Citizen Journalism and Hyperlocal Media: Building Your Brand
Introduction

• Adjunct Professor
• Niche Publications
  – B2B Magazine
  – Fronteras
  – Daily Journal Editorial Board
  – Provided Internships
  – Advertising-Print and Internet
• Musician-Event Coordinator/Publicist
About This Course

• Workshop Oriented
  – Two 7-Hour Days
  – 9am-noon
  – Break
  – 1pm-5pm

• Highly Interactive
  – Class Participation
  – Demonstrate Concepts
  – Respect
Syllabus-Items of Note

Facebook Page

- All Students must 'Friend' by noon tomorrow.
- Delete after class over if you want/hypothetical info only.
- Register for class Blog by noon tomorrow.
- Deadlines are Deadlines
- Budget-Time and Money
Establishment of Class Facebook Page and Blog Exercise
Section 1

Journalism
And
Media
“Journalism is the collection, preparation and distribution of news and related commentary and feature materials through media such as pamphlets, newsletters, newspapers, magazines, radio, film, television and books.”

Britannica Concise Encyclopedia-cited in 2007

What's Wrong with that definition?
Online?
Online Advantage

- Time
- Reach
- Costs
- Relevance
- Proximity
- Participatory-Web 2.0
What's Going on With the Media

- Revenues Declining
- Audiences Shrinking
- Fragmentation
- Online Cost Model
- Shrinking “Budgets”---Revenue focused Activities---
- Social Net
- Convergence
- Video
Breaking Through the Noise

- Why are you here?
  - You want to keep an eye on government?
  - You like to write?
  - People and their stories fascinate you?
  - You want to be heard, or to give voice to those without a voice?
  - You want to fill a void, or are a critic of media?
  - All of the above?
Without consumers, what's the point?

Find the right channel for your message.

How are people going to find you?

How will people want to know what you are writing about?

Brand
Building your Brand

- Credibility
- Writing
- Thoroughness
- Ethics
- Diversity
- Multimedia
- Target Your Audience
Different Types of Content

- News
- Features
- Commentary/Review
- Video
- Photo
- Graphic
News and Newsworthiness

"Of sufficient interest or importance to the public to warrant reporting in the media."

"Interesting enough to be described in a news report."

What makes something newsworthy?

- **5 Factors**
  - Timing- Things new and current
  - Significance- Number of people affected by the story
  - Proximity- Near us means more significant to us
  - Prominence- Famous people get more coverage
  - Human Interest- Appeals to emotion

Varies day to day, depending on what else is going on. (Busy and slow news days)
What do you read/watch/view?

- Newspaper
- TV
- Video
- News
- Information
- Advertising
- Magazines
What draws you to each medium?

- Newspaper
- TV
- Radio
- Magazine
- Online
- etc.....
News and Information

• Your top sites
  – Yahoo!
  – Google
  – MSN
  – Drudge/Huffington/DeadSpin/triblocal

• Local Outlets
Journalism - The Basics

- All news is event oriented
- Driven by the “need to know”
- Newsworthiness
- Intelligence, objectivity, accuracy, and fairness.
- Truth
- Bias - We all have them.
- All journalists, citizens journalists included, should avoid any situation in which they stand to benefit personally from the stories they produce.
Journalism Basics, con't

- Balance right to know with personal privacy
  - Public journalism- telling the news to help public life go well
  - Conventional Journalism- does not acknowledge any duty for improving the quality of life.

- Deliberative Democracy

- Libel and slander
  
  
  Slander (for transitory statements), and libel (for written, broadcast, or otherwise published words)
The Interview

- Interviews are directed conversations
  - Preparation is key-Research your topic.
  - Listen and react
  - Put yourself in their shoes
  - Ask open ended questions
  - Practice Practice
  - Follow up questions- Seed for later inquiries.
The Interview, con't

- Background questions about history and evolution of an issue
- Clarification questions
- Ask subject to verify information
- Ask to extrapolate in the present
- Ask subject to project into the future
- Get reaction to others comments
  - What did I forget?
  - What should I have asked?
  - What else do you want to tell me...?
13 Interviewing Techniques

- Find a good location
- Prepare your goals ahead
- Write down your questions (grocery list)
- Flow (conversation/the job)
- What medium?
- Bring a buddy (second set of ears)

- Avoid Obsessing
- Be a little annoying
- Be a little sneaky
- Empower them
- Get them worked up
- Endure awkward silences (he who flinches, loses)
- Ask for what you need (air, light, breath mint for interviewee)
Wheeler's Tips

• Be upfront. Tell them why you are there.
• Don't interrupt—You are there to listen, not talk.
• Don't think about the next question until you are done with the current question.

