

**GOVERNMENT ARTS COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS),
COIMBATORE – 18
POSTGRADUATE AND RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**SKILL BASED ELECTIVE–IV –JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION
SEMESTER – IV**

UNIT – V: ONLINE NEWS

5.1 ONLINE NEWS PORTALS

5.1.1. WHAT IS ONLINE NEWS?

As cultures evolve, it is reasonable to expect the form of news in print and broadcast to evolve. According to Martin and Copeland (2003), if society recognises its need and desire for news, and it retains the concept of a newspaper, it will surely have to accept the fact of an evolving format for this durable news conduit. The same is true for all forms of news media, principally radio and television, which have traditionally operated in broadcast mode where there was a clear distinction between the news provider and the news consumer. The research on which this paper is based began with a study of the “going online” trend where newspaper corporations, firstly set up websites, and then improved the sites to provide interactivity on those sites. Rapid recent changes to the Internet presence of the news industry as a whole have driven this research into a broader focus where changes to the whole industry brought about by developments of information and communications technologies are examined. This section of the paper looks at the phenomena that initiated the research. It reviews those characteristics that led to the first expansion of newspapers into the online arena and draws a comparison between the new and old forms of news. In general, online newspapers layout is different from print. Traditional print newspapers placed the most important story at the top of the front page. The allocation of space to an item of news, the size of the headlines, the photos used, the placement on the page, and the page on which story appears varies with the editor’s preference. This is unlike online news, where the first few sentences of only a few top stories are placed on the home page at any one time but represented with variation of pictures, videos, and audios that are changed and frequently as new stories break. Online newspapers then offers the full story on separate pages reached through hyperlinks (either within the story text or as a sidebar).

Sub-lists organised at the top or side of the front page are used to link to items under headings such as, politics, entertainment, international news, sports and weather. The links may also lead readers to related stories on the current topic that would enlighten readers revealing the interconnected nature of many events at the local, national, or international level (Eveland et al. 2004). According to Flavián and Gurrea (2008), the use of online news is characterised by increased speed to reach the reader, a much lower cost in distribution information, the ability to update news constantly, and to establish more direct contact and interaction with users. For all these reasons, reading online news has become increasingly popular and newspaper organisations are providing an increasing range of online services. Indeed, the Nielson Online report shows that more and more people are visiting the Web to read newspapers. For example, the top 10 United States (US) online newspapers have increased readership by 27 percent from 199.6 million in December 2007 to 252.7 million in December 2008 (2008).

The NAA report (NAA, 2009) states that users now visit online newspapers for an average of 45 minutes a month. People are turning to the Web for news that is rich and instantaneous. Amongst the distinctive characteristics of the digital medium, compared to analogue media such as the newspaper, are interactivity, convergence of pictures, moving images, text and sound into one medium of distribution and, finally, immediacy, Karlsson (2007). Karlsson defined immediacy as virtually no lag between when information is received or created at a news producer and when the information is passed on to the news consumer. Immediacy to Massey and Levy (1999) is when web news sites provide the most immediate information. What readers need is news, of global and local happenings and fast-breaking events, updated constantly, throughout the day. For Bucy (2004) immediacy is a set of features that lend a sense of “nowness” and real-time urgency. Similarly, Eriksen and Ihlström (2000) described immediacy as ‘live’ reporting that the Web affords in provision of news in a continuous pattern. In contrast, one of the other advantages of having the news on the Web is the easy access to archived news. These archives can be from broadcast, television, print or online news which now can be captured and kept on the Web.

The presence of the archival features permits readers to automate (filter) the delivery of preferred news content (Massey 2000). Content plays an extremely important role in online news. ‘Content is king’ is a well-known slogan quoted from Huizingh (2000 p.124). According to Bucy (2004), content and structural features of messages may compel audience attention, increase viewer arousal, enhance memory, and impact subjective evaluation. At that time, 2004, Bucy elaborate on content elements in four broad categories of information: text

elements (links to full news stories, press release, newsperson biographies, and campaign issue positions), photographs (photos of news reporters, anchors, and personalities, news sources, news events, political candidates, and other people and events), features that lend a sense of timeliness and immediacy to the page (date or time-stamped news stories, news ticker with current headlines, indication of new content, date or time of last update), and network presence items (network or corporate parent logo or organisation name in Web address). Besides content elements, Bucy also posited interactive features into four categories: commercial transactions (for example, forms to buy memorabilia, donations or register to vote online, mechanisms for volunteering, and community activism), interpersonal communication (feedback forms; email links to reporters and staff, presence of chat rooms, forums, bulletin boards, and other online discussions), content interactivity (multimedia), for example as, instant polls or surveys, games, puzzles, and contests, photos or graphics used as links, links to audio and video (archived or live), related sites, newsletters, news digests and listservs, links in news stories, emails postcards and stories, searchable database, downloadable graphics, and wallpapers, other forms and links. Lastly, information accessibility items that consists of search engines, indexes or lists of helpful links, a help page or forums, FAQ list, a site map, the provision of content in different languages, schedules or programming information, condensed information or story summaries, the ability to customise information displays (personalisation) and delivery.

