

## PREFACE

Finally, we would like to thank the people at CQ Press, who were ready to take a chance on a different kind of textbook. In particular, we would like to thank Charisse Kiino, who was the first to get excited about what we had in mind. We are grateful to Matthew Byrnie, who saw the potential for a third edition; Mark Bast, who copy edited this edition's text and its ancillaries; Jane Haenel and Gabrielle Piccininni, who worked with us along the way; and Jerry Orvedahl, who stretched with us to create our online workbook that we hope instructors and students will actually want to use.

*Debora Halpern Wenger  
Deborah Potter*

## CHAPTER

# 1

# THE MULTIMEDIA MIND-SET

*The way news is gathered and delivered is evolving just as rapidly as audience expectations, technological changes and job descriptions for journalists. In this chapter, we take a look at what it means to be a journalist today and why you'll need to quickly develop your own multimedia mind-set.*

"Have you heard there's a little kid trapped in a well?"

Renee Johnson, digital content director for WLOX-TV in Biloxi, Mississippi, says that's the call she received from a station sales representative one day in June. He was on the station's mobile app, saw that a viewer had used the app's "MyReport" feature to submit the story tip and alerted Johnson. Her first instinct was to start confirming the story by checking social media.

"I pulled up the Greene County Sheriff's Facebook page to see what they had posted," said Johnson.

A follow-up call to the sheriff's office ended with a dispatcher recommending that any TV crews that might be coming needed to keep well away from the scene because officials were worried about the ground caving in. That was enough for Johnson.

"We have to get somebody to Greene County!" she called out.

Over the next five hours, the story unfolded on Facebook and the station's website long before the first piece aired on TV in the 4 p.m. news. With Greene County about two hours away from the station and the satellite truck unavailable, the first visuals came from a firefighter who used his phone to take pictures of the hole into which the child had tumbled.

By the time the 10 p.m. newscast rolled around, the story had been updated on the station's website and through social media dozens of times, and the reporter had called in or written content for all five of the evening newscasts on the station's two channels. The last story of the day featured a YouTube video shot by a rescue worker that showed the little girl coming out of the well, safe and sound.

From mobile tips to Facebook pages to cell phone photos and YouTube video, the multimedia mind-set of today's journalists has to incorporate more sources, newsgathering tools and distribution options than ever before.

## MULTIMEDIA BASICS

It's hard to spend any time studying journalism without reading or hearing the following terms—multimedia, convergence, cross-platform or multiplatform journalism. Continual advances in communications technology have forced journalists to come up with a new language to describe their storytelling. For the most part, this text uses the terms interchangeably to describe the practice of "communicating complementary information on more than one media platform."

### A New Approach

If a television reporter and photographer go out to cover a high school football game, they might begin their coverage using Twitter to report on the game as it plays out and send back still photos or video clips for the website and mobile coverage. They'll probably shoot far more video of the game and gather a great deal more information than they'll need to tell their story on the 11 o'clock news, so they may write a new version for the morning show and post online some of the unused video and key statistics from the game. That's multimedia journalism. They would be using more than one media platform—television, social media, mobile and the Web—and the information they broadcast would be complemented by the unique, additional information posted online, through the mobile app or in various social media. The fact that multimedia allows you to communicate more information in new and different ways gets many journalists jazzed about the concept, whether they've been in the business for years or are just starting out.

### Audience First

Most news consumers aren't content to get their news and information in one form—the same individual may routinely use mobile, social media, television, text and online

sources to get information from newscasts, podcasts, articles and tweets. In fact, according to research, people spend more than 12 hours a day with some form of media, and much of that time is spent multitasking.<sup>1</sup> When you look at television use, for example, a survey conducted by Deloitte found that 81 percent of Americans almost always or always engage in another media-related activity while watching their home TV, with that figure rising to a high of 88 percent among 24- to 29-year-olds.<sup>2</sup>

**TABLE 1.1 AVERAGE TIME SPENT PER DAY WITH MAJOR MEDIA BY U.S. ADULTS, 2010–2013**

<i>hrs:mins</i>	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Digital</b>	3:11	3:49	4:33	5:16
—Online*	2:22	2:33	2:27	2:19
—Mobile(nonvoice)	0:24	0:48	1:35	2:21
—Other	0:26	0:28	0:31	0:36
<b>TV</b>	<b>4:24</b>	<b>4:34</b>	<b>4:38</b>	<b>4:31</b>
<b>Radio</b>	<b>1:36</b>	<b>1:34</b>	<b>1:32</b>	<b>1:26</b>
<b>Print**</b>	<b>0:50</b>	<b>0:44</b>	<b>0:38</b>	<b>0:32</b>
—Newspapers	0:30	0:26	0:22	0:18
—Magazines	0:20	0:18	0:16	0:14
<b>Other</b>	<b>0:45</b>	<b>0:37</b>	<b>0:28</b>	<b>0:20</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10:46</b>	<b>11:18</b>	<b>11:49</b>	<b>12:05</b>

*Note:* ages 18+; time spent with each medium includes all time spent with that medium, regardless of multitasking; for example, 1 hour of multitasking online while watching TV is counted as 1 hour for TV and 1 hour for online; \*includes all internet activities on desktop and laptop computers; \*\*offline reading only.

*Source:* "US Time Spent on Mobile to Overtake Desktop," *eMarketer*, July 2013 <http://www.emarketer.com/Article/US-Time-Spent-on-Mobile-Overtake-Desktop/1010095>.

