

ONLINE JOURNALISM

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San Jose State University
AJEEP

AJEEP

Online Journalism

Course Description

This course is designed for the experienced journalism major who wishes to learn about multimedia reporting for the online medium. The course teaches reporters how to approach stories for posting on the Web using the strengths of the online venue. Newspaper, magazine, broadcast and photo majors will work together to produce multimedia packages for posting on the Internet. Editors from the different sequences will collaborate to produce an online portal containing content from each sequence.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

Course Content Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- LO1. Create news stories that are free of factual errors, style errors, errors of omission, spelling errors, punctuation and grammar errors, and usage errors;
- LO2. Conduct multiple-source interviews for news and feature stories;
- LO3. Know where and how to find and develop ideas for news and feature stories;
- LO4. Know how to locate and verify information for news and feature stories through the Internet and traditional sources;
- LO5. Learn and demonstrate how different multimedia features can enhance online storytelling;
- LO6. Produce news content using video, audio, photo and text;
- LO7. Use Web publishing software to create news story pages and index pages;
- LO8. Be self-critical in editing and evaluating your own work;
- LO9. Accept criticism from your instructor and respond to instructor's suggestions;
- LO10. Develop ideas for publishable news or feature stories.

Required Texts/Readings

There is no assigned textbook for this class, but students will be expected to read news articles and other material posted on the class Web page. New material will be posted weekly.

Assignments and Grading Policy

Students in this class will work together on multimedia reporting projects, to be posted on the class Web site. The objective is for them to learn from each other as students with

different specialties work together. By the end of the semester each student should have produced video, audio, photo and text content for the site.

Because multimedia stories are different than just a written story or video package, members of reporting teams for each story will need to work together to come up with a notion of how best to present their chosen topic. For each story, students will be assigned to work together in groups and given contact information. Each group will meet to discuss the elements that will best serve the story, then put together (1) a discussion of the chosen story and its main points, and (2) a visual outline of how it will appear online. These will be presented by one or more members of the group in class on the days noted in the schedule, with others in the class encouraged to offer suggestions.

Please note that every student will be expected to present at least part of a story pitch at some time during the semester. Groups will be given a week or more to produce finished packages, and the packages will be given a collective grade.

This class will include a few lectures and reading assignments, some lab instruction, and a lot of discussion. Since this is a production class with a great deal of work done in the classroom, regular class attendance and showing up on time are vital.

Assignments are weighted as follows:

- Student Life story: 25 percent (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO6, LO7, LO10)
- Controversy story: 25 percent (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO6, LO7, LO10)
- In-Depth story: 30 percent (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO6, LO7, LO10)
- In-class exercises: 10 percent (LO3, LO4, LO5, LO8, LO9, LO10)
- Class participation: 10 percent (LO3, LO4, LO5, LO8, LO9, LO10)

Online Journalism / Course Schedule

Schedule is subject to change; any changes will be announced a minimum of one week in advance, with students notified via e-mail.

Class	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Aug. 22	Online storytelling: The strengths of the online venue and each of its technologies In-class exercise: Choosing media for stories
2	Aug. 29	The basics of putting stories online; working in teams; story pitch Assignment: Campus life story
3	Sept. 5	Web resources and interviewing Campus life story due in class
4	Sept. 12	Writing, editing and presenting your story Assignment: Controversy story
5	Sept. 19	Video tips; sidebar stories; ethics and standards Controversy story due in class
6	Sept. 26	The in-depth story package Assignment: In-depth feature story

October 3

Final In-Depth Story Package Presentation, 12:00-1:15 p.m. in regular classroom.

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Online Journalism

Key Terms

- **Online Story Package** – an online news story that uses multiple media (text, photos, video, audio, graphics) working together to tell a story.
- **Information Graphic** (Infographic) – a visual representation (graphs, charts, timelines, etc.) used to make facts or concepts easier to understand.
- **Sidebar Story** – a secondary article that accompanies a main story, usually focusing in more depth on a person or topic from the main story.
- **Supporting Text** – text elements in an online story package that help explain or tie together multimedia elements.
- **Story Pitch** – a brief presentation by a group in our class, discussing how they plan to pursue, report and present a story using a multimedia approach.
- **Search Operators** – keystrokes and characters that allow online keyword searches to be more specific and productive.
- **Database** – a collection of data (usually digital) organized so it can be easily accessed and sorted.
- **Hyperlink** – a photo, graphic, piece of text or other HTML object formatted to allow users to click through to another document.
- **Rule of Thirds** – a practice in shooting video that divides the frame into imaginary vertical and horizontal thirds, then lining subjects up along the points where those lines intersect.
- **Rendering** – the process of converting a video project into a finished movie.
- **Authenticity** – in journalism, conveying not just the facts of a situation, but the background and context behind those facts, to present a more complete picture of the story.
- **In-Depth Story** – a piece of journalism that explains complex topics or provides previously unknown details of a subject to readers.

AJEEP: Online Journalism, Lecture 1

(ALL NOTES TO THE INSTRUCTOR WILL BE IN UPPERCASE LETTERS.)

Introduction

This class is designed for advanced journalism students who have learned how to write and report news articles but now want to learn how to create story packages for the Internet. This might not immediately sound difficult, but online reporting involves more than just the traditional skills of gathering information, interviewing people and writing a story. The Internet allows for so many different kinds of news content – text, photos, video, information graphics, etc. – that reporters are increasingly expected to use multiple types of content to tell their stories. Using multiple media – literally, “multimedia” – allows reporters to create story packages that can appeal to different audiences and engage readers in exciting and effective ways.

It’s important to immediately note that this class is different from many other classes you may have taken before. Most classes focus on a single topic or skill, or perhaps a group of them that have clear connections to one another. Given the multifaceted nature of online journalism, however, this class by necessity teaches elements of different skills that must be brought together. You must not only learn how to create different kinds of content, but also something larger – how to conceptualize story packages from the beginning, and tailor your reporting to make the assorted elements of those packages most effective. You must also learn at least the basics of how to post stories online and design Web pages.

You must also learn to work in teams – most effective story packages in professional journalism are created by more than one person, and the division of labor is an important step in each project within this class. The goal is to have you all perform different tasks across projects, giving you experience in producing different kinds of content.

Online Story Packages

At this early point, it's important to define what we mean by an "online story package." This is not simply a news article that's been uploaded to a Web site with perhaps a single photo accompanying it. A story package is an online story that uses multiple media working together to tell a story. A package should contain at least one text story (possibly also one or more short sidebar stories), and multiple additional elements. These can include individual photos or photo galleries, one or more pieces of video or audio, one or more information graphics, or anything else that goes beyond words to help make a story more complete. (SEE FIGS. 1A-5)

A few terms mentioned above may also need to be defined. A **sidebar story** is a secondary article that accompanies a main story, usually focusing in more depth on a person or topic from the main story. These are common in online story packages because they provide additional detail that might not fit into a print publication. An **information graphic** (often referred to as an "**infographic**") is a drawing, chart or other visual representation used to make facts or concepts easier to understand. Infographics can include graphs, charts, timelines and many other formats, and are generally used to visually represent data, locations, comparisons and changes over time. As computers became common in newsrooms in the 1980s and '90s, these became popular in print publications. In online news, however, such graphics can be made interactive and include animations, video and other engaging functions.

As we move forward, if there are other terms you're not familiar with, please raise your hand and let me know. It's important that you understand each element along the way.

One thing that you should know right away is that unlike some other types of news reporting, creating online story packages takes a lot of time. You can quickly put together online materials for a breaking story, but to create a fully integrated package is labor-intensive, especially when first learning how to do it. This is why the best of these packages are often done in the wake of a major event, or when covering a person or issue in which timeliness isn't a major element. That means this

class will rarely if ever focus on breaking news, but rather on more of a newsmagazine approach – giving readers a thorough, in-depth, well-researched look at a story.

A factor that makes creating multimedia story packages challenging is that unlike many traditional forms of news, there is no single “template” for creating them. Traditional print news articles have evolved over many decades into certain styles and approaches, as have TV and radio reports. Yet perhaps due to the multifaceted nature of online media and its newness to the news business, as well as the fact that new reporting and presentation technologies are constantly being introduced, there are relatively few structures or guidelines for creating effective online story packages.

In such a vaguely-defined field, it’s hard to know where to start, but the good news is that the lack of set standards means you can be creative and try to tell your stories in new and interesting ways. (TO CLASS) What are some different ways to tell stories online? (DISCUSS)

Types of Multimedia Content

A key point from the start is familiarizing yourself with the strengths of the different types of media content you can use online, and the types of stories that lend themselves to certain media elements. The goal is to get you to react to story ideas by instinctively determining which kinds of media will most effectively help them tell the story engagingly and fully.

Text stories. When we think of “writing a story,” this is what usually comes to mind. But how should text stories be used best within the structure of a multimedia package? Many effective packages have a main story that serves as the anchor, the central jumping-off point for readers that explains why they should be interested and conveys the basic information upon which the package is based. Often they are supported by sidebar stories, as noted above, which add depth and detail to an aspect of the main story. A question you might want to consider about adding sidebar stories, however, is whether they add more to a package than a piece of video or an infographic might. The

notion is that other types of content might be more engaging to readers. Of course, the question is just an extension of the larger issue of that kind of media work best for what kinds of content.

Photos and video are known for conveying emotions, but text stories can do this as well, and also provide a much greater breadth of information. Text can be great for facts and figures if it's used to clarify what might otherwise be difficult to understand. Text stories also lend themselves toward in-depth analysis of complex topics, providing background information, history of a topic and different sides of issues.

We've already noted that often a text story is at the heart of a package, and part of the reason is that depth of information is text's clear strength. Often the text story provides the background information that makes all the other elements make sense, introducing people, concepts and circumstances. It can also summarize and connect seemingly dissimilar material.

The clarity and specificity of information in text stories is something that should never be overlooked. Video or audio interviews or photo galleries provide a type of rich information, but they can leave unanswered questions or unexplained concepts. Individual interviewees and photo subjects aren't looking at the big picture in the way a skilled reporter or editor does. In many ways, text and editing are what make disparate pieces of media content work together to create a meaningful whole. It's the element over which reporters and editors have most control within online story packages.

Weaknesses of text stories are often best explained in comparison to other media. They can lack the drama of video and photos, and the instinctive connection of seeing the faces of the people involved. When television surpassed newspapers as the most popular news medium in America in the 1960s, these factors were widely cited. Yet when used in conjunction with the other media, text stories can wield great power. Figurative language can sometimes create a mental image that is as strong or even stronger than a visual image.

One way to look at text relative to other media – photos and video get attention, but text explains why they matter. (DISCUSS) Generally speaking, every online story package will contain at least one text story.

The reason this section is called “text stories” is that text is useful within story packages in many other ways, which we’ll address a little later.

Photos. Photos are another “traditional” type of media used in multimedia storytelling. Since today’s audiences have had access to visual media (TV, movies, games, etc.) throughout their lives, it’s widely believed that they respond best to anything that has visuals. This may be true, but the key is to understand that photos and other visual elements are to be used as tools to tell a story, not just as pretty pictures.

Reporters often think of photos as simply supplements to text stories, but they need to recognize that photos can provide windows to empathy, fear, triumph and countless other human emotions in a way that text can’t. Story subjects that appeal to these emotions are almost always enhanced immensely by well-chosen photos. Even stories that are more fact-driven can benefit from photos that show the effects of those facts on people. They can give readers a sense of the location where the story takes place, which makes them ideal companions for all kinds of stories.

Photos can also take interviewees in a story and turn them into something closer to characters in a drama. Putting a face to a name creates a more visceral connection between readers and interviewees, and encourages people to empathize with them. The same can be done with video, but photos often capture specific moments and facial expressions more clearly and effectively.

The online venue adds an extra layer of value to photos, as whole galleries can be created and viewed. This gives photographers and editors a way to present a more complete visual look at a story, and also allows some creativity in creating the order in which photos are viewed. These are often formatted as **slideshows**, which can be clicked through by users and often contain captions.

Photos have their weaknesses – they’re great at spotlighting moments but weak at providing context, and sometimes technical problems with them get in the way of effective storytelling. These days, photos also no longer have the immediate credibility they once did, thanks to software that has made them easy to fake.

Still, while text stories can provide detail and depth of information, photos can humanize that information. Facts and figures appeal to the mind, while photos often appeal to the heart. As a general rule, no story package is complete without photos used somewhere.

Video. As noted earlier, today’s audiences have grown up with TV, movies and online video, so they may be drawn to video content more quickly than any other type of media. That doesn’t mean it’s appropriate for every story, however.

Stories involving action naturally work well on video – it clearly lends itself to this more than any other medium. These can include stories about political or protest rallies, sporting events, speeches or anything else where the core of the story involves activity that can be filmed as it happens. Beyond this, video is also useful in some of the same ways as photos. The visual elements of photos are also present in video, but the two media have somewhat different strengths. Both video and photos are great for setting the scene at a location, but generally video gives a better overall picture while photos provide more detail. Conversely, photos capture facial expressions very well, but they can’t actually show kids playing or audiences cheering. Photos capture people’s emotions, but video allows you to hear them speak. Photos are better for moments, but video is better for processes – showing what an accident victim must do in rehab, or how a police officer patrols a beat.

It has been argued that at least the central interviewee in any online story package should be interviewed on video so that readers can hear his/her voice and establish a more personal connection, and while this isn’t always possible it’s usually a good idea. It’s also true that young journalists tend to get carried away with wanting to shoot everything on video without thinking that it might not always be the best medium for a given purpose.

One problem with video is that editing and processing it can take a lot of time. If you want to put together TV news-style video stories with titles, transitions and the like, the process can take many hours to complete, with hours of training leading up to that. If the result is something that tells a story well, the effort is probably worth it. Sometimes, though, students get so caught up in producing a three-minute video that it eats up more of their time than all their other writing and reporting tasks combined.

One alternative is to post raw video of interviews or spot news. Surveys in recent years have shown that this is increasingly popular with readers, perhaps resonating with audiences weaned on so-called “reality TV.” While this means you lose some control over what the audience might see or hear – sometimes including embarrassing comments, shaky images or other elements that might seem unprofessional – it eliminates or drastically reduces the time spent editing video.