According to Bucy (2004) media organisations may stand to benefit by recognising the nonmonetary contributions of online news to the broader news mission, of which there are at least three major types – enhanced coverage (‘hyperlocal’ coverage and updates throughout the day, offers more consumers more control over the news, customised information delivery, other features that engage users on an individual level), include, brand loyalty (the primary purpose of an online news site is to increase viewer loyalty to a station and its services – cultivate by adding more interactive features to invite more involvement and dialogue), and media credibility (as audience tend to pay more attention to and become reliant on media they consider credible and reliable) . Up until the last couple of years, the majority of online news sites exhibited the characteristics just described but were still dominated by the traditional divisions of roles into news providers on the one hand and news consumers on the other. The next section of the paper summarises the results of research conducted by the authors in 2006-2007 involving a content analysis methodology focusing on the interactivity newspaper websites in Australia. This will be used as the basis of comparison with changes to the level of interaction

between news providers and consumers that have emerged since then concerning user participation in news websites.

5.1.2 THE CURRENT STATE AND THE FUTURE OF ONLINE NEWS

Since their inception the Internet and digital technologies have been responsible for the periods of spectacular revolutionary developments among more gradual evolutionary changes in many aspects of human activity. There is currently a worldwide phenomenon of social change fuelled by new Web 2.0 technology. The revolutionary change that the news industry is facing today is not unlike that in other information-based industries, such as education and libraries, or industries with digital products such as in music, magazine and book publishing. Our study indicates that over the past few years, the rapid take up of the phenomenon of social networking is resulting in a dramatic revolutionary change in the news industry (Outing 2008).

These news organisations are realising that, this is part of a major shift in the industry, and they are starting to get serious about efforts to include the community in the news process. It is useful to position these changes on Bucy's (2004 p.103) observation that online news is characterised by three different generations. During the first generation, of Net news, in the early to mid-1990s, where news organisations produced simple hypertext pages and print media learned how to take their efforts online. The second generation, from the mid-1990s to decade's end, moved online journalism to a more independent footing, engaging in original newsgathering and production. Continuous updates became more common, streaming audio and video appeared, news become more visual and in-depth, and interactive chats and online discussions emerged, creating news communities. In the third generation Internet news sites leveraged improved interactive applications that create an entirely new integrated news experience to engage consumers. The phenomenon of user participation and diversification of sources of online news that is happening now could be seen as a fourth generation of online news. In many areas, readers who were once just news consumers from the general public are now taking control of providing and generating the news. Not only that, what we are seeing now is 'the era of convergence' news provider and news consumer as well as between news and a variety of technologies, for example more news publications include users' podcast, videos and photos often from mobile devices. Both reporting and reading news can happen not only at home using desktop computer or personnel computer but people can also access to news when they are 'on the move' via their notebook (wireless), podcast, and mobile phones. This convergence radically alters the fixed notions of time and place that governed the traditional

news cycle. The blurred roles of news media owners, journalists and members of the public are leading to new business models in the news industry. The Internet provides support for multinational companies enabling global control of media outlets by a single organisation, such as News Limited. However, the Internet also enables global reach from the micro-business particularly in an area such as news where the product is digital. This allows individual voices to be heard world-wide and the social networking phenomenon enables these individual to link up and have considerable influence.

This opportunity for global networked advocacy is a revolutionary aspect of the Internet as there are currently issues that require coordinated global attention in the areas of climate change and the financial crisis. The emergence of each new generation of online news is a case of revolutionary change that happens almost overnight. Comparing the spread of fashion to viral epidemics, Gladwell (2000) uses the concept of a ‘tipping point’ to provide some insight into why this modern type of change happens the way it does. He observes how little causes can have big effects where “change happens not gradually but at one dramatic moment” (Gladwell 2000 p. 9). Examples in the case of online news include Bucy’s generation one where there was a sudden epidemic of newspaper websites and in generation three most began to include interactive media.

The fourth generation that we propose follows the ‘tipping point’ in the world-wide use of social technologies. These had evolved in popularity, particularly with the young generation Y, over some time but suddenly appeared in the mainstream when their legitimate use for social networking became noticeable by the rest of us. This leads us to speculate where this will go in the future. What will be the next ‘tipping point’ and when will it occur? Will we soon have a fifth generation of online news or will the rate of change slow for a while to let the fourth generation stabilise? The Internet is a great enabler of social change and there is ample evidence that the Internet is a fruitful tool for change of, and through, news online. One study of Spiegel Online (2008), the most popular online resource for news in Germany, claimed that by 2018, the Web could be the ‘newspaper’ in Germany and the printed newspaper will have become obsolete. However, as Cassidy (1999 p.57) noted a decade ago: “Newspapers are an industry that was supposed to go away when television came out; it was supposed to go away when cable came out; and it was supposed to go away when the Internet came out. But it’s still going strong.” Franklin (2008) claims that newspapers are obliged to operate in increasingly competitive and fragmented markets for readers and advertising revenues and is hypersensitive to developments in media technology. This threat has always motivated newspapers constant

changes to their design and contents to meet readers' shifting requirements for news and its presentation. Hence, many media experts are convinced that it is by using the Internet's added values, online media can distinguish themselves from their traditional counterparts, and it is this distinction that might be the precondition for all readers and advertisers to embrace online news media. The paradox of today's online news production lies in the fact that traditional news organisations follow a defensive media strategy on the Internet (motivated by profit concerns), in which online journalists cannot take full advantage of those internet-specific features that might make their website more 'valuable' and, thus more profitable. Convergence of digital media merging broadcast and interactive modes, as well as static and mobile sources and receivers is making the news landscape much more complex and dynamic. The most emphatic 'tipping point' that we are currently observing is the one involving user participation in the news reporting and production business.