Though it's always been important for journalists to keep the audience top of mind, it's now even more critical because the platform used to deliver the news will affect what the audience gets out of it. As you begin to work on any story, you should be asking yourself what the best way is to deliver the information, what questions the audience will have and what answers you can provide.

Let's say there is major flooding in your community. Some may first learn about the rising waters from social media, but many won't stop there. Some people will tune in to a

television newscast to see the impact of the flooding, how some of the worst-hit neighborhoods are being affected, as well as the weather forecast for the next few hours. At the same time, the mobile audience may be sharing their own pictures of flooded-out roads, and the online audience may be logging on to read and add their own comments to a live blog detailing which shelters take pets and which don't. The audience for the next day's paper

will likely be looking for the big picture—did emergency preparation pay off, or how did the latest flooding compare with previous floods? Multimedia journalists will be thinking about all of these possibilities as they work on their individual stories; they will look for opportunities to use the tools of multimedia to access many different sources and provide different pieces of information to several different audiences on multiple media platforms.

## A NEW TYPE OF JOURNALIST

Margaret Ann Morgan got a job right out of school, working as an MMJ—a multimedia journalist—for the Raycom-owned station WDAM in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Her reporting day begins before she even gets out of bed.



Source: Photo courtesy of Margaret Ann Morgan.

"As my alarm blares to wake me up before I'm ready each morning, my other hand is reaching for my cell phone to check Twitter," Morgan said. "It's the way I check what happened around the world while I was asleep and what the big stories of the day will be, as well as what my viewers are tweeting about."

Morgan says that by the time she walks into the morning news meeting she's well versed on what's happening in her viewing area. She's already exchanged emails with local law enforcement, made calls to city officials and looked for what's trending locally in social media.

"After the morning meeting, I hit the ground running from one story to another. Working alone as an MMJ can be exhausting at times, but it makes the final product much easier to create when there is no one in the line of communication between you and your subject. From lining up the story to setting up the equipment, conducting the interview

and editing the package, everything is done on my own, which also means I am solely responsible for the end product."

Throughout the day, Morgan shares what she's learning about her stories via social media.

"I make posts on both Facebook and Twitter, but it is important to keep in mind the different audiences on each. Twitter is very helpful in giving immediate updates, especially during breaking news. It is also a great tool to interact with followers as well as gain credibility among officials who also have a presence on Twitter. Facebook, on the other hand, is a way to expand on issues, as well as include viewers in conversation."

Of course, Morgan is a multimedia reporter, so the day doesn't end when her news package hits the air.

"I also have to break that 90-second package into a 30-second V/O-SOT, one version for the 10:00 show and another that advances the story for the morning show. After that, I put the script into AP form for the Web and attach the video along with it."

Morgan says being an MMJ is very demanding, but it's the reality for a lot of reporters, and one she's learned to appreciate.

"There are many benefits to working alone in a fast-paced newsroom. You learn to do it all, from shooting to editing to writing. MMJs are, in my opinion, the greatest asset to a newsroom. You can do the job of three or four different people, but it only takes one of you! These positions are in high demand, but it should also be a position that is embraced by the journalist, simply for the freedom and leadership it gives you in the newsroom and in the field."



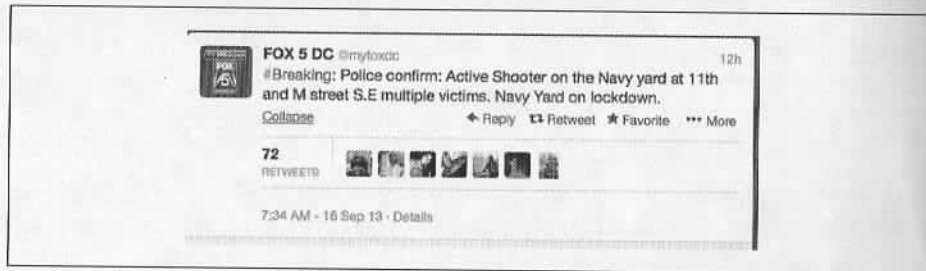
## MEDIA ON DEMAND

In addition to having access to multiple news delivery systems, we are now clearly living in an “on demand” world. News consumers expect to get information when and how they want it—not on a timetable set by a television station or a newspaper operation. For a journalist, that means getting into a 24/7 mind-set. Instead of focusing all of your attention on one story that will air at 6 p.m. or appear above the fold in tomorrow’s newspaper, you need to be thinking about the audience that’s out there right now, hungry for information as soon as it’s been verified and vetted.

It’s quite likely that you will work, or perhaps you already work, for a newsroom that breaks stories in social media or sends breaking news directly to people using mobile devices first, and then worries about traditional content delivery platforms such as television or text. In the flooding example mentioned earlier, the multimedia journalist may first focus on getting the latest information out on Twitter or Facebook before writing a brief text version of the story to be posted online or for the mobile app along with raw video. All of that would happen before he or she begins putting together a more traditional TV story for the 5 p.m. news.

### ONLINE

**Module 1:** Log in to your daily media and track your multimedia multitasking.



*When a gunman opened fire at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C., the local Fox affiliate sent out a tweet several minutes before the first story appeared on the station’s website.*

Source: Twitter.com, <https://twitter.com/search?q=fox5%20myfoxdc&src=typd> (accessed September 13, 2014).