As with photos, video is not especially good at conveying detailed information or complex issues, and it can create an illusion of reality while omitting important material that isn’t in camera range. Video should not be considered an absolute necessity for all story packages – plenty of successful pieces have gone without it – but if you choose not to use it for a particular package, you should explain your reasons why.

Infographics. This technology is often underrated and underused, but can be very effective if done well. Infographics can combine the strengths of other elements – the engaging visuals of photos and video and the facts and details of text – into something uniquely informative. Because they’re relatively rare, audiences often find them eye-catching and end up learning as much from them as anything else within a package. (SEE FIGS. 6-8)

Charts and graphs have been used in news reports for many decades, but today’s infographics allow a range of creativity and complexity that make them truly different from any other news element. Instead of writing a history of a given company or institution, you can create graphically rich timelines featuring photos and key facts from across time. Rather than simply writing about a

school budget, they can create a pie chart to show how the money from student fees is divided up and spent at the university level. Or they can create a map of where campus construction will soon begin, with affected areas and dates provided.

The key to effective infographics lies in taking something complex and using a visual apparatus to make it simple and easy to understand. Some people take to this right away but many do not, so it's important to start simple and work toward greater complexity. Often groups will brainstorm ideas for infographics, but assign one student to actually create them. (In the professional ranks, interactive infographics are sometimes created using Flash or HTML5, allowing readers to click through to reveal content, but it is not expected that you will rise to this level in one semester.)

You're welcome to create infographics, but they should really only be used when they will add something unique to a package.

Supporting text. This might not seem important, but it's something that can tie the elements of a story package together into a cohesive whole. Too often students neglect to provide captions, photo/video credits, names of people pictured, even headlines that would help readers connect the sometimes disparate elements of a package.

The formatting of these elements varies dramatically, and by necessity some of them will have to be defined based on the layout of the site on which they appear and the type of content they supplement. Students often get so caught up in creating their multimedia elements that they lose sight of the little finishing touches that help readers identify and connect those elements into a true package.

Summary and student exercise

(TO INSTRUCTORS: THIS SEEMS LIKE A LOT OF MATERIAL FOR STUDENTS TO DIGEST, BUT KEEP IN MIND THAT THEY'RE FAMILIAR WITH MOST IF NOT ALL OF THESE TYPES OF MEDIA. YOU'RE MERELY MAKING THEM THINK ABOUT THE FACETS OF THOSE MEDIA THAT SET THEM APART FROM THE OTHERS. BY BREAKING DOWN TYPES OF MEDIA INTO THE FUNCTIONS THEY PERFORM BEST,

YOU'RE SETTING STUDENTS UP TO UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS OF IDENTIFYING WHICH STORY ELEMENTS LEND THEMSELVES BEST TO WHICH MEDIA.

(A USEFUL EXERCISE AT THE END OF THIS UNIT IS TO PRESENT STUDENTS WITH SEVERAL STORY SUMMARIES FROM RECENT LOCAL, NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL NEWS, THEN ASK THEM TO WRITE UP WHICH TYPES OF MEDIA THEY WOULD USE TO TELL THESE STORIES, AND WHY. THESE CAN BE TURNED IN VIA E-MAIL OR LEFT AT YOUR OFFICE BY THE END OF THE DAY OF CLASS. I RECOMMEND THAT THIS ASSIGNMENT BE UNGRADED, BUT THAT THE INSTRUCTOR MAKE SOME COMMENTS ON EACH ASSIGNMENT AND RETURN IT TO THE STUDENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE MOST COMMON STUDENT RESPONSES CAN BE DISCUSSED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT CLASS AS A LEAD-IN TO THE DAY'S TOPIC.)

Fig. 1A. Top of *New York Times* Olympic 100-Meter Sprint Story Package

HOME PAGE TODAY'S PAPER VIDEO MOST POPULAR U.S. Edition

The New York Times **Olympics** Search All NYTimes.com **ING DIRECT**

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2012 LONDON NEWS SCHEDULE RESULTS Q&A HIGHLIGHTS PHOTOS SPORTS ATHLETES

All the Medalists: Men's 100-Meter Sprint

One Race, Every Medalist Ever

Usain Bolt's 9.63 set an Olympic record in the 100. So how far ahead of every Olympic medalist is he?

By KEVIN QUEALY and GRAHAM ROBERTS

Sources: "The Complete Book of the Olympics" by David Wallechinsky and Jaime Loucky, International Olympic Committee; Amateur Athletic Association; Photographs: Chang W. Lee/The New York Times, Getty Images, International Olympic Committee

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Usain Bolt vs. 116 years of Olympic sprinters

Based on the athletes' average speeds, if every Olympic medalist raced each other, Usain Bolt (the London version) would win, with a wide distribution of Olympians behind him. Below, where each sprinter would be when Bolt finishes his race.

MEDALS BY COUNTRY			
United States	40	Barbados	1
Britain	8	Bulgaria	1
Jamaica	7	Hungary	1
Canada	5	Netherlands	1
Trinidad and Tobago	4	New Zealand	1
Australia	3	Panama	1
Germany	3	Portugal	1
Cuba	2	South Africa	1
Namibia	2	United Team of Germany	1
Soviet Union	2		

Usain Bolt 2012

Carl Lewis

Jim Hines

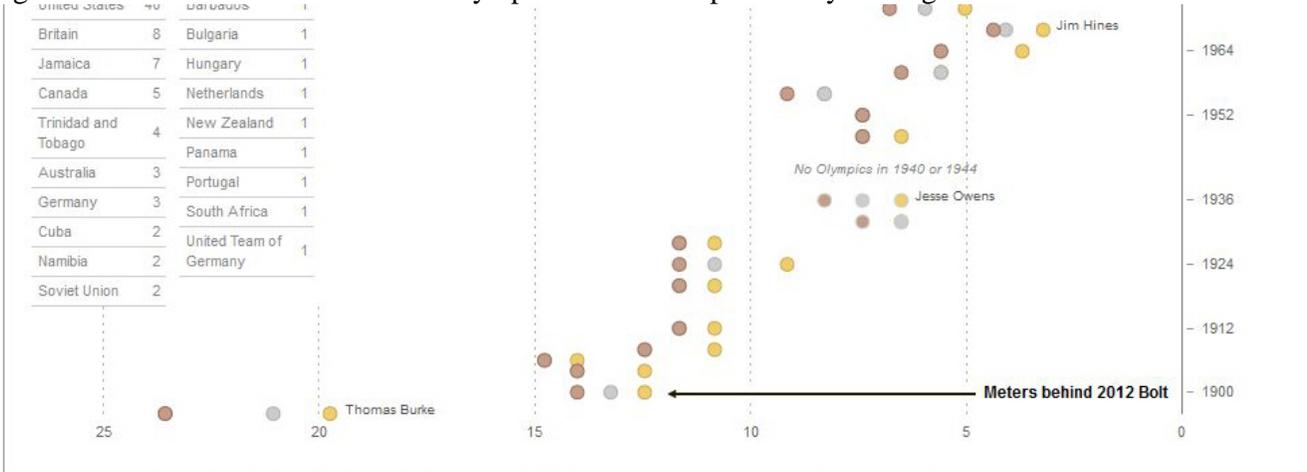
Jesse Owens

No Olympics in 1940 or 1944

Meters behind 2012 Bolt

Thomas Burke

Fig. 1B. Bottom of *New York Times* Olympic 100-Meter Sprint Story Package



This chart includes medals for the United States and Australia in the "Intermediary" Games of 1906, which the I.O.C. does not formally recognize.

Notable winners of the 100-meter sprint



Archie Hahn
United States
The "Milwaukee Meteor" also won the 50-meter dash and the 200-meter dash in 1904.
 1904, Athens 11.0
 1906, Athens 11.2

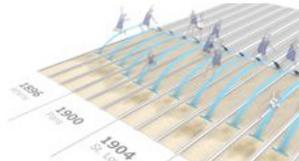
Jesse Owens
United States
Also set the world record in the 4x100 relay and Olympic records in the long jump and 200-meter dash.
 1936, Berlin 10.3

Jim Hines
United States
The first person to break 10 seconds in the Olympics; his 9.95 set an Olympic record that would last 20 years.
 1968, Mexico City 9.95 WR

Carl Lewis
United States
Lewis actually finished second in 1988 behind Canada's Ben Johnson, whose gold medal was stripped after he failed a drug test.
 1984, Los Angeles 9.99
 1988, Seoul 9.92 OR

All the medalists

The Times examines modern Olympic results in the context of 116 years of the Games.



The long jump



100-meter freestyle



100-meter sprint

Kevin Quealy, Graham Roberts and Amanda Cox; additional production by Rose Eveleth | [Send Feedback](#)

Fig. 2A. First page of AZCentral.com polygamous sect escape story package

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RUNNING FOR A LIFE

Fawn Broadbent ran away from Colorado City at the age of 16 to escape life in the strict polygamous sect of Warren Jeffs. First to a safe house in Glendale, AZ, and then to a new home in Salt Lake City where she attended high school, had her first date, and explored the outside world. Three years later this is the story of her emotional flight and continued struggle.

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Fig. 2B. Second page of AZCentral.com polygamous sect escape story package

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RUNNING FOR A LIFE
Credits

Leaving the Flock

Amanda J. Crawford | Photos by David Wallace

Fawn Broadbent woke in her basement bedroom to the sound of people talking upstairs.

She pulled on a sweater and a floral skirt that reached her ankles but with a slit up the side – taboo in Colorado City where women wear long traditional dresses.

She went upstairs to where her parents and several brothers and sisters were talking in frightened voices. When she asked what was going on, her father wouldn't tell her.

She went to the refrigerator, pulled out a hotdog and took a bite.

"We're fasting," her father yelled.

"Well, I'm not," she said.

Her mother explained what happened. But Fawn didn't want to hear any more. She went outside and crossed the street to see her best friend.

The girl was named Fawn Holm, and she lived in a trailer with five of the 34 children born to her father's three wives. Both girls were 16 and shared the same first name, red hair and rebellious streak.

The girls went for a walk, talking about the prophet's latest act: That morning at the Saturday work meeting, Warren Jeffs had excommunicated 20 men, stripped them of their wives, children and property. He ordered the rest of his followers to fast for two days, stay at home and repent.

Jeffs was the voice of God in this polygamist sect. He said the Lord had revealed these men as "master deceivers." The banished men included the town's longtime mayor, influential elders and four of Jeffs' own brothers. One was the father-in-law of Fawn's sister. Another was married to two of her aunts.

The girls walked a couple of miles across town, through the hodgepodge of unfinished homes, old trailers and mansions. They crossed the border that splits the town between Arizona and Utah, walking up a winding street that ended at the red cliffs on the Utah side of town.

Fawn Holm pulled out a cellphone and made a call. The girls decided to keep going.

Two years earlier, when Fawn Broadbent turned 14, her father entered her name in the "Joy Book," the register of young women ready for an arranged marriage.

MAIN MENU

THE PEOPLE INVOLVED
Click on the mugs for more information

THE VIDEOS
Choose a video to play

- **Colorado City:** Harsh rules, forced marriage, or run
- **Outside world:** New clothes, laughter, a family's help
- **Second home:** High school, a dance, Christmas without fear
- **Scars & memories:** Family ties lead back to Colorado
- **Uncertain future:** A new job, new boyfriend and a new life

THE STORIES
Select a story to read

- **Part 1:** Fawn flees Colorado City, unsure of where to go.
- **Part 2:** Fawn struggles for a place in the outside world

Slideshow

MOST READ STORIES

- Brophy teen fights for his life
- Drug gangs taking over U.S. public lands
- N.Y. teen dumping garbage falls in sewage pit, dies
- 'Chandler Rapist' suspect pleads guilty
- Missing Phoenix woman found alive
- Cardinals look to reach deal with safety Antrel Rolle
- Drunk mom allegedly runs through school with sword
- Chicken-wing craze sends prices soaring
- Obama fit but should quit smoking, doctors say
- Couple shot in Scottsdale night club altercation

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Fig. 3. NOLA.com BP oil spill story package



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BP's Deepwater Horizon Response Joint Information Center has offered the following numbers for residents:

- To report oiled wildlife

2nd moratorium after oil spill was legal, Justice Department lawyer says



By **The Associated Press**
August 08, 2012, 4:08PM

Interior Department Secretary Ken Salazar should not be held in contempt of court for issuing a second moratorium on deep water drilling following BP's Gulf of Mexico oil spill, a federal attorney argued on Wednesday. A three-judge panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals heard arguments in a case brought by offshore companies against the Interior Department,...

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Environmental group sues EPA over dispersants used during Gulf oil spill



By **Bruce Alpert, Times-Picayune**
August 06, 2012, 11:07PM

A coalition of environmental and public health groups filed suit to force the EPA to develop new standards for use of dispersants

Full story »

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Doubts about oil dispersants used after BP spill: An editorial



By **Editorial page staff, The Times-Picayune**
August 06, 2012, 7:40AM

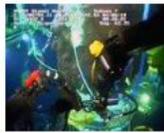
Exploring the long-term effects of chemical dispersants is critical

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BP oil spill dispersants may have hurt Gulf of Mexico food chain, study finds



By **The Associated Press**
July 31, 2012, 10:00PM

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Legislative committee to hold hearing on Gulf oil spill

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[Why was the BP oil spill trial delayed? News Update](#) 12:03 PM Why Judge Barbier postponed the start of the massive BP oil spill trial

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Fig. 4A. Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* bridge collapse package intro

StarTribune.com | MINNEAPOLIS - ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

13 seconds in August

the 35W bridge collapse skip intro



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Fig. 4B. Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* bridge collapse package main page

StarTribune.com | MINNEAPOLIS - ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

13 seconds in August

the 35W bridge collapse



They were stuck in Minneapolis traffic on their way home from work.

They were bound for the Metrodome to see the Twins play the Royals. They were going to spend time with in-laws, work out, pick up a child from the sitter, teach a folk dancing class, eat at an African restaurant, deliver a truckload of bread to Iowa. Alongside the cars were workers in hard hats, laying down a new surface of concrete on a nondescript 40-year-old highway bridge.