At the same time journalists are engaging users through media such as blogs, both within their employer's online space and outside in their personal social spaces. So, there are revolutionary changes to the business model of the news corporation, to the work and life of the journalist, and to the role of the public. News corporations can certainly lower costs in the online environment with not only a reduction in the capital need to print and distribute printed copy but also using the unpaid public as news gathers. As in the traditional news cycle disappears, the work of the journalist become less structured and could be a 24/7 activity. Alongside the large media corporations and the professional journalist, there is now a growing role in the online news business for the individual independent commentator and the amateur reporter. This place a greater onus on the news consumers to be discerning in their interpretation of the information they receive. While independent sources are not 'official' and therefore, their authenticity suspect so are many, particularly young people, disenfranchised by the big-business controlled 'official' news syndicates. Dealing with and moving beyond this speculation may be one of the biggest challenges for new media professionals and scholars alike.

5.2 RSS & NEWS FEED

RSS is an acronym for Really Simple Syndication and Rich Site Summary. RSS is an XML-based (eXtensible Markup Language) format for content distribution. Webmasters create an RSS file containing headlines and descriptions of specific information. While the majority of RSS feeds currently contain news headlines or breaking information the long term uses of RSS

are broad. RSS is a defined standard based on XML with the specific purpose of delivering updates to web-based content. Using this standard, webmasters provide headlines and fresh content in a succinct manner. Meanwhile, consumers use RSS readers and news aggregators to collect and monitor their favorite feeds in one centralized program or location. Content viewed in the RSS reader or news aggregator is place known as an RSS feed. RSS is becoming increasing popular. The reason is fairly simple. RSS is a free and easy way to promote a site and its content without the need to advertise or create complicated content sharing partnerships.

2. History of RSS RSS was first invented by Netscape. They wanted to use an XML format to distribute news, stories and information. Netscape refined the version of RSS and then dropped it. UserLand Software to control of the specification and continued to develop it releasing a newer version. A noncommercial group picked up RSS at the same time and based on their interpretation of the Netscape’s original concept of RSS they too released a new version. UserLand was not happy with the noncommercial version and continued development of their own version of RSS (Really Simple Syndication), eventually UserLand released RSS v2. 3. Advantages of RSS There are a number of advantages to RSS, and it looks as though the Web-browsing world is embracing the technology. First and foremost, with RSS it is possible for Web surfers to see what’s out there without opening a browser and enduring the associated horrors of long loading times, banner ads, pop-up windows and flashing graphics. In addition, the “feed checks” that deliver new content by the RSS reader are automatic, saving the tiring keystrokes and mouse clicks associated with heavy Web surfing. Another plus: the user won’t need to give out an e-mail address for a subscription to a site’s RSS feed. There is no fear of spam outside of what may be published in the feed. Nothing is sent to the user via e-mail. Lastly, it’s easy to delete any feeds the users find boring or useless. No messy email process—just a click of the mouse or keyboard, and the RSS feed is gone.

5.2.1. TECHNOLOGY TOOLS FOR RSS

To take advantage of the convenience of RSS, one needs a special piece of software (called a “newsreader” or “aggregator”) to collect, organize, and display all his feeds. A variety of free and commercial readers are available. Some (such as Bloglines, Google Reader, NetVibes, and My Yahoo) are web-based, others (such as FeedDemon, AmphetaDesk, or NetNewsWire for Macs) have to be downloaded to one’s computer. Some browsers, such as Firefox and Safari, offer integrated feed readers.

Steps to Create & Promote RSS Feeds

1. **Build a Feed** : There are a number of desktop and web applications available that make feed creation easy. Most desktop software applications for building a feed include a wizard and context-sensitive help, simplifying the process of creating a feed. Following a few simple steps in a wizard generally will produce an RSS feed in just a few minutes.
2. **Transfer the Feed onto Your Server** : Once you have constructed an RSS feed you will need to transfer the feed to your server. This can be done using a standard FTP client (if it is not built into the feed creation software). The feed is usually placed in the domain's root directory like this: <http://www.mydomain.com/nameoffeed.xml>, but as long as you know where it is it doesn't really matter.
3. In order to signal to website visitors that an RSS feed containing content related to the website is available, include a colorful graphic on the website like RSS or XML. It has become a standard that nearly all websites that have RSS feeds available use colorful graphics such as flags as indicators that RSS feeds are available for specific content
4. **Include Information in the HTML of the Web Page so RSS Readers Auto-Detect Your Feed** After publishing an RSS feed : it is important to let visitors know that the feed exists. Aggregators will automatically detect RSS on a website if you add a small bit of code in the header field of an HTML page. Be sure to replace <http://www.yourdomain.com/rss.xml> with the URL to the RSS feed.
5. **Display the Feed's Content on a Website** : Contents contained in an RSS feed can be added to a website, providing site visitors an alternative method for viewing the content. The information will also help increase search engine interest. Displaying the feed as HTML can be accomplished. Providing fresh content on a regular basis will encourage site visitors return. will also help increase search engine interest. Displaying the feed as HTML can be accomplished. Providing fresh content on a regular basis will encourage site visitors return.
6. **Submit the Feed to RSS Directories and Search Engines** : As a rapidly increasing number of content sources, new and old, migrate or add RSS as a key distribution channel, and as more people utilize RSS newsreaders and aggregators to keep themselves informed, the ability to maintain high exposure and visibility is gradually shifted from complete attention to major search engines and content optimization techniques to an increasing awareness of RSS feed directories and search tools. In order to increase exposure of an RSS feed it should be submitted to RSS search engines and directories. This can be done manually. Just as you would submit the URL of a website or web page to a search engine you will need to submit the link of the actual feed located

on your website to the RSS directories. There is a large list of RSS directories at <http://www.rss-specifications.com/rsssubmission.htm>