## The Multimedia Industry

More and more communications companies are taking a “reach the consumers wherever they are” approach to providing information and content. ESPN, for example, is a

multimedia powerhouse. From its cable TV channels to its text magazine to its mobile apps and website, the company has become synonymous with sports information by reaching out to sports consumers wherever they can be found.

The Food Network is another big multimedia player. What started out as a cable TV channel expanded to the Web, began publishing a successful text magazine, hosts a recipe aggregator site called Food.com and has more than 5 million fans on Facebook.

News organizations are also taking advantage of multimedia, of course. At Hearst Television, one of the biggest broadcast news companies in the United States, the focus is no longer solely on TV but also on the Web and cell phones, according to Brian Bracco, former vice president of news. “Our audience is mobile, our audience wants their information now and wants it on three screens,” Bracco says. “We need to deliver it on every one; we have to have that skills set.”

WIBW-TV in Topeka, Kansas, has a wide reach—and not just over the air. The station is a longtime market leader, but general manager Jim Ogle, a former news director, doesn’t just want to own the television ratings. He wants to dominate every other platform WIBW is on, so he’s pushed the station’s presence on the Web and on social media. Everyone on staff posts to Facebook, Twitter and WIBW.com; several of them blog on the site, as well. “It’s a way of building rabid fans for the operation,” Ogle says.

## Multimedia Journalists

Increasingly, strong news organizations are looking to hire journalists who fully understand this need to give consumers more ways to access information and more control over how they do it. The Associated Press (AP), for example, instituted what it calls “1-2-3-4 filing.” First comes a tweetable headline, then a brief synopsis of the story being filed, then the complete story, and then an analytical and forward-looking piece.<sup>3</sup>

The 140-character limit of Twitter obviously requires a much different type of writing than the “think” piece at the end of the day. So news organizations like the AP want journalists who understand how the gathering and presentation of content change as the distribution of that content differs. Their writers have to know how to change their styles, depending on whether they are writing the tweet or the Web version or the long-form story that may appear in local newspapers. In other words, as the medium changes, the best journalists will be versatile enough to know how the message should change as well.

## THE PROCESS OF NEWS

Technology has changed everything about the news business, from the way it's delivered to the way journalists do their jobs. Television reporters used to spend most of the day producing a complete package for the main newscast, with a live shot or two thrown in along the way. Not anymore.

"In today's world of journalism, you simply have to make 30 hours fit into a 24-hour day," says WIBW-TV anchor Melissa Brunner. "We still need to put a quality product on the air, but you also must incorporate social media and your website in general into your daily routine."

The station's general manager, Jim Ogle, expects everyone on the news staff to share information on stories all day long. "We've adapted to a world where people want to know where things stand," Ogle says. "It's not about that you produced a great Web piece and a great television piece. That's at the end of a process that you start sharing from the very beginning."

Brunner says that philosophy has changed everything in the newsroom. "When breaking news happens, you can't simply send a crew out the door and forget it," she says. "You must get the crew out the door, tweet/Facebook the information, send a text alert, send a desktop alert and get a story on the website."

Constant sharing carries some risks, of course. Information the station puts out early on may turn out to be wrong. "That's all part of the process," Ogle says. "We acknowledge to people there's new information that changes things."



Source: Photo courtesy of the authors.

## TECHNOLOGY CHANGES CONTENT

Media are evolving so quickly that within a few years, we'll probably be delivering news and information in ways we haven't even imagined yet. The word "podcast"



*WKRG-TV in Mobile, Alabama, was one of the first local stations to develop a mobile app. The news managers understood that technology is changing news delivery systems, too. As more people stay informed through mobile devices, journalists like those at WKRG must adjust to more immediate deadlines and develop new storytelling forms.*

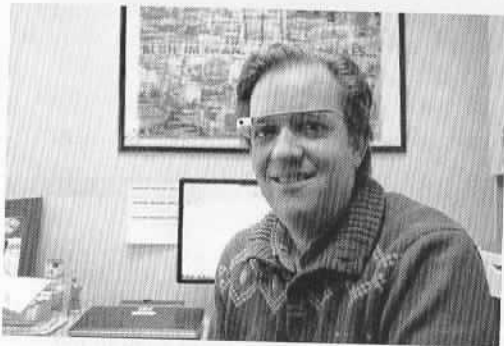
Source: WKRG, News 5 in Mobile, Alabama. Screen grab from mobile app (accessed September 24, 2013).

wasn't in anyone's vocabulary until 2004; within a year, thousands of podcasts were available online. And who could have imagined how quickly Twitter would take off as a newsgathering and dissemination tool following its use in the 2009 Iranian election protests?

The concept of considering the best way to present content based on the delivery method goes far beyond the obvious differences, such as the fact that television news uses sound and video and a newspaper does not. It means that journalists must think about how they can provide useful information to people in all sorts of different ways. The presentation will obviously be different for a tweet, a podcast, a newspaper article

or an online story and so will the content, because consumers using those media want different things. Your Twitter followers may want nothing more than the story's headline and a photo, a radio listener might want a brief summary with sound bites, a newspaper reader might want more details and an online news consumer might want to see the documents that underpin the story. Journalists have to know what elements they have to collect so they can effectively present news and information to consumers in all these media.

In addition, the best multimedia journalists will stay on top of changes in communications technology. For example, the increase in the number of people with high-speed Internet connections is at least partly responsible for changing the thinking about the use of video and elaborate graphics online. Before high-speed connections were common, many news organizations hesitated to post multiple video clips and to create high-level, interactive graphics because the download time for people on dial-up connections made those features nearly impossible to use. Even more recently, the explosion in the number of people with mobile communication devices—from smartphones to tablets—has journalists rethinking the way they handle breaking news. Now, those looking ahead to the future are wondering what wearable devices may mean to news producers and consumers.