Then the 35W bridge collapsed into the Mississippi River. At that moment, the lives of nearly 200 people were suddenly and irrevocably linked.

The Star Tribune has identified the drivers and occupants of 78 of 84 cars, trucks and other non-construction vehicles that remained on the bridge or sank in the river, as well as six of the road construction workers. Each number on this aerial photo represents who was on the bridge that evening. Click on the numbers to read their stories, hear their voices and see the faces of the survivors and the relatives of those who died.

Thirteen people were killed as their cars crashed or the water overcame them. One hundred forty-four others suffered cuts, broken backs, crushed legs and other injuries in the cascade of concrete, steel and water. The number who carry the wounds in their minds is much larger - the next-of-kin, the witnesses, the rescuers, those who got off the bridge seconds earlier or took a last-minute detour.

This is a living document, and we encourage you to [send us your reactions, and thoughts, and help us fill in the missing pieces.](#)

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Fig. 4C. Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* bridge collapse package detail

StarTribune.com | MINNEAPOLIS - ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

13 seconds in August

the 35W bridge collapse



93
Matt Lundquist, 30
 Burnsville

Lundquist is president of a construction company and was on his way home from seeing a client. The pavement in front of him went up a little bit, everything in front of that disappeared, part of the roadway behind him collapsed, and then Matt Lundquist's head hit the ceiling of his tan Ford Expedition.

"I waited for my section to collapse - just hoping nothing would fall on top of me," Lundquist, 30, of Burnsville, said later.

When everything stopped and was quiet, he and others on his section of the bridge hiked down the incline to safety.

In the days afterward, he returned to working in his contracting company, Top Notch Builders. But his back was aching and he had trouble concentrating.

"I was angry. I was wondering 'How can something like this happen?' You trust your life every day, you put it in the hands of someone else ... you think the situation is under control and they know what they're doing," he said. "It definitely turned my life upside down."

- Pam Louwagie



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Fig. 5. USA Today Hurricane Katrina anniversary story package

The image shows a digital interface for a multimedia story package. At the top left, the USA Today logo is displayed next to the main title "5 YEARS LATER HURRICANE KATRINA". Below the title is a horizontal navigation bar with four tabs: "PROLOGUE: The storm", "EFFECTS", "REBUILDING", and "UNSETTLED". The "PROLOGUE: The storm" tab is currently selected. Below the navigation bar, the section title "The storm" is visible. The main content area features a video player showing a satellite view of a hurricane. The video player includes a play button, a progress bar showing 00:02 out of 01:44, and icons for full screen and volume. A small NASA logo is visible in the top right corner of the video frame. Below the video player, there is a footer with navigation links: "ABOUT THIS PROJECT", "CREDITS", "SOURCES", and "LAGNIAPPE". At the very bottom, a secondary navigation bar lists "Home", "News", "Travel", "Money", "Sports", "Life", "Tech", and "Weather".

Fig. 6. *Spartan Daily* infographic on qualifying for student loans

The FICO Score

Getting a loan depends on this algorithm first established by the Fair Isaac Corporation in 1956. The credit reporting bureaus use software that use the same algorithm.

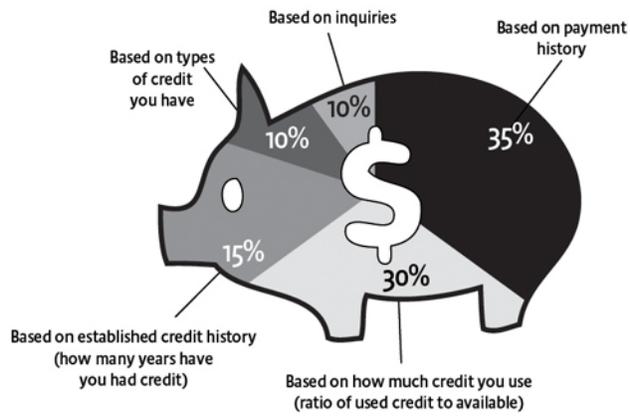


Fig. 7A. Los Angeles Times infographic on gay marriage laws in America

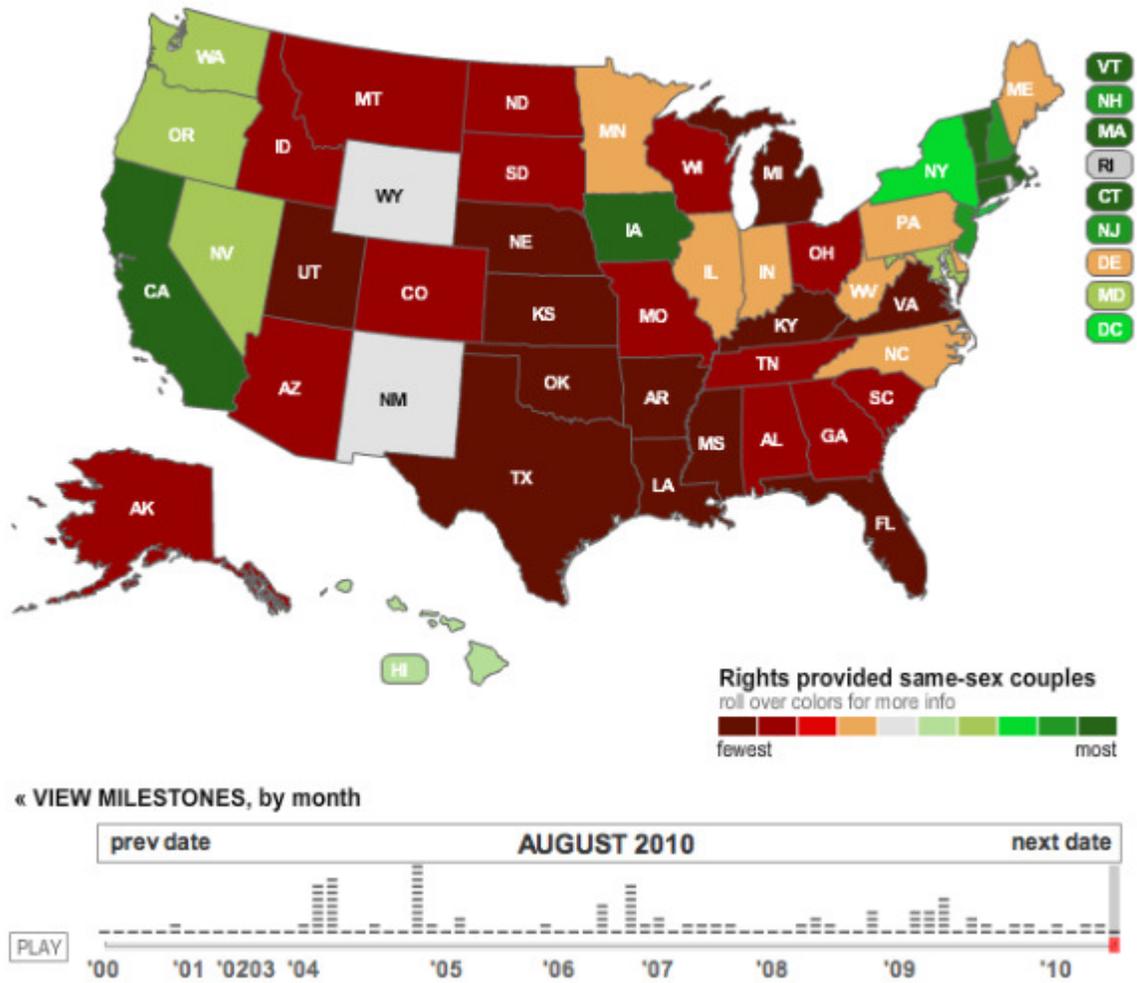


Fig. 7B. Los Angeles Times infographic on gay rights worldwide

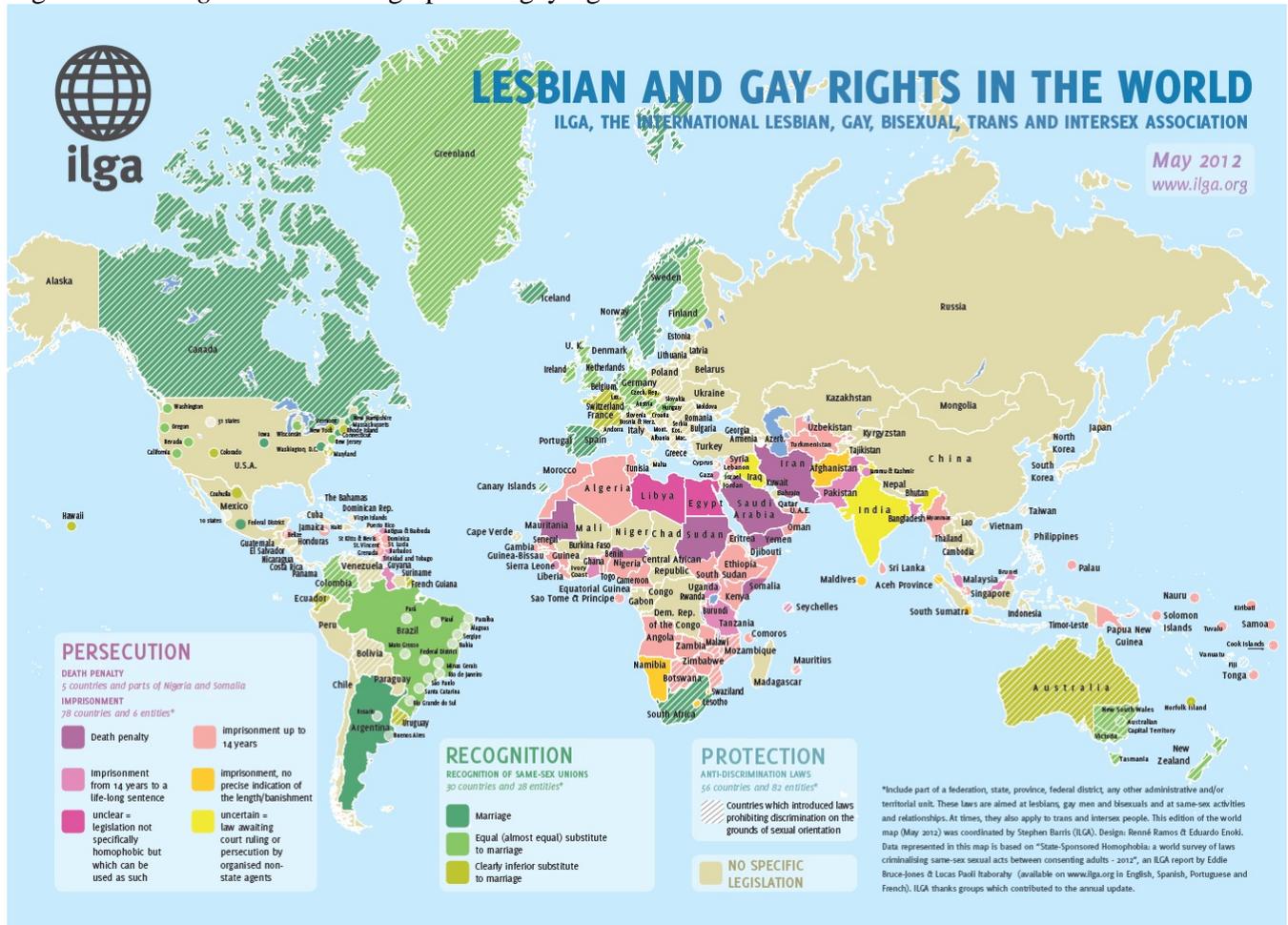
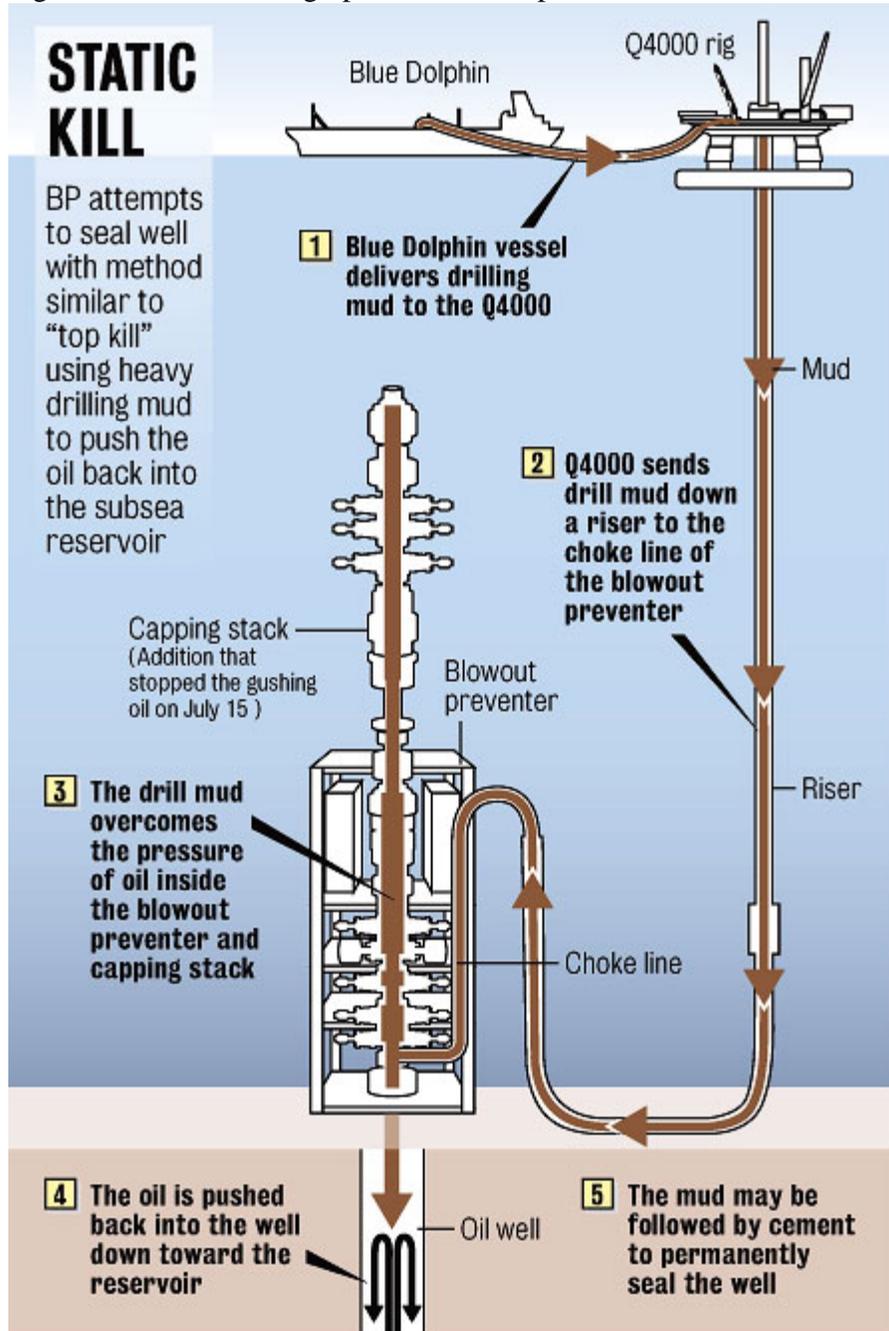


Fig. 8. NOLA.com infographic on BP oil spill



Source: BP Illustrations not to scale

DAN SWENSON / THE TIMES-PICAYUNE

AJEEP: Online Journalism, Lecture 2 – Instructor Prologue

(THIS SECTION IS DESIGNED STRICTLY FOR INSTRUCTOR USE. THE REGULAR LECTURE NOTES BEGIN BELOW.)