7. Get an RSS feed reader : This is the program that checks the websites for changes and updates. It will periodically scan those sites and alert to what's new. Some readers are separate software applications that need installation; others are Web-based programs, or perhaps are offered by major search sites such as Google and Yahoo. There are a number of free RSS feed-reader programs available, and other programs that offer a free trial version. The following three RSS readers are free and run under Windows:

◆ SharpReader (www.sharpreader.com)

◆ RssReader (www.rssreader.com)

◆ FeedReader (www.feedreader.com)

◆ AmphetaDesk: (www.disobey.com/amphetadesk) Google (www.google.com/reader) and Yahoo! (<http://my.yahoo.com>), as well as many blogging services—like Bloglines (www.bloglines.com) and Newsgator (www.newsgator.com) offer RSS feedreading as part of their site's services. 5.2.2 Find a site that offers an RSS Feed Many Library, News and Web log (blog) sites offer an RSS feed, but there are many that don't. The appearance of the image or indicates that RSS is available. These icons have become the standard flags. The RSS feed file will have its own link or address.

5.3 NEWS PODCASTING

Podcasting is the hottest topic in the training industry, including the educational as well as corporate sectors. With this new tool in the market, different groups of people have emerged – Naïve, Inquisitives, Beginners/First-timers, Experimenters, Enthusiasts, Intermediates, Experts, and Critiques. Often, the term “podcasting” overwhelms many people, especially who plan to or who try it out for the first time. The process of podcasting can also frustrate people if podcasting does not work the way they expected it to work. The first-timers, naïves, beginners can refer to the article to get an overview of the podcasting process. The group of experimenters, intermediates, and enthusiasts might refer to the article to deepen their knowledge about podcasting. The group of experts and critiques might want to skim through the article to find solutions to the questions or queries on which they have been mulling over for a long time.

Many people are exploiting podcasting (medium of entertainment) for education. There are different factors driving people's attention toward podcasting. Social Software Learning is a social process. The medium of learning has transformed from face-to-face to e-learning to c-learning (communicative learning, collaborative learning, constructivist learning, or community learning). The three most important things in c-learning are interaction, social feedback, and social networking. Today's competitive world requires us to provide resources and inculcate skills that will help today's generation to keep up with the rapid growing technological world and to continue learning throughout their lives. The questions we should ask ourselves are, "What do today's learners want? How do they want the learning to occur? What are the best ways to teach today's young generation?" Learning is a process of rich and diverse experiences that are possible through collaboration and interaction with as many people as possible. How do young people learn? Young people want hands-on experience, action, interaction, identity in cyberculture, and connectivity with the world. They want a change in the role from consumers to producers. They want learning to be a social process.

To enable social learning, educators are coming up with the ideas of social software. Podcasts, blogs, and wikis fall under the category of social software. The term "social software" came into use in 2002. The use of this term is credited to Clay Shirky, who defined social software as "software that supports group interaction" (as cited in Owen, Grant, Sayers, & Facer, 2006, p. 12). According to Owen et al., (2006), social software and the changing goals of education seem to be moving in the same direction (p. 12). There is a growing trend of digital culture in the current generation of learners. The time is not far away when young learners will be taught B for Blogs, I for iPod, M for MSN, G for Google, P for Podcasting, W for Wikis, and Y for Yahoo! Integration of technology in education and as a part of their lives is a cultural phenomenon where these fragmented learners want continuous connectivity with the world and on-demand content at their "computerstep." Podcasting Definition Podcasting – a simple process of disseminating audio content – tends to overwhelm many first time users. Wikipedia (2007) defines Podcasting, as "a portmanteau of Apple's 'iPod' and 'broadcasting', a method of publishing files to the Internet, allowing users to subscribe to a feed and receive new files automatically by subscription, usually at no cost." I define podcasting as, Providing on-demand content at a student's desktop in the next generation. Podcasting is an optimum way of using the music devices, especially mp3 players, for the purpose of education. **Podcasting, an amalgamation of two words - iPod and Broadcasting has spread rapidly in the field of education throughout the world.**

There are a myriad uses of podcasting – ranging from the uses in corporate world to uses in the academic world. People are using podcasting in as many areas as possible; where there is audio, there is podcasting. Podcasting is a simple process of capturing human voice, uploading it online, and sharing it with the whole world. In today’s education system, educators are trying to create a community-based, collaborative learning environment as opposed to narrowcasting learning to a single learner. The New Oxford American Dictionary entitled “Podcast” as the Word of the Year for 2005 (MacDailyNews, 2005).