• Thank the interviewee, and ask for a follow up.
• Don't be afraid to ask for clarification. It's your credibility (brand) at stake.
Check your Facts

• Everybody has an angle. Make sure everything you are writing can be substantiated.
• No such thing as “Off the record” in the long run.
• Expert sources-Wikipedia doesn't count.
• Examples- Flood Story, Immigration, Spousal abuse, others....?
Build Your Network

- Sources need to be cultivated and protected
- Always remember what people bring to the table. Friends have friends with friends.....
- Be seen, and introduce yourself. Yes...be THAT guy/girl.....
- Always carry your card. Always.
- Marketing isn't just a department.
Interviewing Exercises
(See Handouts E1-1 and E1-2)
The Lead (Lede)
Intro's or Outlines the Story

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- And to a lesser extent, why. “Why” is subjective, as is truth.
- How
Types of Leads

- Question ---poor
- Summary- Good
- Blind- No names
- Narrative
- Quote- Poor
- Anecdotal
- Novelty
- Literary Allusion
- Delayed I.D.- same as blind until the end
Inverted Pyramid Exercise
(See Handout E1-3)
Who

• Who is involved in this story?
• Who is affected by it?
• Who is the best person to tell the story?
• Who is mission from the story?
• Who has more information about this?
• Who is in conflict in this story?
• Do they have anything in common?
What

- What happened?
- What is the point of this story? What am I trying to say?
- What does the reader/viewer need to know to understand the story?
- What is surprising about this story?
- What is the history here, and what happens next?
- What can people do about it?
When

- When did this happen?
- When did turning points occur in this story?
- When should I report this story?
Where

- Where did this happen?
- Where else should I go to get the full story?
- Where is the story going next?
- How will it end?
Why

• Why is this happening
• Part of a trend, or isolated?
• Why are people behaving the way they are?
• What are the motives?
• Why does this story matter?
• Why am I sure I have the right story here?
How

- How did this happen?
- How will things be different because of what happened?
- How will the story help the reader/viewer? Community?
- How did I get this info? Attribution clear?
- How should someone describe this story to a friend?
Types of Leads

- **Straight**: Summary Lead
- **Throwaway**: Provocative or tease-Used for Hard news.
- **Feature**: Used for soft news.
- **Umbrella**: Used to tie multiple stories together (Roundups)

If you can imagine it, you can write it.
More Lead Tips

- Grab attention by capturing the essence of a story
- Don't make it hard to digest. Be clear.
- Select tense carefully for the medium (video, text, photo)
- Write in Active voice
- Use storytelling techniques
- Be creative
- Write conversationally (except for broadcast type news)
AP Lead Advice

- Don't bury the news
- Be concise
- Write visually.
- What is different about this story.
- Action verbs
- Don't be too repetitive
- Use direct sentence order. Don't start with a clause.
- Make old news look fresh by plumbing for facts and analyzing from a new angle.
- Trust your ear
Lead Exercises
E1-4 and E1-5
Style:
Your personal brand
The Story Arc

(See handout E2)
Web Style Tips

- Be Yourself
- Write conversationally
- Short, tight paragraphs
- Chunk information into bite-sized bits (People Skim)
- Interactive, dynamic and current
- Think of a document in its online environment
- Online content is words, presentation and interaction
- Strong heads, subheads, cuts, labels, etc...helps with navigation
Style Tips, con't

- Link-Video Embed
- Use inverted pyramid
- Personal, compelling, energetic writing
- Consistent style and conventions

- Tight, unpretentious, and free of unnecessary verbiage.
- Know your community
- Keep readers informed
Strunk and White
Elements of Style
Handout
Feature Writing
Feature Writing

- Character, conflict, consistency.
- Character—Understandable, sympathy, empathy, identify with.
- Conflict—wars, epidemics, gov't regs, illness, poverty, alcoholism, whatever.....
- Don't violate the rules of your universe.
- Don't have a character act in a way that is unusual for their personality.
- Story arc
Types of Features