This instructor prologue to Lecture 2 explains how to set up a Wordpress Web site, to which your students will post stories. In the lecture notes below, some of this will be repeated for your students, but the main administrative details will be reserved for this section.

It's usually a good idea to solicit help from one computer-savvy student in your class to help in the creation and maintenance of the site. This can help relieve pressure on you when students have questions about their projects throughout the semester. This student can function as "Site Editor" and can be graded on his/her contributions to the project. This student can be contacted before the second lecture – you can discuss what's needed and create an administrator account for them.

To get started creating your site, go to wordpress.com and click "Get Started." (SEE FIG. 1) This allows you to sign up, create a domain name, username and password. Once you've set up an account, you end up at what's called the Dashboard, where you can set all kinds of options for your site. (SEE FIG. 2) You can always get here by going to http://your_address.com/wp-admin.

When you first create a new site on Wordpress, it looks pretty generic. (SEE FIG. 3) But there are several ways to change the appearance to make it look more like a news site. You can go through the Dashboard and make certain changes, but the way most people set up their sites it by using what's called a **theme**. A theme is a package of customization tools that you can easily install on a blog site.

Fortunately, Wordpress offers lots of themes that can be customized to varying degrees. If you click "Themes" from the "Appearance" menu on the Dashboard, you are taken to the Manage Themes page (SEE FIG. 4), where you can pick from many themes, many of which are free but some of which cost money. You can also go in and search for themes with certain tags. In this case, we can search the term "news" and get news site themes. (SEE FIG. 5) Here you have both free and paid themes to choose from. If you're signed in, you can click on a theme, examine its features and if you like it, click "Activate" and Wordpress will automatically install it on your site. (SEE FIG. 6).

Once you've created this, you'll want to set it up so you can add content to the site. Something important to consider here is whether you'll have certain students acting as editors while others serve as reporters. Students experienced with editing and/or with computers are usually the best choices for this. Fortunately, Wordpress news themes generally include different roles for students, instructors and such. When you create the site, you're registered as its administrator. You can add more users by clicking on Users in the left menu, which takes you to the Users page (SEE FIG. 7). You need to "invite" new users, by plugging in their e-mail addresses and setting their roles, which is done with the drop-down menu labeled "Role" (SEE FIG. 8). The choice of roles usually includes administrator, editor, author, contributor and follower, in descending order of amount of control they'll have over the site. You'll probably want to send one message to your chosen editors and a different one to your authors (reporters). Once they've accepted, they should be able to log onto the site on their own. As administrator, you can add new users or change the roles of existing ones.

Once you've added students to the site, you can have them begin adding content to it. Because Wordpress started as a blogging platform, new stories are called "posts," so to add a new story, go to the menu on the left under "Posts" and click "Add New" (SEE FIG. 9). Here students can write and edit their stories as they would using a word processing program such as Microsoft Word. They can also add photos or video clips by clicking the "Add Media" button above the story box (next to "Upload/Insert"). Clicking the button brings up a dialog box that allows adding photos or video and providing captions and other information about the item (SEE FIG. 10).

From this point, your students will likely want to experiment on their own with adding content to the site, and they can do this as long as they save any experiments as drafts rather than publishing them as stories. A student Site Editor can help you manage this and many other elements of adjusting the site to the class's needs through the semester.

At this point you should be ready to teach the second lecture, showing students the basics of the site and signing them up for accounts.

The process of showing students how the site works and creating their accounts can take a lot of time, so you should generally not plan on covering much else during the class period in which it takes place. However, there are some useful pieces of advice that can be offered at this point in the semester. If you have time during this class session, go ahead and discuss the “Working in Teams” and “Story Pitch” elements in the notes below. If not, save them for the following class.

AJEEP: Online Journalism, Lecture 2

(ALL NOTES TO THE INSTRUCTOR WILL BE IN UPPERCASE LETTERS. IF YOU ASSIGNED THE EXERCISE NOTED AT THE END OF THE LAST LECTURE, YOU MAY COLLECT AND DISCUSS THEM AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS CLASS.)

(THIS SESSION WILL INVOLVE A LOT OF VISUAL INSTRUCTION, WHICH I'VE TRIED TO REPLICATE WITH SCREENSHOTS, BUT WHICH WILL OCCUPY FEWER WRITTEN PAGES THAN MOST SESSIONS. IT ALSO INVOLVES SIGNING STUDENTS UP FOR WORDPRESS ACCOUNTS, WHICH AGAIN WILL TAKE SOME TIME. SCREENSHOTS HAVE BEEN APPENDED TO THE END OF THE TEXT WITH FIGURE NUMBERS.)

Introduction

Last time we discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the different kinds of media you can use in creating online story packages. Today we're going to look at the basics of putting stories online, including the creation of an online news site as a venue for posting stories. We'll also discuss protocols for using Web resources as source material and how to use modern communications in getting interviews.

Creating a news site

For the purposes of this class, we need to have a site to which you can post your story projects. There are many ways to create something like this, but we're going to use Wordpress here for several reasons. First, it's popular worldwide and available in many languages. Second, because of its popularity, tens of thousands of developers have come up with materials to help you customize a Wordpress site. Third, and perhaps most importantly, it's available free of charge.

One thing to note about Wordpress – it was originally designed as a site to create blogs, and its architecture and language reflect this. Yet it's been used to create sites for all kinds of purposes, including hundreds of professional and university news sites. Because it's so versatile, it's not hard to customize it for news, and since it's so widely used, there's lots of help available in almost any language.

We're going to need to create accounts for all of you today, but I want you to become a little familiar with how it works before you get an account. To get into the site, you'll need to go to [http://\(PLUG IN SITE ADDRESS\)/wp-admin](http://(PLUG IN SITE ADDRESS)/wp-admin) and log in. This will take you to what's called the Dashboard, where you can create and modify stories, upload media files and perform lots of other tasks. (SEE FIG. 2, GO THROUGH OPTIONS ON SCREEN)

I'll need to create accounts for all of you. You'll need an e-mail address to use as a login, and if you don't have one, you can go to Yahoo or Google or many other sites to create a free one. (GO THROUGH PROCESS ON SCREEN) Wordpress is set up so that different users have different "roles" – different levels of permissions to change things on the site. Most of you will either be an "Author" or an "Editor" – authors can create their own stories and publish them, while editors can edit other people's material, not just their own. If you start out as an author and decide to act as an editor for your group's project, let me know and I can change your role on the site.

Once you have an account, you can begin adding content to it. Because Wordpress started as a blogging platform, new stories are called "posts," so to add a new story, go to the menu on the left under "Posts" and click "Add New" (SEE FIG. 9). Here you can write and edit your stories as you would using a word processing program such as Microsoft Word. (GO OVER HOW THIS WORKS ON SCREEN) You can also add photos or video clips by clicking the "Add Media" button above the story box (next to "Upload/Insert"). Clicking the button brings up a dialog box that allows adding photos or video and providing captions and other information about the item (SEE FIG. 10, GO OVER IT ON SCREEN).

(THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO INTRODUCE YOUR STUDENT SITE EDITOR, IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO ALREADY. DISCUSS WHAT YOU WILL HAVE THE EDITOR DO IN CLASS, AND HOW HE/SHE CAN HELP THEM WITH THEIR PROJECTS.)

Working in teams

With the site created, you will soon be creating their first stories. As we said last time, you will produce stories by working in teams, usually with two or three other students. In the professional ranks, most Web story packages are not produced by one person – frequently one person is in charge of writing the main story, one gets video interviews, another works on graphics, and so on. By having you work in groups, it gives you a chance to perform different tasks across projects, giving you experience in producing different kinds of content. It should be stressed that this class is not going to make you an expert in any one task, but will give you experience trying new things, and often in learning from the other students in your group, who might have different specialties.

In most cases, groups of three (at most four) students will be created to work together. These are generally randomly assigned to avoid having the same students (often with similar specialties) work together all the time. The idea is “cross-pollination,” to have you gain expert knowledge from their peers from other specialty areas.

One other thing to stress early on is that you won’t be expected to produce professional-level production immediately. Given budget and equipment shortages, you may well gather photos, video or audio using cell phones or inexpensive digital cameras, and for the purposes of this class, that’s acceptable. Having said this, you should know that projects are expected to improve throughout the semester as you gain more experience and skills with the equipment and software. Grading will also reflect these rising expectations throughout the semester. Any questions about this?

The story pitch

One other thing that’s a little unusual about this class is the idea of the “story pitch.” You may have noticed in the syllabus that assignment topics are kind of vague. This is done intentionally, to give groups some flexibility in what they choose to cover. I’ll discuss the generalities of the assignment, then set aside class time (if possible) to collectively come up with the topic you’d like to pursue. While you’re doing this, I’ll be around to answer any questions or offer suggestions about possible story topics. The key element should be whether or not a topic will support a story package with multiple media elements.

Each group then “pitches” its idea to the class to get feedback from the instructor or fellow students. We’ll do this during class time if possible, because it gives both the students pitching the idea and the other students in the class the chance to exchange ideas on the project. Once the pitch is done, the groups are free to start working on their chosen projects.

First group assignment: Campus life story

The first assignment for the semester is simply to report on a story worth telling from on campus. As a first story, this gives you lots of flexibility and a manageable area in which to find something interesting. Try to look for something quirky or unusual for this assignment – something on campus that strikes you as odd or otherwise grabs your attention. ANY QUESTIONS?

Fig. 1: Wordpress “Get Started” page

Email or Username
Password
Log In
Remember me
Forgot password?
Sign Up

WORDPRESS.COM

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[Sign Up](#)
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Get your own WordPress.com account in seconds

Fill out this one-step form and you'll be blogging seconds later!

Blog Address

Free

Username

Password

Confirm

E-mail Address

Follow our blog to learn about new themes, features, and other news.

What language will you be blogging in?

Thinking about upgrading?

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Free Blog	✓	✓
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You agree to the [fascinating terms of service](#) by submitting this form.

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Save 41%!

Choose an address for your blog. You can change the WordPress.com address later.

If you don't want a blog you can [signup for just a username](#).

Your username should be a minimum of four characters and can only include lowercase letters and numbers.

Great passwords use upper and lower case characters, numbers and symbols like !"\$%&{.

Password Strength

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Fig. 2. Wordpress “Dashboard” page

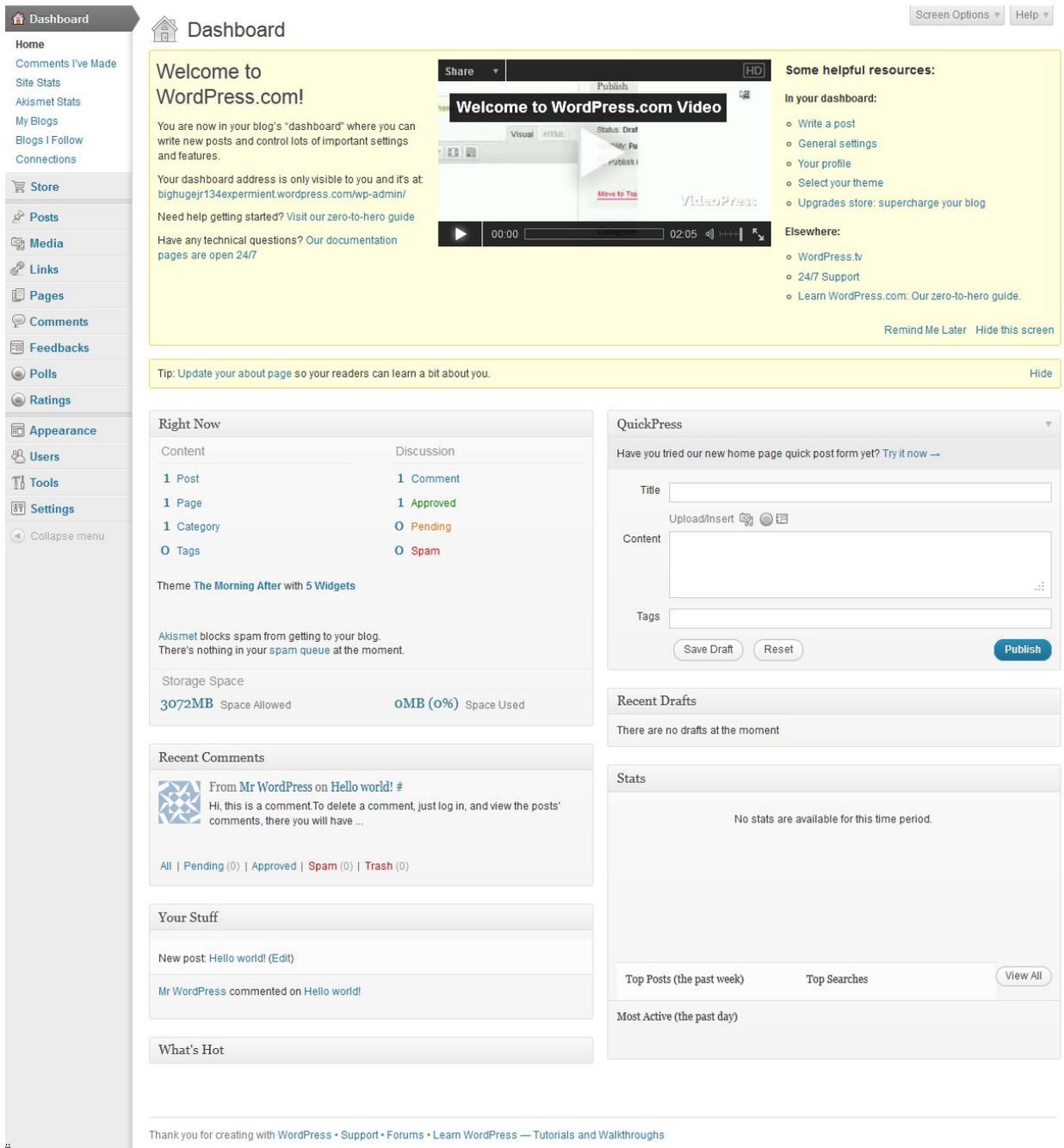


Fig. 3. Wordpress default blog page



Fig. 4. Wordpress “manage themes” page

- [Dashboard](#)
- [Store](#)
- [Posts](#)
- [Media](#)
- [Links](#)
- [Pages](#)
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- [Users](#)
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Manage Themes