A podcasting process involves the following:

Thinking about a topic to podcast

Creating a podcast or Recording podcast episodes (mp 3 format) or Uploading the podcast episodes on a webpage

Creating an RSS feed for the podcast

Subscribing to the podcast

Listening to the podcast or Downloading the podcast or Transferring the podcast to an mp3 player

Pedagogical Benefits of Podcasting Why Should I Get into this Complex Process of Podcasting?

Audio plays a very important role in the learning process. Audio has a few characteristics that text lack. Audio can have a significant impact on understanding of some information. Often, we understand better in a face-to-face lecture than when we read the same content on our own. According to Clark and Walsh, “listening is instinctual, [whereas] reading and writing are not” (as cited in Chan and Lee, 2005, p. 62). Frequency modulation in human voice has an advantage over text when conveying any information. Audio is powerful mode to communicate information – it can add a flavour to information; however, audio does have some drawbacks. Too much of information in an audio format might tend to distract the listener’s attention and interest. According to the Scottish Council for Educational Technology, audio is an extremely powerful medium for conveying feelings, attitudes and atmosphere, and less powerful for conveying detail and facts. From a 30-minute audio tape, one will remember general opinions and arguments and not very many facts and figures (as cited in Chan and Lee, 2005). Podcasting encapsulates the power of audio.

Durbridge identified audio's educational advantages as its ability to influence cognition through clarity of instructions and emotional aspects of learning by conveying immediacy and a connection with the teacher (as cited in Edirisingha, 2006). Hargis and Wilson (n.d.) relate the concept of podcasting to information processing and conceptual learning. According to them, a podcast (a collection of real, raw, and spontaneous ideas) captures the attention of the listener and can sustain this attention to transfer the concepts into the long-term memory. Also, the podcast creation process facilitates self-correcting of ideas and concepts. The hype of the iPod has spread to such an extent that it has become a social symbol to have an iPod. For educators this can be an advantage – students already use these mp3 players – educators can ask them to use it for the purpose of education. According to Clark and Walsh, listening to an mp3 player in public is “socially acceptable” – today's modern young learners (who may be impatient with traditional forms of teaching and learning) like these devices that have a consumer appeal (as cited in Chan and Lee, 2005).

According to Ractham and Zhang (2006), podcasting is a knowledge distribution model and represents useful knowledge management artifacts. Podcasting can serve as a learning strategy for the auditory learners. In this fast-growing technological world, it is very important to provide information to the students in different formats and to offer different dimensions of learning. Kolb's experiential learning circle outlines four phases highlighting four different abilities: concrete experience, reflective observations, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Based on these activities, Kolb suggests four types of learning styles: (a) converger, (b) diverger, (c) assimilator, and (d) accommodator (Smith, 2001). Now, let us see how and where the process of podcasting can fit in. According to Kolb's experiential learning cycle, based on the immediate and concrete experiences, the learner provides reflections and observations. These reflective observations and thinking serve as a foundation for abstract conceptualization. These abstract concepts drive learners' further actions in a new situation and thus create new experiences. As a consumer, listening to a podcast is a concrete experience after which the listener makes observations and reflections. These reflections facilitate strengthening of his/her learning and understanding. In this process, the learner might form abstract concepts which might drive further actions in his/her learning. As a producer, in the podcast creation process, the learner creates a podcast (concrete experience); then reflects on the podcast created (reflective observations) – in terms of concepts learnt; then mulls over the options for improvement (abstract conceptualization); and then takes steps for improvements in learning (active experimentation)

In the Digital News Report, we define a podcast as an episodic series of digital audio files, which you can download, subscribe to, or listen to. Technically the programme or show itself sits inside a feed, which can be accessed via an app (sometimes known as a pod catcher) such as Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Stitcher, or Podcast Addicts – or via a publisher app or website, such as BBC Sounds or SR Play from Swedish Radio, or the New York Times, which has recently incorporated a podcast feature in its app. But in the last few years podcasts have also become available via music services such as Spotify and Pandora, via voice platforms such as Amazon’s Alexa and the Google Assistant, and via Google search itself. As audio becomes more integrated into mainstream consumer experiences across the internet, these early technical definitions are becoming less meaningful.

Individual shows are increasingly being surfaced across the web often without the need to subscribe to a feed or use a specialist app. Given this, it is perhaps more useful to consider the other characteristics of a podcast, in terms of content or form, that make it different from a traditional radio programme. A number of previous studies have noted that podcast listening is a more active process, with listeners typically listening intently from the start, whereas radio is often consumed distractedly as a flow of information. This allows shows to be constructed in a more demanding way, often using immersive and narrative storytelling techniques borrowed from movies and television drama. ‘It is often more filmic,’ says Kellie Riordan, manager at ABC Audio Studios. ‘Radio tends to be topic driven whereas podcasts – even if they’re news podcasts – build in storytelling, and plot points, and casting, and character, and scene building.’ Marguerite Howell, co-editor of The Intelligence at The Economist says it is not just about the way shows are constructed, it is also about tone: ‘It’s much more intimate, where sometimes with the radio it’s as if you’re being assaulted.’ But it is not just the production techniques. The context is also different, with 90% of podcast listening happening alone, largely using headphones attached to a smartphone, whereas radio listening is often a shared experience.

