
Leading an Online Newsroom

Getting your staff motivated & in synch with
online integration of community news

Presenter: Jim Santori / SNA webinar, July 30, 2009

Target audience: Community newspapers

- Assumptions

- Community newspapers not metros
 - Small staffs already multi-tasking
 - Not the most “up-to-date” equipment, software
 - Access to broadband or T1 lines, not dialup
 - How to get “up to speed” with evolution
 - Geared to newsroom leaders, not techs
-

It's a wake-up call

TIMES CHANGE

- Competitors everywhere
- 'Audience' in many cases wants to participate
- New tools to tell stories
- Demand for news now, not tomorrow morning
- Do more with less, which means making hard choices

BASICS DON'T CHANGE

- Storytelling
- News judgment
- Accurate, timely and fair
- Being part of the community you cover

Take #1 poll

Past newsroom leaders



From the 'general,' a leader who dictated tone and coverage

To the 'conductor,' a leader who blended various talents to achieve high degree of achievement.

But now we have...

Confronting the new journalist...

- "I am only 28 years old and I am a member of Generation Y. I have an iPhone, a MacBook, Facebook and Twitter accounts, a blog, an Xbox and a Nintendo Wii. I know what re-tweeting is and how to do it, and I am the perpetrator of many a rickroll.

"...I and many others like me represent the future of journalism. The media industry is entering the age where Generation Y becomes management."

- *News editor Renai LeMay, ZDNet.com*

Feeling like Cat herder? Relax



"Be humble. Stop trying to `herd cats' and start building trust and mutual respect. Your `cats' will respond. They will sense your purpose, keep your business purring, and even kill your rats." — "Managing People is Like Herding Cats" by Warren Bennis

You will have to change first

- It must come from the top – publisher
- If not her, jump in yourself
- Do not designate someone
- Form your online team from volunteers
 - Reward them, lavish them, spend time with them
 - Leave the rest behind

10 things newsroom leaders should know

- 1. How to use **Twitter** and **Facebook** to cover your beat and engage in conversations.
- 2. How to use **RSS feeds** to gather news and manage them
- 3. That there is a difference between **link journalism** and 'cut and paste' journalism (aka plagiarism).
- 4. That your readers are smarter than you think. In fact, plenty of them know more than you do. **Engage them and use them.**
- 5. That **churnalism** – rewriting press releases -- is much easier to spot online. If you do this regularly, your readers are already on to you.
- 6. **Google** is your friend. Get to know it more. Not just for research.
- 7. Freely experiment with **free or cheap online tools** to engage readers. Plenty of them out there
- 8. How to use **multimedia** – for **photos** (Slideshow or BananAlbum), Audacity for audio, YouTube for **video**. Do not use multimedia for multimedia's sake.
- 9. How to write **search engine friendly** journalism. Old school thinking about headline writing, story structure etc no longer applies online
- 10. Learn more about **privacy**. Think carefully how you use social network sites and double check your findings.

SOURCE: Paraphrased from John Thompson, Journalism.co.uk

Think of “why” you are leading

- Multi-skilled, multi-purpose newsroom
 - Benefits:
 - Multiple story platforms reach different “users”
 - Tighter news holes force alternatives
 - Some things you can’t do in-paper
 - Maps, video, audio, archives, slideshows, conversations (blogs, community forums), live updates (ex .twitter)
 - Side benefit: Help make your employees marketable
- How to motivate?
 - First, show them the readers want it