Wu Wei
By [Jeff Ngan](#)

A clean, minimalist, grid-based theme featuring an alternate dark colour scheme, custom background, and custom header [Read more about Wu Wei](#) →

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Browse our themes in random order 197 items

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Headlines Premium

[Purchase \(\\$60.00\)](#) [Live Preview](#) [Details](#)

Quintus

[Activate](#) [Live Preview](#) [Details](#)

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Oulipo

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Brand New Day

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Fig. 7. Wordpress users page

The screenshot displays the WordPress 'Users' management interface. On the left is a sidebar with navigation links: Dashboard, Store, Posts, Media, Links, Pages, Comments, Feedbacks, Polls, Ratings, Appearance, and Users. The 'Users' section is expanded, showing sub-links for All Users, Invite New, My Profile, and Personal Settings. The main content area is titled 'Users' and includes an 'Invite New' button. Below the title, it shows 'All (1) | Administrator (1)'. There are bulk action controls for 'Bulk Actions' and 'Change role to...'. A search bar is present with the text 'Search Users'. A table lists the user details:

Username	Name	E-mail	Role	Posts
<input type="checkbox"/>	profrcraigexp	jr134experiment@profrcraig.com	Administrator	1

Below the table, there are more bulk action controls and a note: 'Use the invites feature to [invite new users to your WordPress.com blog](#).' At the bottom of the page, there is a footer: 'Thank you for creating with WordPress • Support • Forums • Learn WordPress — Tutorials and Walkthroughs'.

Fig. 8. Inviting new users

Dashboard Store Posts Media Links Pages Comments Feedbacks Polls Ratings Appearance Users All Users Invite New My Profile Personal Settings Tools Settings Collapse menu

Invite New Users to Your Blog Help

Usernames or Email Addresses
yourfriendusername, yourfriend@wordpress.com

Invite up to 10 email addresses and/or WordPress.com usernames, separated by commas. Those needing a username will be sent instructions on how to create one.

Role
Follower [Learn more about roles](#)

Message
profraigexp invites you to follow [bighugejr134experiment](#)
Come check out my blog!

(Optional) You can enter a custom message of up to 500 characters that will be included in the invitation to the user(s).

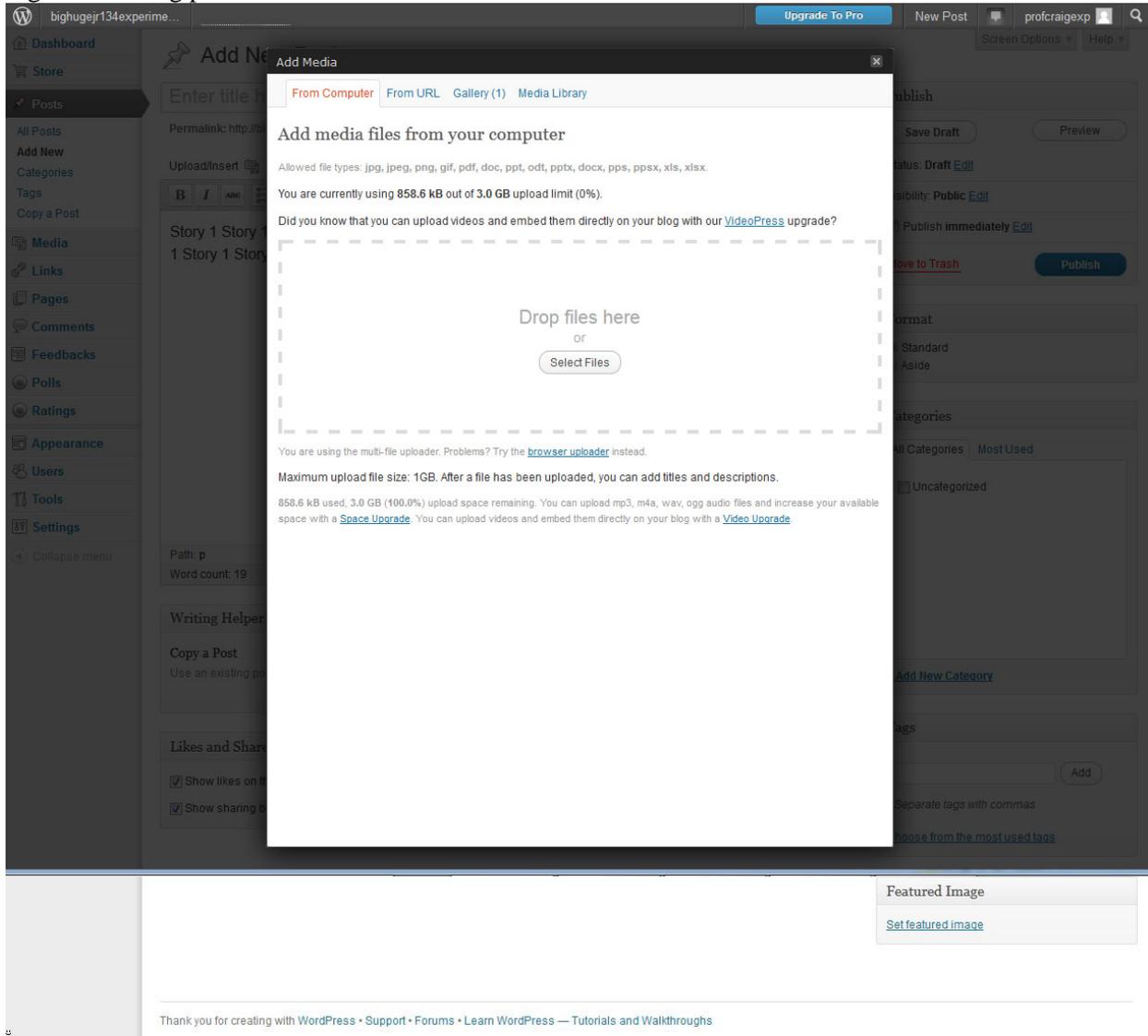
[Send Invitation](#)

Past Invitations

Invitee	Sent By	Role	Date Sent	Date Accepted	Actions
You have not sent out any invitations for this blog yet.					
Invitee	Sent By	Role	Date Sent	Date Accepted	Actions

Thank you for creating with WordPress • Support • Forums • Learn WordPress — Tutorials and Walkthroughs

Fig. 10. Adding photos/video



Featured Image
[Set featured image](#)

AJEEP: Online Journalism, Lecture 3

Introduction

This week's class will center on how to gather information most effectively for online story packages. Today's class will focus on interviewing and story resources, taking into account that while there are countless electronic resources available today, they're not the only way for reporters to get information.

Using online and offline resources

In today's information age, there is often an assumption that any piece of information is simply a Google search away. Yet everyone understands the concept of too much information – of having to sift through tons of material to find the facts you actually need. When you're a reporter on deadline, you don't have time to waste plowing through pages and pages of material that's only loosely related to what you're looking for. That's why the best reporters are often already knowledgeable about the subjects they're covering, and also why they know how to get exactly what they need quickly.

As a reporter, the Web is only a useful resource if it saves you more time than it wastes. Most of us have, at one time or another, started out looking for something on the Web and would up spending lots of time looking at material on a seemingly unrelated subject. The way search engines and Web pages are designed encourages this. News articles in print are linear in nature – that is, they generally follow one subject by using narrative elements that guide the reader on a single logical path. But with the addition of links to outside information within pages and in their margins, most Web pages are non-linear – they encourage you to drift away from the subject or line of reasoning on a page and learn more about different aspects of it.

While going off on tangents can be interesting, a reporter on deadline must stay focused, and must find the most relevant information as quickly as possible. This is why for reporters using the Internet, good search skills are indispensable. They make the time you spend online far more productive, giving you more time to do other kinds of research and to write your story.

A simple first step in optimizing their use of resources is through smarter keyword searching. These days, anyone with a computer can get online and do a quick search and sort through a giant batch of results on just about any subject. But to do it really well requires a little more thought.

We'll assume that you'll go to Google for search – it's the clear global leader. While you might simply go to Google and type in the words related to whatever you're looking for, you might not be familiar with ways you can make your searches more precise. Like most search sites, Google uses certain keystrokes and characters called “operators” to allow users to be more specific about what they want to find.

For reporters, probably the most commonly-used operator is quotation marks to find an exact phrase. Let's say you type this into Google:

```
george bush president
```

You'll get search results that include material about both the 41st and 43rd Presidents of the United States. (A quick test of this produced 127 million results on Google.) Now let's see what happens when you type in this:

```
"george w. bush" president
```

By putting quotes around “George W. Bush,” you're specifying that you're looking for that exact phrase, and thus you eliminate the material specifically about his father. (This search ended up with 81 million results, 36 percent less than the first search.) Using quotation marks is

a great way to knock out unneeded results, and the more specific you can be, the less unrelated material you'll have to sort through.

There are several other examples of operators that can help you make your searches more precise (SEE FIG. 1, GO THROUGH EXAMPLES). Google's operators aren't completely universal, but Bing and other search engines use quotation marks and many of the same or similar techniques.

Beyond simply using Google and other search engines more efficiently, experienced reporters know that there are lots of places to get information that are more specialized and detailed than a simple Web search. Some of these are available on the public Internet and some have restricted access. It is important for instructors to learn what databases and other resources are available through their universities – these can often give you advantages in finding material that might not otherwise be available.

Often the most helpful of these for reporters are government databases, which are frequently available to reporters either through the Internet or by contacting the government agency in question. In America most state and federal government agencies and many local ones have online databases to search public information, and though this is becoming more common globally, it might still be a problem for reporters. Again, check to see what is available through your university.

Many colleges and universities subscribe to commercial database services. These services have a tremendous amount of private information not freely available on the Internet – all sorts of searchable, cross-referenced news articles, legal documents and other items – and they charge subscription fees for access. Lexis-Nexis, which began as a legal information service and grew to include news and business information, is available at many libraries and on

the Web through subscriptions (SEE FIG. 2). Dialog, also available at many libraries, has scientific and medical holdings, as well as all sorts of government and business information. Through mergers in recent years, Dialog has also gained access to some of the largest European databases as well. Each of these (as well as other commercial databases) has relatively easy search commands for reporters to learn, which it possible to sort through an immense amount of material to find what you need. With government and commercial databases, experience helps – they all have different methods of categorizing and different search syntax – but these are generally learned quickly, and reporters can find all kinds of information there that is unavailable elsewhere.

One advantage of using these electronic resources in an electronic medium is that it often allows for linking to the original source material. This is especially easy if the document in question contains a button to create a link to the article – this is sometimes available even from commercial database services. Some organizations have begun using Google Docs and other public electronic document sites to store public records, which allows for easy linking to a variety of document types – even sortable spreadsheet and database files. Conversely, reporters interested in sharing results of their own research can do the same thing, to allow readers to see the raw data you've used to compile your stories.

There is clearly more that can be explored within this subject, but a lot of what you choose to do with it will depend on the materials available at your university. If resources available to you are not listed here, be sure to learn as much about them as possible.

In Afghanistan, one particularly helpful resource is the A to Z Guide to Afghanistan Assistance, which is available for free download at:

<http://www.areu.org.af/EditionDetails.aspx?EditionId=586&ContentId=7&ParentId=7&Lang=en-US>

Interviewing

While gathering information has certainly changed in the Internet age, it might seem that interviewing hasn't changed much at all. Reporters need to learn about their story subjects, figure out what types of witnesses, experts or bystanders they need, then talk to them – it sounds much like the same process followed by reporters for decades. Aside from the technologies used, why should it be any different?

Well, a reporter's preparation might not have changed much, but the communications realities of the 21st Century have made arranging for, conducting and reporting interviews much different than it was just a few years ago. These days reporters might contact potential interviewees not simply by a phone call to a secretary or aide, but perhaps by an electronic message (e-mail, text message, Facebook message, etc.) directly to the intended interviewee, or perhaps a tweet or more general social media posting if he/she is difficult to reach.