*Dr. Marcus Messner is experimenting with Google Glass in his classes at Virginia Commonwealth University. He is exploring the application of this new technology for mobile multimedia reporting with his students.*

Source: Photo courtesy of Audry Dubon.

Researchers are already exploring the use of Google Glass as a tool for photojournalists to more easily provide context for the photos they take during a breaking news situation. For example, the photographer could narrate the scene as she is taking pictures and that narration could be synced with the photo, so an editor can quickly post the photo online or via social or mobile media along with more background information.

These are just a couple of examples of the ways in which the development and increasing use of new technologies are having an impact on the way journalists do their jobs. We talk more about this phenomenon in Chapter 13.

## Good Journalism Matters

Journalism is ripe with opportunity for storytellers, and learning how to take a multimedia approach to stories gives you the potential to reach a more diverse group of people with more news and information.

Still, it's important to remember that good journalism skills are universal—smart reporting and strong writing apply to all platforms. As the technology used to manage the content becomes easier to navigate, multimedia journalism is likely to become less about knowing how to post a story or use a smartphone to capture video and more about the skills it takes to gather and present information that is relevant and compelling to an audience—regardless of whether that audience is watching, reading or interacting with the story. As Mike Wendland, who has covered technology for both the Detroit Free Press and NBC, puts it, "Our skill set as storytellers will be more in demand than ever."

In addition, adherence to journalism's best practices and ethical codes remains essential. As the speed increases and the methods of dissemination vary, your journalism must be sounder than ever. Your reputation and that of your news organization are only as strong as your credibility, so just because technology allows you to do something does not mean it's something you should do. For example, you may be able to post a horrific 911 tape on the Web, but you should still ask yourself about the journalistic purpose of posting that audio before taking advantage of the option.

## The Power of Multimedia

Never before have journalists had so many storytelling tools with which to work. When you can take advantage of broadcast's powerful sound and imagery, text's depth and detail and online media's interactivity, as well as mobile's ubiquity, you have the potential to reach more people with more of an impact. The key for today's journalists is to find a way to report information in the medium that works best for each individual news consumer.

In the most progressive newsrooms, journalists have the potential to do a better job of telling stories because they can now show, tell and invite the audience to interact with the information. For the rest of this chapter, we explore what broadcast, text, online and mobile media do best to give you the foundation you'll need to develop powerful multimedia stories.

## THE BEST OF BROADCAST

Ask people where they got their coverage of the first presidential debate in the 2012 election and they will likely mention watching television news. According to a study done by







*Some of the best broadcast journalism allows the audience to share in the experience of others. In a story about a home explosion and fire in Baltimore, WBFF-TV viewers could hear and see for themselves how neighbors reacted.*

*Source: WBFF-TV video courtesy of Stan Heist.*

the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 70 percent of people it polled were primarily following the news surrounding the debate on television.<sup>4</sup> TV technology allows broadcast journalists to present history as it happens. Television journalists can combine words, sound and pictures to create a sense of being there for the viewer. A great broadcast storyteller can make you feel like you know the person being interviewed, like you've been to the location being showcased or that you were at the event yourself. So, when you begin to plan a multimedia story, you need to keep the strengths of broadcast journalism in mind.

## On the Scene

Television and radio news are able to let viewers watch or hear events as they occur or to report on them within minutes, or even seconds, after they happen. Though social media and the Web also allow for immediacy at times, live trucks, satellite uplinks and even smartphones allow radio and television journalists to broadcast directly from the scene of breaking news events, showing viewers how big a fire is or taking them inside a courtroom to hear a judge read out a verdict in real time. Though mobile video use is exploding, most live video viewing still takes place on television.

For example, when the town of Austin, Minnesota, was inundated with several feet of water, anchor Pete Hjelmstad donned his hip waders and stood live in the middle of a flooded street to show viewers of KIMT-TV in Mason City, Iowa, exactly how serious the situation was in some parts of the city. From that vantage point, he acted as a narrator over live pictures of people trying to break into second-floor windows of their own businesses to salvage what little they could.

But this ability to disseminate information instantly or extremely quickly comes with risks. It is always better to be right than first and wrong, so “going

live” or “getting on the air with the information” should be secondary to checking the facts.

## Impact of Visuals and Emotion

Great journalists in all media are able to convey emotion and create pictures in the reader's mind through their writing, but broadcast journalists have an edge when it comes to this kind of reporting. Through the use of sound and video, broadcasters can actually let viewers hear the mother's plea or see how swollen the river is at flood stage. TV journalists must still use words effectively to explain or supplement the video, but there is no substitute for great pictures combined with strong writing.

For example, WBBH-TV in Ft. Myers, Florida, covered vast brush fires that were eating up thousands of acres in Collier County, a key part of the station's coverage area. In one story, a reporter-photographer showed the impact of the fire on a family-owned dog kennel. In his video we saw flames just a few yards away from the dogs and their cages as the owner of the kennel started opening the cage doors and urging the dogs to get out and run. The video of her frantically trying to save the animals and calling out, “Get out of here, go, go!” was one of the most powerful moments in the newscast—one that likely affected viewers in a way that few other stories did that day.