Content Performance							View
Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Bounce Rate	% Exit	\$ Index		
1,109,350	824,014	00:06:08	3.16%	39.59%	\$0.00		
% of Site Total: 100.00%	% of Site Total: 100.00%	Site Avg: 00:06:08 (0.00%)	Site Avg: 3.16% (0.00%)	Site Avg: 39.59% (0.00%)	Site Avg:		
Page Title	Pageviews ↓	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Bounce Rate	% Exit		
1. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - Homepage	342,951	194,510	00:08:35	0.07%	38.79%		
2. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - Legacy_	224,242	158,495	00:04:09	0.23%	33.78%		
3. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - Marketplace	77,902	72,769	00:00:43	0.26%	62.02%		
4. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - Green Day frontman's wife r	22,344	20,526	00:03:00	0.26%	29.59%		
5. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - Local News	14,210	8,058	00:03:58	0.13%	30.44%		
6. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - Engagements	10,383	4,161	00:02:15	0.00%	11.62%		
7. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - Fatal train crash victims ident	7,287	5,735	00:05:30	0.00%	30.23%		
8. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - Fatal crash shocks highway	6,111	5,498	00:09:50	0.15%	40.39%		
9. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - Monster Jobs	6,069	4,962	00:20:34	0.08%	76.16%		
10. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - Andrew Swanson the real d	5,878	4,329	00:04:28	0.09%	25.11%		
11. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - Truck-train collision injures 2	5,827	4,852	00:09:04	0.00%	34.53%		
12. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - Archives	4,817	3,598	00:02:03	0.00%	19.22%		
13. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - North Kato fight escalates to	4,165	3,672	00:04:15	0.00%	25.55%		
14. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - Graffiti defaces area overnig	4,162	3,497	00:06:50	0.26%	32.82%		
15. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - Sports	3,928	2,660	00:03:26	0.00%	32.94%		
16. Free Press Forums: Real names, real people. For membershi	3,761	2,632	00:06:48	0.08%	49.06%		
17. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - Graffiti suspects arrested	3,652	3,285	00:06:32	0.00%	27.77%		
18. The Free Press, Mankato, MN - Police Logs	3,554	2,280	00:03:18	1.04%	18.85%		

Identify, reinforce and reward

- Award points
 - # times stories updated
 - # times tweeted links, etc.
 - # times blogged
 - Consider: most popular online stories
- Top points = prizes
 - Apparel
 - Gift cards for gas, meals
 - Annual: Laptop



Take #2 poll

Habits hard to change; keep evolving

- Train, update
 - Hold brown baggers on related topics
 - Tap your college or university for trainers
 - Web writing
 - Video editing
 - Latest SM startup
 - Send team to regional seminars
 - Almost all have web component now
- Search for and email with links to helpful tips
- Invest ... but with commitments
- Promote your “believers” with in-house ads
- Have online “chats” with staff & newsmakers using CoverItLive.com
- Share & promote
- Change the position description (Howard Owens)

Specific duties, broken out

- **NIGHT COPY EDITOR: ½ time to web**
 - Breaking stories
 - OK story comments
 - Creates Google crime map
 - Web summaries for Sunday print
 - OTHER COPY EDITORS: Post stories from selected list throughout the night
- **REPORTERS:**
 - Breaking news “confirmed news as we know” to day news editor for approval.
 - Take video to spot news event. Write stories and with help from tech savvy photographer, post video
 - Public Safety reporter posts police log.
 - Reporters post pdfs & spreadsheets if needed.
- **EDITORS:**
 - OKs real name forum participants and watches debate online forum.
 - Approves comments for stories.
 - Does updates on personal Twitter (what editorials we’re pursuing) and mankatoneews Twitter for breaking news stories or stories of interest.
 - Write up promos of web content in print edition, including blogs and time stories break as well as slideshows, video etc.
- **PHOTOGRAPHERS:**
 - One to two slides shows per week.
 - Post slide shows from free lance photographer who "Faces and Places" for lifestyle magazine
- **BLOG:**
 - Nine staffers (copy editors, reporters and editors) write blogs, updated anywhere from 3 to 5 times per week in addition to their daily stories.

Map out the duties, who will do them

Duties

	cops	PM web	AM web	CClrk	NClrk	Desk	News Ed	ME
Police Logs	X	X	x					
Crime Map	X	X	x					
First alert stories from day	x	x	x				x	
Updating trials		x	x					
Meetings, public hearings		X	x					
Traffic incidents, accidents		X	x					
Multimedia with cops	x	X	x					
Supplement items w/stories		X						
Web refers in paper		X						
Blogs	Individual bloggers are responsible							
Approving story comments		X						x
Managing forums								x
Linking links with stories		X						
Providing web analytics								x
Interactives for entertainment			X					
Post submitted photos		X						
Most popular web for week		X						

Specifically detail content pieces

	cops	PM web	AM web	CClrk	NClrk	Desk	News Ed	ME
Police Logs	X	X	x					
DAILY CONTENT								
Births					X			
Local News		x				X		
Breaking News		X						
Top News		x						
Top Sports		x						
Top Features						x		
Obituaries						x		
Police Blotter								
Fire Calls					X			
Local Editorial						X		
Local Columns						X		
Letters to Editor						x		
My views w/mugs						x		
News of Weird						X		

Think about ‘citizen journalists’



*“Hello sweetheart,
get me rewrite”*

- Qualified people in your community
 - Retired professionals
 - College students
- Act as correspondents
- Bloggers
- Have a rewrite editor to handle the copy

Take #3 poll

Think future: How to set it up



SOURCE: Michael Langley, NextNewsroom

Characteristics of new newsroom

- A place that's very much in the moment
- Requires quick thinking
- “Adopt & Drop” -- willingness to dump one idea and take up another quite quickly.
- No single method, cookie cutter approach
 - Each news team will have to figure out what works best for them.