Before conducting an interview, it's a reporter's job to find out as much information as possible about the interviewee. This has always been the case, but openness with which people share information in the 21st Century has potentially made it easier. It's become standard practice for reporters who regularly cover elected officials and other newsmakers to closely follow their "digital lives" – to follow them on all the available social media platforms. Few newsmakers are truly reclusive anymore, especially younger ones who have grown up with this technology. Still, it's important for young reporters not to rely solely on self-reported information to learn about the people they want to interview, especially if they're people in power. Reporters should develop the instinct of finding out as much as they can about interviewees as part of their preparation for the interview.

The actual act of conducting interviews has also changed radically in the past few years. As recently as the 1990s, the tools of the interviewing trade for most non-broadcast reporters were a notebook and a pen. Interviews were almost exclusively done either in person or over the phone. In the 2010s, however, few professional reporters in any area of journalism fail to record their interviews using audio or video. With the tools now available, even reporters with relatively small budgets can record material and put it to use in any number of ways. Newsmakers have generally become accustomed to this, though it's always helpful to say how you're going to record an interview when arranging it.

Having said this, many reporters still hand-write notes in notebooks as they conduct interviews. This isn't done just because old habits die hard – it helps in speeding the process of determining which material you want to use in your story. Some reporters check their watches while notetaking during interviews and note what is said at different times, making it easy to move quickly through the recording later to find the right quotes. Broadcast reporters have similarly logged their audio and video for years, and this is a way for online reporters to stay organized and save time later.

The in-person interview is still considered the best method by almost all reporters. In-person interviews let you see the person's facial expressions, gestures and mannerisms from up close, which adds a richness to the interview. It can also allow you to see where the interviewee works or lives, which can add even more depth. Most reporters bring audio or video recorders with them and simply set them on the desk or table where the interview is taking place, in plain view of the interviewee so that it's understood from the beginning that this is being recorded. Small video cameras and tripods have also begun to become standard items in a reporter's

toolbox in recent years, and with video on the Web becoming increasingly common, newsmakers are often prepared for this.

Until very recently, most reporters would have said that if an in-person interview wasn't a viable option, a phone interview was their preferred second choice. Phone interviews offer reporters the chance to respond to answers and ask follow-up questions, and are usually easy to record – cell phone apps to record conversations have become commonplace (though you need to check the local and state laws that apply to this). They also allow for interviews regardless of whether the interviewee is in the local area or far away.

The tool that is starting to displace phone interviews for many reporters is interviewing by video phone calls. Most computers and laptops these days come equipped with Webcams, and thanks to technology such as Skype, NetMeeting and Telepresence, it's become relatively simple to talk to someone via video anywhere in the world. While Skype – the most popular such software – doesn't come equipped with the ability to record video calls, numerous plug-in programs are available free of charge that provide this function. This allows reporters and interviewees to interact no matter where in the world either of them might be (as long as they each have an Internet connection). As with phone interviews, it allows for follow-up questions and genuine interaction. Best of all, reporters can pick up facial expressions and see something about the environment in which the interviewee is operating. It's not as good as an in-person interview, but it's a better second choice than has existed previously.

Most importantly for the online journalist, audio or video recordings of interviews (and permissions to use them) give you raw material for multimedia stories. The traditional reporter's instinct is to gather as much information as possible and sort it out while writing, but recorded audio and video take lots of time to transcribe and edit. This is why smart 21st Century reporters

keep tabs on where their information is within their audio and video files. It's a good idea when starting a project to create a Word document outlining how you plan to proceed with the story. Some reporters outline how they envision the story will read, while others simply list subjects they want to cover and people they want to interview. In conjunction with this, if you've taken note of when different things were said during an interview, you can copy those notes into your Word file for later use. It's a way to use pre-deadline time to save time later.

Assignment due: Campus life story

At this time, groups can present their campus life stories. Please pay attention to the presentations of all the groups – you may have questions or suggestions for members of another group along the way, and please raise your hand to be recognized if you do.

Fig. 1. Google search operators

<p>Search for an exact word or phrase <i>"search query"</i></p>	<p>Use quotes to search for an exact word or set of words in a specific order, without normal improvements such as spelling corrections and synonyms. This option is handy when searching for song lyrics or a line from literature. ["imagine all the people"]</p> <p><i>Tip:</i> Only use this if you're looking for a very precise word or phrase, because otherwise you could be excluding helpful results by mistake.</p>
<p>Exclude a word <i>-query</i></p>	<p>Add a dash (-) before a word to exclude all results that include that word. This is especially useful for synonyms like Jaguar the car brand and jaguar the animal. [jaguar speed -car]</p> <p><i>Tip:</i> You can also exclude results based on other operators, like excluding all results from a specific site. [pandas -site:wikipedia.org]</p>
<p>Include similar words <i>~query</i></p>	<p>Normally, synonyms might replace some words in your original query. Add a tilde sign (~) immediately in front of a word to search for that word as well as even more synonyms. [~food facts] includes results for "nutrition facts"</p>
<p>Search within a site or domain <i>site: query</i></p>	<p>Include "site:" to search for information within a single website like all mentions of "Olympics" on the New York Times website. [Olympics site:nytimes.com]</p> <p><i>Tip:</i> Also search within a specific top-level domain like .org or .edu or country top-level domain like .de or .jp. [Olympics site:.gov]</p>
<p>Include a "fill in the blank" <i>query * query</i></p>	<p>Use an asterisk (*) within a query as a placeholder for any unknown or "wildcard" terms. Use with quotation marks to find variations of that exact phrase or to remember words in the middle of a phrase. ["a * saved is a * earned"]</p>
<p>Search for either word <i>query OR query</i></p>	<p>If you want to search for pages that may have just one of several words, include OR (capitalized) between the words. Without the OR, your results would typically show only pages that match <i>both</i> terms. You can also use the symbol between words for the same effect. [olympics location 2014 OR 2018]</p> <p><i>Tip:</i> Enclose phrases in quotes to search for either one of several phrases. ["world cup 2014" OR "olympics 2014"]</p>
<p>Search for a number range <i>number..number</i></p>	<p>Separate numbers by two periods (with no spaces) to see results that contain numbers in a given range of things like dates, prices, and measurements. [camera \$50..\$100]</p> <p><i>Tip:</i> Use only one number with the two periods to indicate an upper maximum or a lower minimum. [world cup winners ..2000]</p>

Fig. 2. Lexis-Nexis home page

General Searching

- » Easy Search™
- » Advanced Search

» **Tip:** Click the headings below to view links to specialized search forms and other useful features.

- News
- US Legal
- International Legal
- Companies
- Country Information
- Subject Areas
- Sources
- Guides & Resources
- Mobile

Easy Search™ Help Clear

Use of this service is subject to Terms and Conditions

Search the News

Covers 1980 to today.

Search For:

By Source Type
Major World Publications

Or by Source Title

Start typing a title like **New York Times**

» For more options like search by date or byline, use [Advanced Search](#) or [All News](#).

Go

Look up a Legal Case

Covers US and state cases.

By Citation like 347 U.S. 483

Or by Parties like *Mapp v. Ohio*
 v.

Or by Topic like *Equal Opportunity*

» Citations must be exact. [Click here](#) for citation help. For more options, try [Cases](#), [Law Reviews](#), or [Landmark Cases](#).

Go

Get Company Info

Covers over 80 million companies.

By Name like *Microsoft*

Or by Ticker like *MSFT*

» For more options like list companies by zip code or revenue, access the full [Company Dossier](#).

Go

Hot Topics Links

Click the links below to see recent news articles.

Today's Front Page News

- Health Care
- U.S. Presidential Election 2012
- Syrian Uprising
- Education
- Immigration
- Barack Obama
- Mitt Romney
- Human Trafficking
- London Summer Olympics 2012
- Environment

» For more options, see [Advanced Search](#).

Research People

Covers public figures.

Last Name (Required)

First Name (Optional)

Source:
Biographical Reference

» Try also [People](#) or see [Browse Sources](#) for more People sources.

Go

Combined Search

Search multiple kinds of content.

Search For:

Date:
Previous 2 years

- Major US & World news
- Company profiles
- SEC Filings
- US & State Legal Cases
- Law Reviews

» Try also [Advanced Search](#), [Sources](#), and [Help](#).

Go

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AJEEP: Online Journalism, Lecture 4

Introduction

Today's class gets into the actual writing and editing of online stories, as well as the basics of uploading them to the class Web site. It's true that you can write an online story exactly the same way as a print story, but will it present the information effectively? Will it take advantage of the strengths of the medium? Will it appeal to an audience that reads news very differently than previous generations? Questions like these must be addressed to get you thinking in the right way to prepare stories for online publication.

Headlines, hooks and hyperlinks

The Web isn't designed to make you concentrate on one thing. As we discussed in the last class, it's a non-linear medium – its hyperlinks (usually simply called “links”) invite you to look at new things rather than concentrate on a news story in an orderly fashion. This makes the Web a challenging medium for writing news, but there are techniques to help you deal with it.

Stories need to grab readers' attention more quickly than ever, with strong leads and concise, informative headlines. While newspaper and magazine readers might page through the publications from start to finish, this almost never happens online. News sites usually have a home page full of organized links, and readers choose stories that pique their interest based, in most cases, on nothing more than a category and a headline.

The headline, because it's generally the text of the link leading to the story, is more important in online journalism than in any other medium. Headlines must hook and inform readers enough to make them click through to the story. This means that before readers can even get to your brilliantly crafted lead, your headline must attract them first. This places more emphasis on the headline than the lead, which makes many writers uncomfortable, and which is

a strong argument for requiring reporters to write suggested headlines for their stories. A reporter presumably knows more about the story than anyone else, and thus is in better position to write an informative headline.

In traditional journalism, headlines could be clever under certain circumstances but couldn't entertain at the expense of informing. In online journalism, headlines need to jump off the page to grab attention. They do need to accurately reflect what's in the story, and they can't be inconsistent with its tone. Given the difficulty of attracting readers amidst all the other links, however, online headlines simply need to be engaging in one way or another. Using strong verbs and highlighting their stories' key points can help to make your headlines more effective.

Similarly, leads for online stories are even more important than for traditional media. Every major study of online media use shows that online readers are more fickle than those in any other news medium – they sample stories and if their attention isn't sustained right away by a story's lead, they close it out and move on. This is one reason why leads and nut graphs need to be especially punchy and informative in online storytelling. Many studies have shown that online readers will actually read deeper into stories than print readers if you can get them past the first few paragraphs.

A common structure for online news is to write stories in “chunks” – sections of a few paragraphs apiece – rather than in one long narrative. This doesn't usually require massive changes in writing style – even long-form stories usually have informal sections that cover particular aspects of the story. Simply assigning headers to sections seems to make readers more likely to continue. Some online news outlets limit how much can appear on one page, allowing readers to click through to continue reading.

The main message should be a familiar one – the online venue rewards clear, concise writing, not flowery prose. Get to the point and make it easy to understand. It's not uncommon to encounter students who write long, florid passages in their stories yet would never think of reading anything that long.

(IF THERE IS TIME, IT'S NOT A BAD IDEA TO HAVE EXERCISES IN CLASS WHERE STUDENTS CRITIQUE EACH OTHER'S WORK. SIMPLY TAKE THE WRITER'S NAME OFF EACH STORY, THEN REDISTRIBUTE THEM AMONGST THE CLASS AND SOLICIT COMMENTS, THEN RETURN THEM TO THE ORIGINAL WRITER.)

One more thing to consider about writing online news stories is the use of hyperlinks. It's become common practice to include related links in most online news stories, but this is done in a number of different ways. Some news outlets prefer to place links to related stories in a box at the end of the main story, while others include links teased between paragraphs as a means for dividing stories into sections. A less common practice is actually turning key words within a story into links. One way or another, reporters and editors should become accustomed to providing these links as part of any story package.

In many instances, as reporters research the facts behind a story, they read articles about that topic and simply paste the URLs at the bottom of the story as they go along. In other instances, more of the responsibility for identifying related links goes to the editor. In any event, this all contributes to the notion that online readers will jump off to read another story at a moment's notice.

One way to keep readers from abandoning your site in response to links is simply to format your links to open new browser windows or tabs. This can be set as the default in Wordpress, or an additional piece of HTML code can simply be added to a link

(TARGET=NEW). This means that when readers follow a link to another site, when they close that tab or window, they'll still have your story there to finish or continue.

Editing online stories

If a reporter for an online outlet has many things to keep track of, an editor has more. While reporters sometimes shoot video, take photos or record audio themselves, more often each of these is done by a different reporter, and the whole works must be put together by an editor. One of the most common problems in online journalism classes have is in getting students to actually edit material for content – grammar, spelling, structure, word choice, etc. Just getting the material online and formatted the way you want it takes a lot of time.

This is why for group projects, it's not a bad idea to select one main editor. The best story packages usually have a consistency and singularity of purpose across all their pieces, which is most easily achieved with a single editor in charge. If your group selects a main editor, let me know and I'll change their role to Editor so they can edit all your group's material.

The editor's job can vary dramatically in difficulty depending on how much multimedia is being used. If a photo gallery and multiple video clips are used, the simple formatting and processing can take a lot of time. The positive side of this, though, is that students that gain this experience often find it to be rewarding and a major asset when trying to get a job.

More than reporters, editors need to become familiar with the particulars of the Web site you've created for your class. If you're using Wordpress, student editors (and reporters who are interested) should read about Wordpress and practice creating stories and placing multimedia elements. An advantage of Wordpress is that a story package can be completed, saved and previewed before being published to the Web, allowing editors to see exactly how a package will appear.

With this in mind, it's up to an editor to assure that:

- copy is clean, especially spellings of names and institutions
- headlines work in attracting reader interest
- photo captions and credits are in place and spelled correctly
- all visual elements are correctly placed
- all elements work on multiple platforms, in multiple browsers

This is obviously a lot of responsibility to place on a student editor, so you might show the finished packages to their other group members before presenting or publishing. As always, more sets of eyes are more likely to catch errors.

Posting/presenting the story package

When it comes to putting everything together for a story package, there are a number of ways to do it, but the key thing is to recognize that there is no perfect formula. In working on a Wordpress site, there is a lot of customization that can and should be done, but there are a few key points to be made regardless of how the layout is done.