This tends to push creators towards a more intimate experience where the relationship with the host is critical. ‘People are choosing to listen to that particular host either daily or weekly and make that part of their habit,’ according to Susie Warhurst, Global Head of Content at Acast. ‘You are incredibly engaged with the content.’ Others point to the democratic nature of podcasts – the way that low barriers to entry encourage diverse viewpoints. Podcasts open up the possibility of super-serving an almost infinite number of passions and niches. In that sense they are different from radio programmes which, in terms of the spoken word, have tended to serve a more general audience within a particular broadcast distribution area. Attempts to

neatly define and categorise podcasts are often problematic, as this study shows. A significant proportion of popular podcasts originated as radio programmes but can now be enjoyed in a new context. We also find broadcasters adapting and re versioning content as well as commissioning podcast-first content that finds itself back on the radio. In this report we will use the terms native podcast and catch-up radio, because it helps us understand the production and supply of content. However, these differences are not clear cut and audiences themselves rarely make these distinctions.

The Importance of News in the Wider Podcast Ecosystem Taking native and catch-up radio podcasts together, we find 771,000 podcasts in the Apple directory as of November 2019, but the news category makes up a relatively small proportion of these – 6% or about 50,000 podcasts. And yet we find that news makes up more than a fifth (21%) of the top 250 places in the Apple episode charts: ‘These episode charts are reflective of consumption, not just recent subscriptions. So clearly news pods punch above their weight,’ says Dave Zohrob, CEO of Chartable, which tracks changes in the podcast ecosystem. Across all genres, the number of new podcasts is growing at a rate of more than 200,000 a year, though this rate has started to slow a little.

Many of these are produced by hobbyists and individuals, but this growth is also increasingly driven by higher-quality professional content with significant investment from broadcasters and digital-born publishers, as well as those with a background in print. There have been almost 12,000 new news podcasts so far this year, representing an increase of around a third (32%) in the last year. While some publishers have been creating and distributing podcasts for 10 or 15 years, it was the blockbuster success of *Serial* (2014), an investigative journalism podcast developed as a ‘spin off’ from the American public radio show *This American Life*, that kicked off this current wave of excitement. The show’s first two series notched up 340m downloads,⁷ sparking a new genre of true crime investigations including break-out hits *S-Town* and more recently *The Teacher’s Pet* in Australia.

Noting renewed interest in podcasts, the New York Times started to develop a daily news show to showcase its journalism in an audio format. Borrowing techniques from American public radio, the show launched in early 2017, becoming a surprise hit, in part because of the podcast’s ‘conversational and intimate’ tone.⁸ In turn this has led to the development of a new genre of narrative news podcasts that take a deep-dive into one or more stories. In the United States listening patterns have already started to change dramatically: ‘Strategically we know that we

would be completely foolish if we weren't committing ourselves to pushing aggressively into the on-demand space,' says Chris Turpin, Vice President for Editorial Innovation and Special Projects at National Public Radio (NPR), who notes that the podcast audience is much younger than the broadcast audience

5.4 WRITING FOR THE WEB

Writing for the Web is not the same as writing for print. People read differently on the Web. They scan read—jumping quickly from one piece of content to the next. People are much more action-orientated on the Web. They get online to get something done. Words should always be driving actions.

Here are 10 rules for writing effective web content:

- 1) Know your reader
- 2) Take a publishing approach
- 3) Keep content short and simple
- 4) Write active content
- 5) Put content in context
- 6) Write for how people search
- 7) Write great headings
- 8) Write great summaries
- 9) Write great metadata
- 10) Edit. Edit. Edit.

1) Know your reader All effective writing begins with knowing your reader. Write for your reader, not for your ego. Your reader is not everybody. The most effective writing is keenly focused on the specific needs of a clearly defined reader type. Is your reader a middle class, female American, with two kids, who lives in the suburbs? Think like your reader thinks. Get to meet her. Once a month, talk to your reader. Read what she reads. Is there a common style and tone being used to reach her? Use it. Put a picture of your readers up on your wall. You shouldn't have more than 3-5 core reader types.

2) Take a publishing approach Publishing is about getting the right content to the right person at the right time at the right cost. It's about getting and keeping attention with content. It's about driving actions. Publishing is about selling with content. Back around 1995, if you went to many airline websites, you found a big picture of an aeroplane on the homepage. Now, you will find a booking process and special offers.

Killer content. The first thing publishers must get right is their killer content. What content do you have that will really drive actions? Put that on your homepage.

3) Keep content short and simple: In publishing, less is nearly always more. Remember, the one word that describes the scan reader is impatient. Here are some guidelines for the length of your content: • Headings: 8 words or less • Sentences: 15-20 words • Paragraphs: 40-70 words • Documents: 500 words or less Get rid of all your fancy words. Get rid of your ego. Writing effectively is not about showing off. It's about communicating. It's about driving actions. Write simply. Get to the point. Then stop.

4) Write active content: The most powerful word in the English language is 'YOU.' Write from the point of view of the reader. The reader has come to your website to do something. Your content should be written in an action-orientated style. Every sentence should be moving them towards a purchase, a subscription, a solution.