SOURCE: Chris O'Brien, NextNewsroom

Characteristics of new news staffer

- Multi-tasker (thrives under multiple deadlines)
- Hates to be wrong (accurate)
- Graduate of multimedia J-school (Ball State University, Northwestern)
- Most important: Attitude (...over aptitude) Willing to invest in their own future



Backpack journalist Kevin Sites, former reporter and producer for CNN, NBC and ABC turned foreign correspondent for Yahoo News. Now author and free lancer.

Characteristics (cont.) 7 Effective Habits

- Covering everything with everything
 - Multimedia projects
- Try something new, move on
- Blogs
- Involved in social networking
- Networks with other multimedia journalists
- Keeps a finger on possible story development with Digg, del.icio.us, TwitterTrend
- RSS the blogs of other journalists

SOURCE: Mark Luckie, "10,000Words.com"

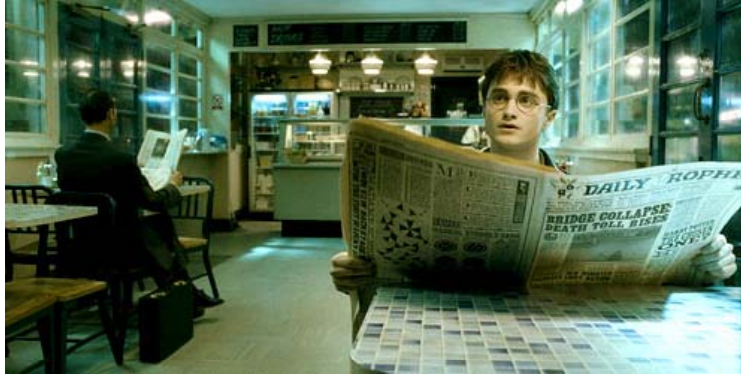
Don't have the 'right' equipment

- Laptop with wireless
- Photos: Soundslide \$40 or BananAlbum *free*
- Video: Flip video \$149
 - Video editing software: Mac built in
- Audio recorder for interviews: Olympus \$100
 - Audio editing software: Audacity *free*
- Cellphones: If you can text, you can Twitter
 - iPhone better all around "street tool"

Why now?

- "People who decide, 'I'm going to wait around until [media are] fully transitioned and hope I don't get laid off,' " do so at their own peril. (A)s night follows day, things are really tipping, and it's better to have that training early rather than late." -- *Tina Brown, former editor of Vanity Fair and New Yorker and now head of digital magazine, TheDailyBeast.com*

Thank you! Questions?



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Some helpful links to use

- What every journalist should know: <http://blogs.journalism.co.uk/editors/2009/01/13/ten-things-every-journalist-should-know-in-2009/>
- Why Twitter will renew journalism: <http://www.zdnet.com.au/insight/business/soa/Why-Twitter-will-renew-journalism/0,139023749,339297085,00.htm>
- Pursuing the complete community connection: <http://stevebuttry.wordpress.com/2009/06/18/bloggers-share-lots-of-advice/>
- Twitter journalism.: <http://www.twitterjournalism.com/>
- Great apps for multimedia journalists: <http://adamwestbrook.wordpress.com/2009/04/08/great-free-apps-for-multimedia-journalists/>
- Online News Tools: <http://ryansholin.com/tools/>
- 7 Habits of Highly Effective Multimedia Journalists: <http://www.10000words.net/2008/02/7-habits-of-highly-effective-multimedia.html>
- How journalists can use Facebook: <http://savethemedia.com/2009/01/19/how-journalists-can-use-facebook/>
- Journalists Guide to Twitter: <http://mashable.com/2009/05/14/twitter-journalism/>
- Wired Journalists Forums: <http://mediageeks.ning.com/>
- 100 Best Blogs for Journalism Students: <http://www.bachelorsdegreeonline.com/blog/2009/100-best-blogs-for-journalism-students/>
- Howard Owen's Job Description ideas: <http://www.howardowens.com/2007/2008-objectives-for-todays-non-wired-journalist/>