Given that Wordpress is essentially a blogging platform, on the home page it places the most recent posts on top. However, the theme you choose for your site may offer additional features that allow you to change this. Many news themes include an option for “featured” posts, allowing you to highlight particular stories at the top of the home page. This is especially nice if you have one big story that you want to keep at the top even as students add new material.

There are a number of steps that should be taken before students create their stories. First, the reporter or editor should create story categories, which is useful for site visitors who want to find material within these categories. Students with the assigned role of “Author” cannot create new categories, but may suggest them to an editor. Frequently these will correspond with

the assignment titles (Student Life, Controversy, etc.), but you might want to create additional categories that fit the nature of your assignment. Editors can also create story tags that might include topics and subtopics that regularly appear in your coverage (budget, administration, etc.).

When you create stories, you'll need to do a few things before you publish (SEE FIG. 1, REFER TO IT THROUGH THIS SECTION). First, at the upper right under "Publish," make sure that "Status" is set to "Draft." This allows them to add material to stories without it being visible to site visitors. "Visibility" below it shouldn't matter if the story is in Draft status. The author should then assign appropriate categories and tags to the piece (at right). You will write the story in the large box at the center, using the buttons above to format text and to add photos or video. To save the story, you need to click the blue "Update" button at the right under "Publish." You should preview your stories along the way by clicking the "Preview" button under "Publish." This gives you a look at how the story would appear in its current state.

If this story is a sidebar or is connected to a sidebar as part of a multi-story package, you'll need to include a link to the story to which it's related. Type in link text (something like "RELATED:" and then the headline to the related story), then highlight it and click the link button (looks like links in a chain) above the story box. As long as the other story exists on the system, you should be able to go under "Link to existing content," find the related story and select it.

When the story is ready for an editor to look at it, you should click "Edit" under status and change it to "Pending Review." This will change its status on the Dashboard and let editors know it's ready for editing.

In editing stories, there are a few additional steps to consider. If the story is going to be a Featured story at the top of the front page, the editor needs to go to "Visibility" in the Publish

menu, click “Edit” and check the box that says “Stick this post to the front page.” The editor also needs to assign an image to appear with the story on the front page, which is done by clicking “Set featured image” at the lower right.

When it’s time for the editor to publish the story, there’s one more item to note. If a story package involves a sidebar story or a second story of some kind, publish the sidebar first, so that when the main story is published it will appear above the sidebar on the home page. It will also appear in that order on category pages and any archives you create.

When the story is completely ready, the editor goes to the top right, makes sure that “Visibility” is set to “Public,” then clicks the blue “Publish” button. This will publish the story to the site. Any story can be edited even after it’s published by going to the “Posts” page from the Dashboard, highlighting the story and clicking “Edit.”

Assignment: Controversy story

The next assignment for students on the syllabus is the controversy story. This is fairly straightforward – create a story package about a controversy, being sure to talk to people on different sides of the issue and to write a main story that is fair to all sides. (SEE FIGS. 2-3)

Fig. 1. Wordpress “Edit Post” page

The screenshot shows the WordPress 'Edit Post' interface. On the left is a sidebar menu with categories like Dashboard, Store, Posts, All Posts, Media, Links, Pages, Comments, Feedbacks, Polls, Ratings, Appearance, Users, Tools, and Settings. The main content area is titled 'Edit Post' and shows the post title 'Hello world!'. Below the title is a permalink and buttons for 'Edit', 'View Post', and 'Get Shortlink'. A rich text editor is visible with a toolbar and the post content: 'Welcome to WordPress.com! This is your very first post. Click the Edit link to modify or delete it, or start a new post. If you like, use this post to tell readers why you started this blog and what you plan to do with it.' Below the editor is a 'RELATED: Headline of related story' link and the text 'Happy blogging!'. At the bottom of the editor, it shows 'Path: p', 'Word count: 51', and 'Draft saved at 8:17:00 pm. Last edited by profcraigexp on July 29, 2012 at 7:57 pm'. Below the editor are three sections: 'Writing Helper' with a 'Copy a Post' button, 'Likes and Shares' with checkboxes for 'Show likes on this post' and 'Show sharing buttons on this post', and 'Featured Image' with a 'Set featured image' button. On the right side, there are several panels: 'Publish' with 'Status: Published', 'Visibility: Public', and 'Published on: Jul 27, 2012 @ 21:06'; 'Format' with 'Standard' selected; 'Categories' with 'Uncategorized' selected; 'Tags' with an 'Add' button; and 'Featured Image' with a 'Set featured image' button. At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with the text 'Thank you for creating with WordPress • Support • Forums • Learn WordPress — Tutorials and Walkthroughs'.

Fig. 2. *New York Times* gun laws article

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/21/us/colorado-gun-laws-remain-lax-despite-changes-after-columbine.html?_r=1&pagewanted=print

The New York Times

July 20, 2012

Colorado Gun Laws Remain Lax, Despite Some Changes

By JOHN SCHWARTZ

The news of the horrifying armed assault in Aurora, Colo. — just a half-hour drive from the site of the Columbine High School shootings in 1999 — has a freakish resonance in a state that has long played an unsought role in the national debate over gun laws and firearm rights.

As a mountain state, Colorado has a history of broad support for Second Amendment rights. But in the years since the Columbine tragedy, the state's lawmakers and voters passed some gun restrictions, including requirements governing the sale of firearms at gun shows, a law regulating people's ability to carry concealed weapons and legislation banning "straw purchases" of weapons for people who would not qualify to buy them legitimately.

Still, James Holmes, 24, the former neuroscience student believed to be the lone gunman in Friday's shootings in Aurora, armed himself with an assault rifle, a shotgun and a handgun to allegedly kill 12 and wound 59 others, many critically. All were weapons that would probably be legal for him to possess.

"The guy basically had normal guns," said Eugene Volokh, an expert in constitutional law at the University of California, Los Angeles. Unless some new evidence of documented psychiatric disturbance emerges, Mr. Volokh added, "there's no indication that, from his record, he is someone whom more restrictive screening procedures would have caught."

Despite the changes over the past 13 years, Colorado law still prohibits local governments from restricting gun rights in several significant ways. Moreover, gun rights organizations have successfully fought other efforts to restrict access to guns, including blocking a University of Colorado rule prohibiting concealed weapons on campus.

People in Colorado are allowed to carry firearms in a vehicle, loaded or unloaded, as long as the gun is intended for lawful uses like personal protection or protecting property.

Carrying a concealed weapon requires a permit, but Colorado is among those states whose rules on permits are relatively lax, said Heather Morton of the National Conference of State Legislatures. Colorado is one of 38 "shall issue" states. She explained that this meant "if a person complies with all of the requirements, then the state must issue a concealed weapons permit." (By other measures, the number of states whose laws amount to "shall issue" is closer to 41.) Factors that might keep someone from being able to get a permit generally include felony convictions, mental illness or protective orders.

Other states have a tougher "may issue" law, which gives discretion to withhold a permit to an authority like the local sheriff or department of public safety.

Getting a concealed weapon permit in Denver is a relatively straightforward affair, according to materials put online by the Denver Police Department. Information forms and the application are available online; the process costs \$152.50, payable by certified check or money order. Denver's Web page describing the process warns, "Do not bring any weapon with you when you bring your application for review."

The latest shootings will almost certainly lead to efforts to tighten gun laws. The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence issued a statement that laid the blame on lax gun laws: "The horrendous shooting in Aurora, Colo., is yet another tragic reminder that we have a national problem of easy availability of guns in this country."

On his weekly radio appearance Friday morning, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York called for the presidential candidates to make gun issues a part of their campaigns.

Yet another tragedy is not likely to shift the national debate over guns, said David Kopel, an adjunct professor at the University of Denver law school and the research director of the Independence Institute, a libertarian organization in Denver. He noted that gun violence did not seem to bring about national restrictions on gun rights.

“The gun prohibition people tried to use Gabrielle Giffords and the Trayvon Martin case to get their cause going again, and weren’t particularly successful with that,” he said.

At the state level, he added, having fought pitched battles over gun rights since the 1980s, “we’re at a reasonably well settled point,” and “the legislature is not that interested in opening it up again.”

Mr. Volokh said the fragmentary information available so far about Mr. Holmes and the attack did not make a strong case for reform.

“The only weapons-control solution that could do anything about this kind of murder would be a total ban on guns,” he said.

“It’s hard to prevent someone who is really bent on committing a crime from getting them,” he added, and “it’s unlikely that gun laws are going to stop him.”

In the never-ending argument, tragedy can become a talking point. Luke O’Dell, a spokesman for the Rocky Mountain Gun Owners, a Colorado-based group that fights gun control measures, said private gun restrictions may well have had “tragic consequences” in the shootings.

He noted that the theater chain that owns the Aurora movie house bans firearms on the premises, and said that if other patrons had been legally able to carry weapons, the death toll might have been less. Mr. O’Dell also said that Mayor Bloomberg’s call for a discussion of gun issues was “exploiting the blood of these innocent victims to advance his political agenda.”

Fig. 3. KansasCity.com abortion laws article

<http://www.kansascity.com/2012/07/30/v-print/3732434/judge-to-let-arizonas-abortion.html>



Posted on Mon, Jul. 30, 2012

Judge says Arizona's abortion ban can take effect

By PAUL DAVENPORT and JACQUES BILLEAUD

Associated Press

Arizona's ban on abortions starting at 20 weeks of pregnancy is poised to take effect this week as scheduled after a federal judge ruled Monday that the new law is constitutional.

U.S. District Judge James Teilborg said the statute may prompt a few pregnant women who are considering abortion to make the decision earlier. But he said the law is constitutional because it doesn't prohibit any women from making the decision to end their pregnancies.

The judge also wrote that the state provided "substantial and well-documented" evidence that an unborn child has the capacity to feel pain during an abortion by at least 20 weeks.

Republican Gov. Jan Brewer signed the measure into law in April, making Arizona one of 10 states to enact types of 20-week bans.

Arizona's ban, set to take effect Thursday, prohibits abortions starting at 20 weeks of pregnancy except in medical emergencies. That is a change from the state's current ban at viability, which is the ability to survive outside the womb and which generally is considered to be about 24 weeks. A normal pregnancy lasts about 40 weeks.

The New York-based Center for Reproductive Rights and another group filed a notice that they would be appealing Teilborg's decision to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

"Today's decision casts aside decades of legal precedent, ignoring constitutional protections for reproductive rights that have been upheld by the United States Supreme Court for nearly 40 years and threatening women's health and lives," said Nancy Northup, the center's president and CEO.

Maricopa County Attorney Bill Montgomery, who was sued as part of the challenge, said there was no telling whether the appeals court would prevent the law from taking effect. Commenting on Monday's decision, Montgomery said, "I thought it was sound legal reasoning and reached the appropriate conclusion."

Brewer also lauded the ruling, saying in a statement that it protects women and children.

Teilborg held a hearing Wednesday on a request from abortion-rights groups that he temporarily block the law's enforcement.

The groups' lawyer said during the hearing that the ban crosses a clear line on what U.S. Supreme Court rulings permit, and it intrudes on women's health decisions at a key point in pregnancy. Montgomery argued the state Legislature was justified in enacting the ban to protect the health of women and to shield fetuses from pain.

A second Arizona anti-abortion law enacted earlier this year also faces a court challenge. That law would bar public funding for non-abortion health care provided by abortion doctors and clinics.

The anti-abortion laws are among many approved by Arizona's Republican-led Legislature. The other laws include restrictions on clinic operations, mandates for specific disclosures and a prohibition on a type of late-term abortion.

Attorney Janet Crepps of the Center for Reproductive Rights argued at Wednesday's hearing that under Supreme Court decisions starting with the 1973 Roe vs. Wade ruling that legalized abortion, states can only regulate how abortions are performed, not ban them, before a fetus is viable.

Montgomery said that not implementing the 20-week ban would doom fetuses that might be saved due to advances in medicine.

While North Carolina has long had a 20-week ban, Nebraska in 2010 was the first state to recently enact one. Five more states followed in 2010: Alabama, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas and Oklahoma.

Along with Arizona, Georgia and Louisiana approved 20-week bans this year, though Georgia's law doesn't take effect until 2013.

The Center for Reproductive Rights said none of the 20-week bans have so far been blocked by courts.

AJEEP: Online Journalism, Lecture 5

Introduction

As you get farther into the semester, the assignments get more complex. You may have shot some video for their first project, but you should spend some time learning a bit about how it works. A second way to increase the complexity and mirror the nature of professional online journalism is to require sidebar stories to accompany main stories in their story packages. We'll talk about those today and ways to identify good sidebar subjects. This is also an appropriate point in the semester to discuss ethical issues that come along with posting news online. With today's ease of cutting and pasting information from anywhere, the temptation for young journalists to cut corners and violate ethical standards is greater than ever. We'll address how to avoid falling victim to this problem.

Video basics

In the age of digital photography, most American students have shot some sort of video well before they go to college. Thanks to cell phones and YouTube, many have already posted video online. None of this, however, means that they know anything about doing it well.

Entire courses are taught on the subject of shooting video. We're not going to go to those lengths in this class, but it's still useful to know some basic elements of shooting video. Too often students simply go out and film talking heads answering questions without any understanding of how basic shooting techniques can help them later on.

1. **Use a tripod.** With video cameras and cell phones being much smaller than traditional video cameras, the tiniest little wobble produces some very shaky video. While some have turned this into a cinematic technique, for news it

generally serves to distract the audience. If a tripod isn't available, placing the camera on any stable surface to shoot is preferable to trying to hold it steady.

2. **Use a microphone and headphones.** Some cell phones and many small video cameras have external microphone jacks, and external microphones are always preferable to the internal ones that record through a small hole in the camera body. Wind noise and other ambient sounds can distract viewers, whereas clear sound can help emphasize the point being made by the speaker. Using headphones on the spot to check that sound is being recorded is vital as well. Without playing back sound on the spot, you risk spending hours shooting and then finding out they have no sound and have to start all over.
3. **Pay attention to light.** This course isn't a TV production class and doesn't require you to learn how to use lighting rigs. However, you should learn to avoid simply lining people up and interviewing them without paying attention to light. Get in the habit of having interviewees turn so that they're not backlit or facing directly into the sun.
4. **Get different kinds of shots.** This is something you might not think of on your own – you might get close-ups of everything or not close enough to anything. Take a variety of shots of the subjects of your stories – full shots (where you can see the whole body of the person, often interacting with others), medium shots (usually their upper half) and close-ups (just the face is visible), as well as establishing shots of the area where an event takes place and of the people involved doing what they would normally do. This is all good raw material for the editing that will come later.