- Brights (short and usually funny)
- Follow-ups
- Round-up (court news)
- Sidebars
- Exploit the medium
- Profiles or Historical Story
- Adventure
- Seasonal
- Explanatory
- How-to
- Human Interest
Writing Good Headlines

- Use complete sentences
- Capitalize the first word and all proper names
- Use an active voice
- KISS
- Puns are OK

- Other figures of speech OK, also
- Grab attention
- Use imperative
- Be clear, concise, creative
Writing for PR

- Ethical if done correctly.
  - A Mayor should never write about a particular ordinance, but there is nothing wrong with that Mayor writing an article about the Moose Lodge Annual Dinner.
  - A hospital PR department should never be allowed to run an article about their new “Birthing Center”, but they could submit a feature about their annual fashion show fundraiser, with video and photos.
  - A locksmith could write a short piece about what to try before you call a locksmith, but never about her “fantastic service and impenetrable dead bolt lock”.

**Photo/Video Tips**

- Rule of Thirds
- Light is Everything
- People on your front page
- Diversity
- Get permission
- Over shoot and save everything
- Gather stock for breaking news
Online SEO Tips

Identify the keyword phrase you'd enter into a search engine to find the timely and newsworthy article you're about to post. Check if that phrase is attracting traffic by entering it into Google Trends, Insights, Newsonrails or Surcher. Reconfigure accordingly. Use this phrase in your headline – 65 characters max- and make sure it names names and is in title case (capitalize nouns and verbs). Get to the point in the first paragraph with a strong 50-word lede – who, what, when, where, why and maybe even how. Ensure copy is factually correct and build the story from most to least important information -250-word minimum, 600-word max. Link to 3 credible sources. Format using 50-word paragraphs, bold keyworded subheadings, and bulleted or numbered lists for easy reading. Link to your or other related onsite articles with keyword anchor text - no exposed urls. Attach a clear, appropriate photo or video you have permission to use from your desktop or from Flickr, YouTube or our library. Give the article 6 navigational tags, including proper names and your target 2-3-word keyword phrase.
In-class story exercise
E3
Section 2

What is Branding?
Assignments

- Facebook
- Find class Blog
- Read and critique case ethics case studies for class discussion.
- Read Diversity articles and be prepared to discuss
- Write and edit a 400 word news story about family or friends. Interview required.
- Think about the medium. Video or photo?
- Questions?
“Every news organization has only its credibility and reputation to rely on.”
Tony Berman, NBC news chief
Ethics in Media

• Privacy
  – Autonomy as Individuals
  – Scorn and Ridicule
  – Reputation control
  – Keeps others at a distance
  – Shield against the power of freedom

• Anything that happens in the public view can be reported!
Unethical List

- Contagious Diseases or disabilities
- Homosexuality
- Sex Crimes
- Children as sources
- Suicides
- Accidents and Personal Tragedies
- Database Journalism
- Juvies
- Cameras and recorders
Does not apply to public people
Truth and Honesty

- Deception and Lying
- Story must be accurate.
- Verified facts-solid evidence
- Promotes understanding

- Fair and balanced
- No hidden cameras/mic's
- No re-enactments or staging
- No altered photos
- Fabrication
Truth, con't

- Plagiarism
- Misappropriation
Ethical Process
The SAD formula

- **Situation Definition**
  - Description of the Facts
  - Identification of principles and values
  - Statement of ethical issues or question

- **Analysis**
  - Weigh competing principles and values
  - Examine duties to various parties/external factors
  - Applicable ethical theories

- **Decision**
  - Rendering moral agents decision
  - Defend it!
Media Law

- No 1st Amendment protection for
  - Obscene material
  - Fighting words
  - False and misleading ads
  - Advertising illegal products or services
  - Language that incites illegal action

- Libel and slander

- Copyright

- States may not
  - Regulate news gathering
  - Regulate content
  - Regulate distribution

- Insurance for libel
Codes of Ethics
E5-1 and E5-2
Ethics Case Studies
And
Exercises
E4-E5
Section 4

Diversity in Media
And Media Criticism
Diversity
And
Criticism Exercises
(E6)
Peer Edits/rewrites
Closing comments