5) Put content in context The Web is about links and connections. Web content is classified and linked content. Never leave your reader at a dead-end on your website. I wrote this article to impress you about what I know about writing for the Web. Here's the type of actions I'd like you to consider: Find out more about my writing for the Web workshops http://www.gerrymcgovern.com/seminar_d.htm Get in touch with me about your content management needs <mailto:info@gerrymcgovern.com> Join my New Thinking weekly web content newsletter http://www.gerrymcgovern.com/new_thinking.htm Read a free chapter from my book, The Web Content Style Guide http://www.gerrymcgovern.com/guide_excerpts.htm Download a free chapter from The Web Content Style Guide (PDF 219 KB) http://www.gerrymcgovern.com/la/writing_for_web.pdf

6) Write for how people search Write to be found when people are searching. That means using the words your target readership is using. Before you begin writing, you need to sit down and plan the keywords you will use in your content. There are two excellent websites that will help you do this: Wordtracker www.wordtracker.com Overture

7) Write great headings Headings are the most important piece of content you will write. That's because:

- People scan read and the first piece of content they often read is the heading. If it's not interesting, they're gone.
- The heading is often used as title metadata. This is what the search engines use on the search results page.
- The heading may be placed on a homepage as a link to the content. When writing headings:
- Keep them to eight words or less
- Make sure you include the most important keywords
- Cut out as many adjectives and prepositions as possible (and, the, a, of)
- Be clear and precise. Avoid Shakespearean references. Avoid being clever

8) Write great summaries, sentences, paragraphs The summary is the: who, what, where, when, how. It's about getting the facts across in 50 words or less. An objective of a summary is to make people want to read on. Keep them punchy and factual. Sentences should be between 15-20 words. Paragraphs should be between 40-70 words. Remember, people scan read. If the first sentence in the paragraph is not interesting, they'll move on. So, always lead off a paragraph with a factual sentence.

9) Write great metadata If you can't write good metadata, you can't write for the Web. Metadata gives web content context. You need to see metadata as an extension of grammar. You might say that metadata is web grammar. Classification (categorization) is metadata. Focus on what classification terms are used on your website. Focus on how your content is classified. It is your responsibility to ensure that your content is properly classified. Misclassified web content might as well not have been written.

Headings and summaries are metadata. Date of publication and author information are metadata. If there's one piece of metadata that every webpage must have, it's title metadata. Every webpage should have a unique title that precisely describes the content on that page.

10) Edit. Edit. Edit. If at all possible, get someone else to edit your content. If you are editing someone else's content:

- Take your time. Good editing can take anything from 30-50 percent of the time it took to write the original content.
- Aim to do about three edits.
- Edit first for style and tone. Ask these questions: Is it clear? Is it necessary? Is there a shorter way to say this? Is there a simpler way to say this?

- Leave the checking of grammar and spelling until last. For a thorough edit, print out the content. Get a ruler. Place the ruler at the end of the content and read backwards.

5.5 CITIZEN JOURNALISM

Throughout history, citizen journalism has changed and morphed but has remained one of the vital parts of modern civil society. Citizen journalism gives everybody a chance to be heard and everybody can have an active role in the society. In today's age of digital disruption, the role of citizen journalism has never been more important. The public can follow developments of certain events and happenings as they occur, or they can produce the news themselves. Furthermore, citizen journalism contributes to the variety and pluralism of media outlets. The history of citizen journalism is a key element when it comes to understanding citizen journalism as a concept.

Due to the development of technology, the Internet and social media, citizen journalism is often considered as a new phenomenon. Although, according to some authors, it could not be farther from the truth. For instance, Wally Hughes (2011: 6) states that citizen journalism has been around longer than the profession of journalism itself: In 1908, the University of Missouri opened the doors of the world's first journalism school, but newspapers had been around for centuries before that. As a matter of fact, early colonial newspapers in the United States had such an impact on the country that founders included a clause in the First Amendment protecting freedom of the press. But if the country had no professional journalists (since the profession had not been created, yet), then what were the framers of the Constitution protecting? (Hughes, 2011: 6).

Consequently, citizen journalism is a phenomenon which was and is constantly present, but has changed and morphed throughout history. Furthermore, the power of the Internet and the influence it had on the development of citizen journalism cannot be denied. In other words, without the Internet, citizen journalism would not exist as we know it today. The world's first website <http://info.cern.ch/> was launched in 1991 by Tim Berners-Lee, but it was not interactive. Over the following years, the number of websites did increase, but the real "game changer" was the Web 2.0. platform, developed in 2004 (Citizen Journalism: A primer on the definition, risks and benefits, 2012).

Authors Alexander and Levine (2008: 42) claim that, when differentiating Web 2.0. from the rest of the web, two features should be considered: microcontent and social software. The

authors explain microcontent as an essential feature that allows users to create small chunks of information, which take up significantly less storage. Furthermore, their uploading to the web is simpler than ever and does not require any kind of web design expertise. The second feature is social software, or social media. Web 2.0. platforms are organized around people. Therefore, the authors claim that social media in combination with microcontent creates a “series of synergistic effects, including conversations that occur across multiple sites and with multiple conversations.” (Alexander, Levine, 2008: 42).

There are many different definitions of citizen journalism. Some claim that citizen journalism is simply a dissemination of information, whereas others state it refers to any kind of collecting and/or reporting data via new and traditional media and platforms. Jay Rosen (2008, Pressthink.org), a professor of journalism at New York University, describes citizen journalism as a phenomenon in which the audience employs the press tools they possess in order to inform one another (2009, Pressthink.org). In other words, citizens become contributors to the media, using many different forms of distributing information. The term which is commonly used while explaining citizen journalism is “citizen media”. According to Aparna Dwivedi (2013: 8), that term was coined by Clemencia Rodriguez, who defined it as “the transformative processes they bring about within participants and their communities”. Citizen media contributes to the variety of media outlets. As stated by Dwvendi (2013: 8), the occurrence of citizen-generated content is a response to mainstream traditional media, which oftentimes neglected public interests and had a biased portrayal of events and news. Overall, two major points which can be seen in these definitions are the following: the public starts making content and that certain content is a response to the deficiencies of professional journalism. With this in mind, producing the type of content which functions outside the mainstream media requires a certain level of democracy.