5. **Vary backgrounds and angles.** Too often students line up all their interviewees in the same place and have them face the same direction with the same background. This produces a monotonous effect and makes all the interviews look the same instead of establishing interviewees as different people. Varying backgrounds, light and angles makes for a more visually interesting piece.
6. **Remember the rule of thirds.** In shooting video, your first instinct might be to put your interviewees or other subjects in the center of the frame. However, this isn't what professionals recommend. Most students aren't familiar with the Rule of Thirds, which is commonplace for TV and film majors. To illustrate how this rule works, it's helpful to draw a rectangle representing the video frame. Divide the frame into thirds vertically and horizontally, creating nine rectangles. Where these lines touch are the points where you want to put your interviewee. This makes shots more interesting to the eye and separates one interviewee from another, especially if you vary the directions they face. Visually, it's boring to place your subject in the center of the frame – you usually want them a bit to the left or the right of center, speaking into the larger empty area.

Again, these are just the very basics of shooting video. When the time comes to edit it together, you'll be glad you followed these directives.

Here are a few basic rules of editing video that you should follow:

1. **Shorter is better.** Sometimes students want to impress their colleagues or instructors by trying to turn a video news assignment into a great work of art by making it five minutes long or longer. The fact is that online news consumers rarely watch anything longer than two minutes, much less five. As a general rule,

clips shouldn't run more than two-and-a-half minutes – if you need more time to tell a story, make it into two clips.

2. **Vary the types of shots.** We've already discussed that you should shoot a mix of long, medium and close shots when recording video. In the editing process, you'll want to alternate long, short and medium shots to keep viewers visually engaged. Normally you want to follow a close-up with a wider shot and alternate long and close shots to create some visual variety.
3. **Avoid fancy transition effects or jarring cuts.** With video software allowing for dozens of kinds of transitions between one shot and another, some students get carried away and end up overshadowing your pieces' main points with splashy visual effects. Others go to the other extreme and pay no attention to cuts between one section of an interview and another, with interviewees seemingly jumping from one place to another. Just remember to pay attention to transitions and try not to make them distracting.
4. **Pay attention to sound levels.** One common issue with student videos is that some passages will have faint sound while others are loud. Again, this distracts from the message of the piece and is usually easy to fix with today's video editing software. You should bring headphones with you while shooting and try to make sure that the sound you're recording isn't too loud, too soft or too full of extraneous noise. If there are problems with sound, move the interview somewhere with fewer distractions.
5. **Leave time for final rendering.** Rendering is the process of converting a video project into a finished movie. Rendering a finished video project can take literally

hours, especially if you don't have the newest computers available. In some classes, students were scheduled to present their finished story packages but couldn't show their video because it was still rendering. Please plan ahead and put the final versions of your video together the night before it's due – all video should be rendered and posted before you come to class.

Just a few years ago, most non-TV majors would never have been called upon to shoot video nor had the resources to do it. In the 21st Century, however, employers worldwide are coming to expect that journalism graduates will have experience both shooting and editing video, and those that don't are at a serious disadvantage.

Sidebar stories

Most of the best professional online story packages contain more than one story. Secondary stories – sidebars – are nothing new in journalism, but the online venue rewards the ability to come up with short pieces about specific elements of a main story.

Sidebars are secondary stories that expand on one aspect of a major story, and appear nearby for readers who want more information. These are often brief profiles of a person or agency involved in the main story, explanations of a complicated aspect of a story, or some other element of a story that deserves further study.

In traditional media, sidebars were reserved mainly to accompany major ongoing stories with many angles to them. In print publications, a story would need to be important enough – and the sidebar appealing enough – to justify the extra space they would occupy. On the Web, however, there is theoretically no limit to how long a story can run, so that concern is eliminated. Many online editors believe that a main story can exist to draw in casual readers, and sidebars can allow more interested readers to choose to dig further into specific details. It's become

common for major national and international outlets to accompany stories with groups of sidebars focusing on particular aspects of the main story.

A good way to approach sidebars is to look at examples on the Web. The *New York Times*' Web site is known for providing lots of sidebars for big stories, but they're common at many major outlets worldwide. If you look for major stories at pretty much any outlet online, you'll find examples of sidebars that you can use – they usually accompany stories of great disasters, triumphs or crimes.

One suggested Afghan example would be the annual government budget approval by the National Assembly in February and March of each year. As with any budget, there are always examples areas where the ministries and house of representatives will disagree on allotments for various programs, and regions or cultural groups will feel underrepresented throughout the process. These can all make excellent sidebar story opportunities.

Of course, on-campus stories don't usually involve huge national or international issues, but there are still plenty of stories worthy of sidebars that can be found for class assignments. You just need to identify a particular aspect of the main story that deserves its own "sub-story" that might attract reader interest. If you find yourself asking several questions about a single aspect of a multifaceted story, that subject may well deserve a sidebar.

In the multimedia age, another issue with sidebars is whether you want to write a sidebar story about a person or issue or put together a video story. In some cases, you may do both – for example, writing a profile of a person connected to the main story, and accompanying that profile with a brief video interview. It all comes back to whether or not it adds something of value to the story package – if students believe it will be a compelling addition that's worth their time, they should do it.

Ethics and standards

In an age where media content is shared far and wide, frequently without regard to who created or produced it, upholding ethical standards in your reporting is more important than ever. It's easy to talk about traditional journalistic values – accuracy, completeness, fairness, etc. – but the online venue and the practices that have emerged there make applying traditional values harder than it might seem.

For example, accuracy and completeness would seem to be issues on which there is no compromise. Yet with online news there is a new factor – speed – that can complicate matters considerably. Even before Twitter, online journalists had to deal with the fact that the Web made it possible for information to spread worldwide in seconds. Journalism went from print deadlines – one a day, usually late in the evening – to a constant rolling deadline. Whereas reporters used to have time to fully flesh out a story – to make it complete, to verify its accuracy – too often that's not the case anymore. With Twitter now offering tiny bits of immediate information to worldwide audiences (with no assurance at all of its accuracy) journalists now face having to compete with the ill-informed on an information playing field that's anything but level. If an ordinary citizen gets information wrong, what are the consequences?

As student reporters that will hopefully become professionals, you have to adhere to a higher standard – as student reporters, you can post tweets or Facebook updates, but you're responsible for making sure the information is accurate. If you want to tweet or live-blog from the site of an event, it's better to take a little extra time and get it right. The notion is that bits of accurate information can lead to understanding of a story or situation. However, when writing a full story later, they need to strive for the completeness that quick updates can't achieve.

A term tied in to this is **authenticity** – conveying not just the on-the-spot facts, but the background and context behind those facts that paint a more complete picture of the story. Some journalists say that this often gets abandoned with the lightning speed of the online medium. They argue that without the proper context, the audience can easily misunderstand the meaning and significance of the facts that emerge bit by bit through tweets and other messages. It should be noted, though, that this has long been a problem in journalism. For years, commentators have correctly argued that daily journalism too often answers the first four basic questions (who, what, when and where) at the expense of the last two, more analytical questions (why and how). Oddly enough, online journalism has the space to allow for this, and sometimes analysis pieces get as much readership as breaking news stories.

The question of fairness is also a major issue in the online world, in ways not imagined before the Web. So much online coverage these days is full of opinion and analysis that younger news readers have begun to lose sight of the difference between news and opinion. They've come to expect an edge to their news coverage, and frequently a dose of the writer's opinion. While this might be common among bloggers and those working for sites that openly proclaim a partisan stance, if you aim to be a professional journalist it's best to learn how to write stories that are fair to all sides and keep opinion isolated to labeled opinion and analysis pieces. You might eventually land a job at a news site that espouses particular opinions, but if you pepper their student reports with opinion, you might well limit your job prospects later on.

Assignment due: Controversy story

(IF YOU ASSIGNED THE CONTROVERSY STORY, YOU MAY HAVE STUDENTS PRESENT IT DURING THIS CLASS PERIOD. THIS STORY SHOULD PRESENT MULTIPLE SIDES OF A GENUINE CONTROVERSY AS FAIRLY AS POSSIBLE.)

AJEEP: Online Journalism, Lecture 6

Introduction

(TODAY'S FINAL CLASS WILL BE RELATIVELY BRIEF IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE ANY SUBJECTS THAT NEED TO BE FINISHED UP, ANY DISCUSSION YOU MIGHT LIKE TO PURSUE AND ANY QUESTIONS STUDENTS MAY HAVE.

The in-depth story package

The last assignment in this class is the in-depth story package. Students are often confused or intimidated by this assignment, so it's important to take time and make sure you understand it. The assignment requires a main story of at least 1500 words, one or more sidebars, two or more photos and either audio or video or both. The topic your group chooses to cover in this assignment must have enough complexity to support all these elements. Maybe you feel like you have no idea where to start in coming up with a topic like this, but I have an exercise I'll explain later that will hopefully help you.

In-depth journalism is often called "explanatory" in nature – in-depth stories often explain things to readers who don't know about them. Sometimes this involves breaking down something complicated so it's easy to understand, and sometimes it shows the complexity of something seemingly ordinary. Sometimes it shows how a problem developed over time, discusses what experts think and how they believe it might be solved. The key is peeling back the layers of the topic – almost everything is more complex than it seems, yet almost anything can be broken down into manageable pieces. It's all about being curious – deciding what questions need to be answered in the story. The questions should encourage answers that provide context, details and specifics, evidence, impact, scope and a notion of future repercussions.

For college students, the easy path is to write stories about some element of the university budget or administration or something like that. They can start with a press release, talk to an

official and another student or two, who write what they're told and end up not even understanding what they wrote. It's harder to write about a complex subject, but it's something that can often educate readers and provide useful information for them.

Having said this, if you're writing about a complicated subject and you don't really understand it, the audience never will. Sometimes writing stories involves asking experts to explain what they're talking about, then explain it again in plain language. Sometimes it involves finding another expert who is better at explaining the topic. Either way, the reporter's job is essentially to translate the subject into something understandable, whatever that requires.

(HERE YOU CAN PROVIDE EXAMPLES OF IN-DEPTH STORIES AND DISCUSS THE NATURE OF THE TOPICS, THE QUESTIONS ASKED BY THE REPORTERS, AND HOW THE ANSWERS HELPED ILLUMINATE THE ORIGINAL ISSUE, QUESTION OR PROBLEM AT THE HEART OF THE STORY. IT HELPS IF YOU CAN FIND CURRENT EXAMPLES THAT STUDENTS WILL BE FAMILIAR WITH.)

A useful metaphor is "connect the dots." As an example, at one university, students idly wondered why they'd see steam rising from little holes in the sidewalks on winter mornings, but that's usually where the curiosity ended. A group of students looked into this, discovered it was a result of the campus heating system, which used steam generated from a large building on the edge of campus. They talked to campus personnel, got to go in and get pictures of the boilers that powered the system, got statistics on how it worked, interviewed workers and the head of Building Services about the system, and wrote up a huge in-depth piece that answered many student questions. It was a classic example of connecting a few unanswered questions and turning them into a nice package.

(NOTE – YOU CAN USE THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLE TO ILLUSTRATE A POINT ABOUT DEVELOPING STORY IDEAS, OR YOU CAN USE THE ASSIGNMENT YOURSELF IN CLASS IF YOU’D LIKE.)

Another example was actually developed from an assignment most students hated. In a discussion of the development of story ideas, students were told to come up with the three worst story ideas they could imagine – the most boring, pointless, obscure stories that they’d never want to cover under any circumstances. One student had listed “a story about a cemetery” as one of his worst story ideas, and another student used that idea and wrote up a fantastic in-depth piece about a local cemetery. The lead story started with something simple – some quotes from a groundskeeper going about his tasks early in the morning – and grew from there. It turned out that this particular cemetery was one of the largest non-governmental cemeteries in America, and was built during the Civil War to hold Union soldiers and Confederate prisoners of war who had died. At the time the story was written, the cemetery housed one U.S. president, three U.S. vice presidents, 12 U.S. governors, 14 U.S. Senators, 16 Civil War generals, and so on. My student had all of this information and also photos, maps and other materials that made it into an amazing piece of work. She started connecting dots and didn’t stop until she’d created something really special.

(AT THIS POINT, BREAK STUDENTS UP INTO GROUPS, THEN GIVE THEM THE FOLLOWING EXERCISE.)

As a group, make a list of things that either you don’t understand, or that you think other people don’t understand. This doesn’t have to be turned in – it’s just for your use. Once your group has made a list, you can work together on determining which of these might be good story topics. For each potential topic, you should ask one essential question – “What don’t we

understand,” or “What don’t other people understand?” In the process of finding out the answers, you can develop an in-depth story. As you begin work, you can ask more questions: “Who knows the answers?” “How did this get this way?” “How does this work, or how is it supposed to work?” “What’s really going on?” “What’s the story behind the story?”

Once you decide on a topic (or as you make your final choice), you should decide how best to frame the story to engage readers, break down the issues that will need to be explained, and determine what elements lend themselves to what types of media. You can then start work on deciding who to interview and where else to get information. During this process, I will walk around the room and answer questions. By the end of class, each group should be ready to pitch its story idea to the class.

(THE CLASS HAS BEEN DESIGNED FOR STUDENTS TO PITCH THE STORY, THEN PRESENT THE COMPLETED STORY DURING THE ASSIGNED FINAL EXAM PERIOD, USUALLY A WEEK TO 10 DAYS AFTER THE LAST CLASS SESSION. AGAIN, IF THE CONDITIONS PERMIT, YOU CAN ALLOW THEM MORE TIME TO PUT THE STORY TOGETHER.)