Again, this ability comes with responsibility. There will be pictures that are too graphic to use and sound that's too disturbing to hear. For example, some stations have policies against airing “moment of death” video or audio. If they get pictures of a fatal car crash as it's occurring or if officials release a 911 recording of a woman being beaten to death, these stations refuse to air the content. They believe the story can still be told without these potentially disturbing elements. Good journalists must always weigh the storytelling benefit against any potential harm the story might cause. We talk more about the ethical use of visuals in Chapter 12.

## Audience Connection

Part of the reason broadcast news has been so successful is that it is the medium in which a person is actually “telling” a story to the audience. Viewers make a personal connection with anchors and reporters. That may be one reason why so many newscasts begin or end with the statement, “Thank you for watching.” Broadcasters



*In 2013, Amazon.com founder Jeff Bezos purchased a financially challenged Washington Post for \$250 million. In his first interview about the purchase he said, "We've had three big ideas at Amazon that we've stuck with for 18 years, and they're the reason we're successful: Put the customer first. Invent. And be patient," he said. "If you replace 'customer' with 'reader,' that approach, that point of view, can be successful at The Post, too."<sup>5</sup>*

Source: Rex Features via AP Images.

realize that many people in the audience do feel as if they are inviting the newscasters into their homes, and that invitation comes with certain expectations.

"When is the last time a newspaper thanked its readers?" asks Michele Godard, general manager at KALB-TV in Alexandria, Louisiana. "As subtle as this seems, it works its way into viewers' mind[s] and they feel a greater stake in our lives."

Before she became the boss, Godard was one of the station's primary anchors, and her experience convinced her that television stations have an enhanced personal connection with the viewers. "When I was the

evening news anchor I was pregnant twice," Godard said. "Do you know people still stop me in the street and sigh when they see how big my kids are? They chart their lives by the ups and downs of ours." For Godard, the connection works both ways. "I can tell you that as a result of the very personal connection I feel with our viewers I tend to take the information we provide more seriously," she said. "When our anchors read a story about a murder, I immediately wonder who the person was. Did that man or woman ever stop me in the store and ask about my children? It drives me to be more vigilant."

Social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, and online interactivity such as the comments section or the reader ranking options following many stories, have made it easier for newspapers and online news organizations to create audience connections, as well. But good television newscasts continue to provide the audience with important information presented in a compelling manner. That can

include anchors and reporters who are good communicators, graphics that help better explain the stories and even music that helps set the mood or tone of a story.

## THE POWER OF TEXT

Newspapers have a long and illustrious history in the United States. When the framers of the U.S. Constitution included the guarantee of press freedom, they understood that the dominant news medium of the time—newspapers—played a fundamental role in preserving the country's democracy. But newspapers are in crisis in America—advertising dollars and readership are declining, and that's translated into fewer newspaper jobs.

Even so, newspapers still cover local communities in far more depth than any other medium. The Project for Excellence in Journalism conducted a study that looked at all the local news outlets in Baltimore for one week. It found that newspapers accounted for 48 percent of the original reporting in the market, followed by local TV with a little more than 30 percent.<sup>6</sup>

Newspapers also do much of the great investigative reporting in this country, and some of that may be attributed to the strengths of the medium. As you work on planning your multimedia stories, you'll want to remember the following text attributes.

### Depth

In general, most newspaper articles are longer than the broadcast version of the same story. For example, the "CBS Evening News" once did a story about a new treatment for asthma sufferers. The Washington Post reported the same story the next day. The CBS News story was approximately 2:00 long. When, in an experiment, the Washington Post story was read aloud by a local TV news anchor, it was more than twice (4:40) as long. The essential elements of the story were reported by both news organizations, but the newspaper story included more background on the Food and Drug Administration's approval process for the drug, more information about how much the drug might cost and why it might not be right for everyone. The added depth would have made the story particularly relevant to someone considering using the drug.

### Detail

Detail can simply mean adding more specifics. For example, many text stories will include the age of a subject, the middle initial of an interviewee and specific numbers instead of a rounded figure. This additional detail can help in terms of ensuring accuracy



and understanding. If someone's name is Peter Smith, then reporting on "Peter E. Smith, 52, of Mountain Lake, Virginia" makes it far less likely that someone will think the story refers to 19-year-old Peter W. Smith who lives in Richmond.

Since newspapers can't rely on video to convey information, television journalists writing text stories must be sure to incorporate significant details from the video into the text. Using the example of the fire threatening the kennel in Florida, the text version of the story might have included a paragraph like this:

With the flames less than 10 yards away from the dogs in their kennels, Atwell started unlocking the cage doors one by one. With tears streaming down her face and a voice hoarse from inhaling smoke, Atwell pulled the dogs out, pointed them away from the fire and shouted, "Get out of here, go, go!"

Without video to help set the scene, the writer for text must be more specific about the nearness of the fire and must describe what the subject is doing and how she looks and sounds in order for the reader to fully experience the drama of the moment.

The risk of including too much depth and detail is that you bog the story down or make it boring and unreadable, but most television journalists writing newspaper stories easily avoid that trap.

