The Knight-Wallace Fellowship is named after legendary "60 Minutes" correspondent Mike Wallace, a 1930s University of Michigan graduate. Wallace gave a large donation as well as purchased the house that is used as Wallace House's headquarters on the campus of the University of Michigan.

Ann Arbor, where the University of Michigan is located, became the first city to lose its daily newspaper in 2009 when the Ann Arbor News closed and merged with the media group MLive. The Ann Arbor News now publishes a paper twice-weekly and offers daily online stories.

Changing these statistics "requires training, mentorship, and financial support," Clemetson said. She hopes the fellowship will fill the void left by disappearing news outlets.

Midwest News Fellows will team with advisors from entrepreneurship programs at the University of Michigan Law School and Ross School of Business to address the goals and challenges of journalism ventures. They will not have to leave their

news organizations to be a part of the program and will receive up to six months of mentoring after the fellowship is over.

Applicants must be from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Peggy Lowe, a reporter for KCUR, said her life was changed when she became a Knight-Wallace fellow in 2008. Lowe is thrilled by the new opportunities afforded by the expansion of the fellowship and believes it acts as an "investment" in individuals who are innovating local news.

The fellowship "offers recipients the break of a lifetime," Lowe said. "It changed my life. I got a break from the daily grind of a newspaper, I met fellow journalists from around the world, we traveled to places I'd never been, and most importantly, I had the time to really think about what the second half of my career would be."

Other recipients, such as Amy Maestas, a digital editor at the Salt Lake Tribune, said the fellowship allowed her to focus on learning ways to keep journalism sustainable.

"After the fellowship, I led a team of people across my company. Our work was nationally recognized by industry organizations, and we provided guidance to other newspapers," Maestas said.

Other fellowship programs in the United States offer similar immersive programs. Some of these programs include the Nieman Fellowship at Harvard, the Knight-Bagehot Fellowship at Columbia, the Knight Science Journalism Fellowship at MIT, and the JSK Fellowships at Stanford.

"We are making a concerted effort to extend support to people trying to sustain journalism in the Midwest," Clemetson said. "One of the key differences of this Midwest News Fellowship is that we will work with news leaders who cannot afford to fully step away from work during the program."

Applications for the fellowship are now open and the deadline to apply is Feb. 1.

"It changed my life. I got a break from the daily grind of a newspaper, I met fellow journalists from around the world, we traveled to places I'd never been and, most importantly, I had the time to really think about what the second half of my career would be."

— Peggy Lowe

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