Allan (2013: 1) calls this instance “accidental journalism“. One of the most known examples to illustrate this term is Sohaib Athar's live-tweeting. Athar lived with his family in Abbottabad, Pakistan and in May 2011 he heard a helicopter flying over his house. That was not a common occurrence – consequently, he decided to share that with his Twitter followers. Athar wrote the following: “Helicopter hovering above Abbottabad at 1 AM (is a rare event)“. (Mullen, Saifi, 2016). Later, he tweeted a series of information; he stated that more than one non-Pakistani helicopters were involved, that one of them is being shot down and he provided his followers with a Facebook link to a map that pinpointed the exact area (Allan, 2013: 2).

With the invention of the Internet, citizen journalism became universally accessible. Sharing and publishing information has become easier and faster than ever, especially with the development of blogs and social media. That being said, some authors claim that blogging is journalism, whereas other experts disagree. However, during the 21st century, blogs have become one of the more notable platforms for sharing information, opinions, feelings and other various content.

Citizen journalism is sometimes perceived as “amateurish” or as a “bad version” of the mainstream media and it definitely has its critics. It is commonly known that professional journalists have formal education and ethical responsibilities towards the public. Moreover, there is an abundance of regulations, laws, and codes, which help professional journalists navigate the “ethical field”. Based on that, many criticize citizen journalism and its lack of regulations and codes of ethics. However, a few codes of ethics have emerged for online or citizen journalists. According to Cyber journalist .net’s Blogger’s Code of Ethics, responsibilities of citizen journalists are the following: to be honest and fair, accountable, and to minimize harm (Roberts, Steiner, 2012: 9). Many authors have proposed numerous solutions to the ongoing problem of ethics in citizen journalism. Martin Kuhn proposed a variety of practical and ethical guidelines, such as promoting interactivity, striving for factual truth, transparency and free expression (Roberts, Steiner, 2012: 9).

5.5 SOCIAL NETWORKING IN JOURNALISM

Social platforms have not only emerged as important news platforms for the public, but also as useful tools for journalists. Journalists use social media to find story leads and to share their work with audiences, which has made journalism more interactive.

A social media reporter (SMR) is an individual with a professional background in journalism and reporting whose main responsibility is to supplement traditional news reporting by adding informative content in media conduits such as blogs, microblogs (such as Twitter), websites, web pages, and other platforms connected ... Social media also helps SEO for journalists, a necessary consideration in today's digital-first world. As with any storytelling medium, you'll need to hone your style and study your audience, making sure you're creating the content that your readers are looking for.

Journalists can instantly report just by using their smart phones and that is a huge impact social media has on journalism. ... It is important for social media platforms to acknowledge the fake news so they can prevent it from being shared to the mass audiences that use their services¹. Social

media offers journalists increased access to content. ... They're on Twitter or Facebook, sifting through content and sharing stories from their friends and family, sometimes before a journalist has even picked it up.

Social Networks, Part 1 Students will learn the fundamentals of creating and managing social presences on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Google+ and how journalists are using these networks. The material provided in this lesson is intended to give students the tactical knowledge of how to use these social networks, it is recommended that class time be used to cover the ideas, theory, or application of these networks. Lesson Objectives: • Create and maintain a professional journalist presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ • Create and publish content to a Tumblr blog • Engage with other journalists on social media • Use social media to follow their beat and community

Facebook

Learning Objectives:

- Setting Up Your Facebook Page
- Understanding Facebook Page Features
- Monitoring Facebook Insights
- Understanding How Journalists & Media Use Facebook

Twitter

Learning Objectives:

- What is Twitter?
- Setting Up Your Twitter Account
- Understanding Twitter's Web Features
- Following & Connecting with Your Community on Twitter
- Understanding Hashtags & Privacy Settings
- Understanding Journalism Best Practices for Twitter
- Engaging With Your Community on Twitter

Google +

Learning Objectives:

- What is Google+?
- Creating and Customizing Your Google+ Profile
- Understanding Google+ Features

- How to Grow Your Audience Using Google+
- Creating and Using Google+ Circles

Tumblr

Learning Objectives:

- What is Tumblr?
- Understand How Tumblr is Similar and Different from Other Blogging Platforms
- Understand How News Organizations Are Using Tumblr
- Create and Customize a Tumblr blog
- Publish Content to Tumblr

Social Networks, Part 2

Students will learn the fundamentals of creating and managing social presences on LinkedIn, Instagram, and Youtube, and how journalists are using these networks. The material provided in this lesson is intended to give students the tactical knowledge of how to use these social networks, it is recommended that class time be used to cover the ideas, theory, or application of these networks.

Lesson Objectives:

- Create and Maintain a Professional Presence on LinkedIn
- Understand How to Incorporate Multimedia into Reporting
- Understand How YouTube and Instagram Can Be Used in Journalism