## Reader Experience

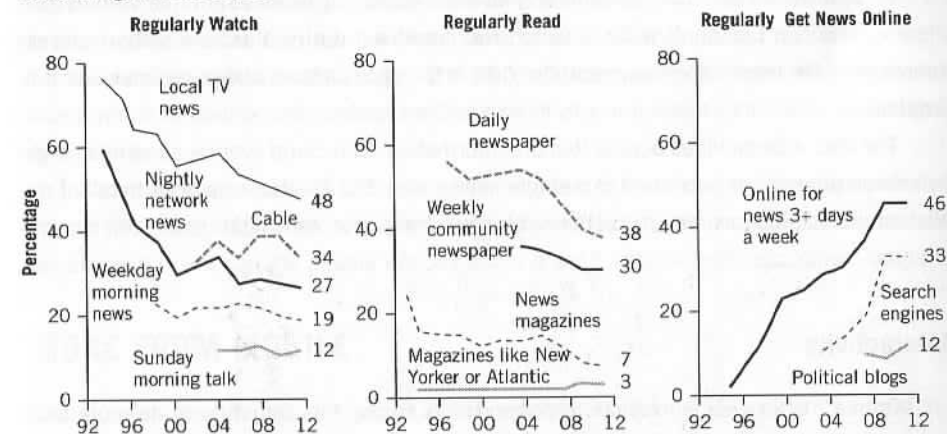
Ask avid newspaper readers why they like newspapers and many will mention the fact that they like the reading experience better in text than they do with digital devices. The combination of portability and permanence in a newspaper allows you to take the paper with you without worrying about connectivity or power, and you can easily reread something that you didn't get the first time without having to scroll up and down to find your starting point. These characteristics are important for those planning multimedia stories to consider: Content that you think the audience may want to hold on to for any length of time might best be presented in text.

## THE ORIGINALITY OF ONLINE

According to the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, the number of people who go online for news three or more days a week stood at 46 percent in 2012, after years of steady increases. Looking at Figure 1.1, you'll notice it is the only news medium that had been consistently growing audience.

FIGURE 1.1 THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF NEWS

### Trends in Regular News Sources



PEW RESEARCH CENTER. 2012 News Consumption Survey Q41a, b, k, o, p. Q43a, b, d e. Q61, Q64. \*Search engine use and general news online three or more days a week. All other trends based on those who "regularly" get news from source.

*While most traditional sources of news and information have been trending downward, the number of people who say they go online for news three or more times a week had been on the increase until growth leveled off in 2012.*

Source: "In Changing News Landscape, Even Television Is Vulnerable," Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, <http://www.people-press.org/2012/09/27/section-1-watching-reading-and-listening-to-the-news-3/> (accessed September 19, 2013).

Most likely when you turn to the Web for information, you go in search of something specific. You may choose to get news online because you don't want to wait for the nightly news or for the next day's paper. According to Pew, online news is valued most for headlines and convenience, not detailed, in-depth reporting. This "getting the information you want when you want it" is one of three key strengths of online journalism.

## On Demand

With broadcast and text media, the news consumer is essentially at the mercy of those who select what information to air or publish and when. In the online world, if the information is posted somewhere, the savvy Internet user can usually find it. Even if the information will

be included in a broadcast and in the newspaper eventually, if it's also online, the user does not have to wait to access the information on someone else's timetable.

CBS News, for example, streams stories from its nightly newscast on the Web to gain viewers who can't or don't want to watch the broadcast during the time slots it airs on television. Like many other news outlets, CBS is trying to capture audience whenever it is available.

The Web also provides access to more information than could ever be aired in a single television program or published in a single newspaper. The "bottomless news hole" of the Web creates an opportunity to satisfy news consumers who want more than what the traditional media can offer.

### Interactivity

Online media give journalists the opportunity to ask the audience to do more than passively read or watch a story—online users can be invited to explore information on their own, add perspectives to the storytelling or literally try something for themselves. This may be the real key to making multimedia stories powerful. For example, you may be working on a story about restaurants that don't meet state health standards. You will only be able to include a limited number of restaurants in your broadcast or text story, but if you add an online component, you can give users access to the entire restaurant report database so they can search for their favorite restaurants' ratings on their own. You could ask users to add their own restaurant horror stories or invite customer reviews of popular restaurants. If you have a creative online production team, you might work with the health department to create an interactive inspection game. The game might use a series of photos of a typical restaurant kitchen and ask users to spot the violations that health inspectors have set up for the purpose of this teaching tool.

### Innovation

As you can see, the online medium allows us to combine the best of text and broadcast in innovative ways. Often journalists who don't understand the technical side of the Web are afraid to brainstorm the online component of a multimedia story because they don't know what's possible. The secret is to think from an audience perspective: How can I present the information in a way that's most helpful to the user's understanding? How can I make exploring this issue fun for the user? How can I find out what the user already knows or wants to know about this story?

When the Richmond Times-Dispatch was working on content to help commemorate the anniversary of the 1965 Selma civil rights march, one of the reporters involved discovered something called the Alabama Literacy Test. Blacks in Alabama had to take the test in order to vote, but the questions were so difficult that almost no one—white or black—would have been able to pass. The Web producers posted a series of the test questions, which helped people understand the type of discrimination that blacks were facing at the time.

Sometimes you will want to create unique content but you may not have the technical support to do exactly what you want. Even so, you'll be surprised how much you can accomplish if you can get people excited about a good, interactive idea.

### MORE FROM MOBILE

Mobile news consumption has exploded in recent years, and news organizations are still figuring out how to use this new medium more effectively.

Approximately four out of five Americans say they use a mobile device, and half of those use it to access news.<sup>7</sup> In fact, Americans have become so attached to their smartphones or tablets that they take them everywhere; some go so far as to sleep with their mobile devices right beside them. It's an incredibly powerful tool for both newsgathering and the dissemination of news, and there are some unique characteristics of mobile that the multimedia journalist needs to recognize.

### Geolocation

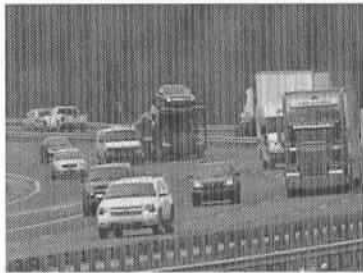
Mobile devices are, well, mobile, meaning you can use them when you're on the move. News organizations are experimenting with the geolocation capabilities of mobile devices. Geolocation, as a verb, describes the ability of an Internet-connected device, such as a smartphone, to detect its own physical location and to tag any content it generates with that location. So, when an app you've just downloaded asks to "use your location," it's trying to enable this geolocation feature and can then use that data to target you with location-specific information.

Twitter, for example, has a geolocation option, that allows you to tag tweets with your location. CNN's opinion columnist John D. Sutter used that feature for a story about a tornado in Moore, Oklahoma. Sutter walked the same path the twister had taken and tweeted photos, videos and comments about what he was encountering during his walk through the devastation. This approach changed the way he told his story; he was able to

LOCAL NEWS

## DOT: Extra lane could remain open during I-40/I-440 rebuild

Posted May 14, 2013



**RALEIGH, N.C.** — Triangle drivers could see less congestion when road crews begin overhauling an 11.5-mile stretch of Interstates 40 and 440 early in 2014, the North Carolina Department of Transportation said Tuesday.

DOT crews and construction crews from Granite Construction Company and RS&H Architect-Engineers-Planners, Inc. will work to keep three lanes of Interstate 40 open in both directions throughout the entire

project, dubbed the I-40/I440 Rebuild.

Officials had previously estimated that only two lanes in each direction would stay open.

The extra lane could alleviate traffic headaches and delays for the approximately 110,000 drivers who travel the roadway each day.

Officials said Tuesday that work will be done in phases, with construction on the I-440 leg of the project set to begin in January 2014. Once that work is done, the work on Interstate

### MORE ON THIS

- NC DOT I-40/440 rebuild project
- 3/11: DOT crews train for clearing I-40/I-440 rebuild gridlock
- 2/18: Drivers won't see official detour during I-40/I-440 rebuild
- 2/7: Defective pavement to blame for massive Raleigh I-40/I-440 overhaul
- 1/28: Johnston Co. emergency officials bracing for Raleigh I-40/I-440 overhaul

*At WRAL in Raleigh, North Carolina, important stories are routinely enhanced online. Ongoing coverage of a massive construction project involving the primary interstate highway in the area has its own page on the website. Each new story about the project is posted online and accompanied by a sidebar that links you to previous stories or additional content related to the topic.*

Source: WRAL in Raleigh, North Carolina, retrieved from <http://www.wral.com/extra-lane-could-remain-open-during-i-40-i-440-rebuild/12443356/> (accessed January 3, 2014).

add more visuals and incorporate more people into his storytelling than he could in a standard piece, even though these mini-sidebars were nothing more than 140 characters with visuals.

Precise locations were clearly relevant to this story, but there are other ways in which geolocation can play a role in newsgathering and the presentation of news content. We talk much more about those possibilities in Chapter 10.

### Sharing Capacity

Sutter's tornado walk tweets generated dozens of retweets and favorites on Twitter—expanding the reach of his coverage exponentially. Mobile and social media just seem to work hand in hand. For example, most multimedia journalists use Twitter or Facebook to do incremental reporting—essentially, reporting pieces of the story as they happen. These updates are designed to keep the audience engaged throughout the evolution of the story, so reporters will post photos and videos, ask questions or respond to viewers—all on their mobile devices.

The mobile audience often clicks on links found on social media networks to view the finished version of a story on a news organization's website. One local news site in Oxford, Mississippi, HottyToddy.com, routinely gets a third of its traffic from mobile Facebook users. The writers for the site have learned that a well-crafted Facebook post with a link to a story can triple the number of viewers for that content.

Multimedia journalists also use the combination of a smartphone and social media to monitor the news around them. They check for trending topics, follow the competition to make sure they're not missing anything and watch to see if their story sources are making relevant comments via social networks.

### Expanded Reach

Mobile news delivery is now the focus of audience growth at news organizations across the country. According to the RJJ-DPA Mobile Media Research Report, "In every age group except for those 65 and older, the percentage of respondents who used mobile media devices to keep up with the news exceeded the percentages of those who used desktop computers for news."<sup>8</sup>

At Tribune Company's Sun Sentinel newspaper in South Florida, metrics show that on weekends almost half its audience is reading Sun Sentinel content via mobile. "That's a significant jump from just a year ago," said Anne Vasquez, associate editor for text and digital content. "We anticipate that the proportion of our audience that





For John D. Sutter's story on CNN.com, "Walking the Path of a Tornado," the columnist tagged his tweets with geolocation information as he explored the devastation the tornado had left behind in Oklahoma.

Source: "Walking the Path of a Tornado," CNN.com, <http://www.cnn.com/interactive/2013/05/us/sutter-walk-oklahoma/> (accessed September 24, 2013).

prefers to get its news via mobile device will continue to grow at a rapid rate for the foreseeable future."

The more people consume news content through the mobile platform, the more news outlets are going to expect that their multimedia journalists think differently about the best ways to gather and distribute their stories.

## FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

Although the news media are going through a period of rapid change and evolution, change itself is not new and should not be seen as a threat for journalists. It's important to remember that new media seldom, if ever, replace the old. We still read books, we still listen to the radio and we certainly still watch television; however, it's indisputable that most news

media are trying to adapt to the changing technologies and a changing news consumer culture that is more fractured than ever. No longer can you count on the fact that a majority of adults in the United States will read a daily newspaper, and no longer can you be sure that the 6:00 p.m. newscast will be the most critical broadcast of the day. What you can be sure of is that journalists who are skilled in the journalism basics—researching, interviewing, writing and ethics—will be able to succeed in a changing media environment if they are willing to embrace the idea that it's the story that matters.

## Grow Storytelling Skills

Media General has been a key player in the area of multimedia journalism for more than a decade. Dan Bradley, vice president and general manager of WCMH, the company's TV station in Columbus, Ohio, has embraced multimedia from the start.

"Journalists have to get over the idea that it's 'their story,'" Bradley says. "The story belongs to the audience and once reporters accept that, it doesn't seem to matter whether the story is published on the air, online or in text."

What Bradley and many other news managers are looking for are journalists who want to tell stories—regardless of platform. And those journalists who are already adept at telling stories in more than one medium are more likely to get jobs or to move up. Mike McMearty, news director at WTOP Radio in Washington, D.C., says, "If I have two candidates, each with the same skills and experience, but one of them is comfortable writing and working on the Web and one is not, I'm going to hire the one who knows the Web."

## New Opportunities

Beyond enhancing your ability to get a job in broadcast or text, learning about multimedia journalism may also jump-start a career for you in online journalism itself. Job posts for positions such as social media reporter or mobile media manager are popping up more and more frequently in journalism employment listings. Researchers studying jobs posted by the top 10 TV and newspaper companies in the United States found nearly half of all positions referenced the need for applicants to have mobile and social media skills.

In addition to jobs at sites attached to traditional mainstream news organizations, positions are available at nonprofit sites like ProPublica, which promotes investigative journalism, or online-only sites such as the Huffington Post, which is billed as an outlet for news from a liberal perspective. Sometimes journalists with a passion establish their own sites, for example, broadcast journalist Rick Kupchella, who created Bring Me the News, a digital-only news outlet that uses aggregation and original reporting to cover

Minnesota stories, or Brian Storm, who created MediaStorm.com, a website to showcase innovative multimedia storytelling. And then there's David Cohen, who created a mobile-only news organization with an app called Circa.

"The method, the reach and the scope of how we communicate will never be the same," says Caroline Little, former chief executive officer and publisher of Washingtonpost.Newsweek Interactive (WPNI), which operated washingtonpost.com, newsweek.com, Slate and Budget Travel Online. Journalism has fundamentally changed and will continue to do so, but the emphasis on solid newsgathering and storytelling skills remains.

## TAKING IT HOME

It is essential for today's journalists to understand how the audience is accessing and using news and information now, as well as the ways in which the message must change as the medium changes. Capitalizing on the strengths of each media platform available to you will make you a more effective storyteller and will help ensure that your audiences get the information they need.

This text is about preparing you for jobs that are changing and jobs that have not yet even been envisioned. "With industry transformation and emergence of new technology, multimedia is now included in all of our job descriptions," says Virgil Smith, who heads up recruiting for Gannett. "We want multimedia journalists with solid basics—the ability to write, inquisitiveness, people who want to dig deeper, who know how to use the tools with an understanding of how their information will be used on multiple platforms."

We hope this text will help you do it all.

### TALKING POINTS

1. Log on to the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press (<http://people-press.org>) and check out the latest research on how people are using news media. What implications does the research have on the way journalists are or should be doing their jobs? Pay particular attention to the demographic breakdowns for media use. What do the data suggest to you in terms of serving a diverse audience?

2. For one 24-hour period, track your news media usage. How much time are you spending with each medium? Are there stories that you saw mentioned on more than one platform? Are there stories that were unique to one platform? Did the news organization involved do anything specific to capitalize on the power of its medium?
3. Find a good multimedia storytelling example. Whether it's a broadcast story with a Web companion piece or a text article that's enhanced online or a story that uses some other combination of media platforms, analyze how the journalists involved are leveraging the platforms included in the presentation.

### ETHICS CHALLENGES

1. News organizations never seem to have enough resources to cover all of the stories they'd like to tackle. If you know a story about a local celebrity will play better on social media and help drive more traffic to your Web and mobile sites, do you put a reporter on that story and report the mayor's new tax proposal as a reader in your newscast and as a text story online? Or do you choose to give the more "important" story fuller treatment by assigning a reporter to the topic? How much do you let the pursuit of audience drive your coverage?
2. Social media is such an essential tool now for multimedia journalists that some news organizations have created ethics policies that outline the ways in which the journalists they employ can use social networks. Gannett released its policy in 2013. Go online (<http://bit.ly/15gPRCX>) to take a look at it and then ask yourself if you think it is fair or goes too far. Do journalists have a right to make personal comments on their personal social media accounts, or are they always on the job when it comes to social media?

### ONLINE LEARNING MODULE 1

For chapter exercises, practice tools and additional resources, activate or buy this chapter's online learning module at [journalism.cqpress.com](http://journalism.cqpress.com). You'll find:

- **SKILL BUILDING:** Take an interactive quiz to test your knowledge of the strengths of each media platform.