

The Convergence Newsletter

-- From Newsplex at the University of South Carolina
Vol. 1 No. 1 (1 July 2003)

EXPLORING THE MEANING OF MEDIA CONVERGENCE

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide an editorially neutral forum for discussion of the theoretical and professional meaning of media convergence.

We welcome articles on any topic directly related to media convergence. In this issue we open the discussion with an article considering media convergence and the diversity of voices. For future issues we invite your commentary on the following questions:

"How should we define convergence?"

An organizational structure that is referred to as convergence by some is called confluence by others, while yet another group may only see a business merger that happens to include separate media units.

"What are the legal and ethical implications of media convergence?"

For example, does publishing the news across multiple platforms increase our exposure to legal risk?"

"What does media convergence mean for minorities within news operations?"

For example, will the new technologies create new opportunities for advancement?

We also welcome information about conferences, publications and related links.

Please contact us for submission guidelines and a deadline schedule.

James D. Christian, Editor

convergence-editor@gwm.sc.edu

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***** FEATURE ARTICLES

THE NEWSPLEX AFFILIATES PROGRAM

The Newsplex Affiliates program was created in 2001 to engage educational institutions in the process of sharing information about the training of the next generation of journalists. The initial goal was to involve recognized institutions from around the world that were engaged in the research and teaching in converged journalistic practices in the Newsplex mission of teaching and research in convergent journalism.

Since that time, we have identified dozens of educational institutions that have made convergence an integral part of their curriculum. Many of these schools have come to Newsplex to get information that will help them design facilities and/or curricula. Through these visits, as well as in conference presentations and a great deal of interpersonal communication, it has become clear that each of these programs has important lessons to share, and that the Newsplex Affiliates program could serve as the clearinghouse for this information.

The University of South Carolina has thus decided to open the Newsplex Affiliates program to any institution that is engaged in teaching and research in convergent journalism. The criteria for membership are:

Each institution must provide a comprehensive description of their journalism curriculum that will be shared with other schools through this newsletter and through the Newsplex Web site (Newsplex.sc.edu). (For more information on these descriptions, see the related article later in this

newsletter.)

Each institution must agree to contribute at least one article a year to this newsletter. Articles can explore theoretical, practical, or critical aspects of convergent media, and should be of interest to both academics and media professionals.

In return for joining the Newsplex Affiliates program, a school will receive a number of benefits. The primary benefit is the exchange of information with others involved in teaching and research in convergent media, with other benefits including a) subscription to this newsletter for all interested faculty, staff, and students, b) discounted registration fees for Newsplex-related academic conferences and c) discounted academic training at Newsplex. The goal of the program is to make the Newsplex Affiliates program a comprehensive forum for faculty and professional exchange on media convergence, involving Affiliates to the greatest extent possible in the information exchange.

The Newsplex Affiliates program began with twelve affiliates: the Journalism Research and Development Centre at the University of Tampere in Finland, New Directions for News and the Institute for New Media at the University of Minnesota, The Paris-based World Editors Forum, the Netherlands-based European Journalism Centre, Sweden's Royal Institute of Technology, the School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, the University of Hong Kong Journalism and Media Studies Centre, the Paris-based Centre de Formation et de Perfectionnement des Journalistes, the University of Navarra in Spain, the Media Center @ the American Press Institute in Virginia, the Missouri School of Journalism and the Erich-Brost-Institut Für Journalismus at the University of Dortmund, Germany. These twelve original Newsplex Affiliates have been designated as "Charter Affiliates" and will receive all of the benefits of membership. Although they are not required to submit further materials to maintain their membership, we anticipate that these institutions will be as eager as the newcomers to share information on their programs.

As the program matures, our goal is to develop other means of sharing information among affiliates. Information shared in these newsletters, especially information on curricula, will also be posted on the Newsplex Web site. Suggestions on other information sources should be directed to Augie Grant at the University of South Carolina. (Possibilities include an electronic journal, listserv and research exchange.)

To become a Newsplex Affiliate, a school simply needs to send a letter of interest that includes a commitment to produce at least one article for this newsletter, along with a description of their curriculum, to:

Augie Grant, Ph.D., Newsplex Academic Liaison

College of Mass Communications and Information Studies
University of South Carolina
Carolina Coliseum
Columbia, South Carolina 29208
U.S.A.

Requests can also be sent via e-mail (augie@sc.edu) or fax (803.777.4103).
You can also telephone, if you have questions about the program:
803.777.4464.

CONVERGENCE AND DIVERSITY

One recurring theme in popular press discussions of media convergence is the challenge that media convergence represents to diversity. Most of these discussions refer to "diversity of voices," but few of these offer a definition of the concept.

The regulatory debate offers an opportunity for academic researchers to define and explore the concept of diversity in greater depth. The literature in media economics includes a number of studies that address and define diversity of program content and diversity of ownership, without explicitly addressing the issue of "diversity of voices." Diversity has also been addressed extensively in studies of representation in media content.

One of the most important reasons that a systematic inquiry is needed into the relationship between media convergence and the diversity of voices is the fact that the existing literature suggests a counterintuitive conclusion from media consolidation, that a monopolist provides a greater diversity of content than a competitive media landscape. Using a model developed by Steiner (1952) and Owen, Beebe, and Manning (1974), a variety of researchers have explored relationships among the diversity of program content and ownership, number of channels, and related variables (see Grant, 1994 for a more detailed discussion).

One problem in the research on television program availability is the manner in which content is aggregated into "program types." Researchers in this tradition acknowledge the limitations in aggregating programs that might be dissimilar into the same category, but an alternative means of operationalizing diversity of program content has yet to be defined.

This debate does not address another dimension of diversity that has been oft-cited in criticisms of changes in the radio ownership rules in the U.S., the issue of homogenization of media content across markets. Traditional analyses of diversity look at content within a market, but the complex web of relationships among the radio industry and music industry, along with a

similar pattern of relationships among local television stations and the producers of television content suggests this area as a fertile one for academic inquiry.

It is critical for scholars studying media convergence to be familiar with both the literature and lapses in our knowledge of the relationship between convergence and diversity so that we can both contribute systematic analysis of the impacts of convergence and discuss the range of conceptual dimensions implicated in the term "diversity."

There is no question that a great opportunity exists for academics to take the lead in further defining types of diversity and then performing the research needed to ascertain the impacts of media convergence. As the media consolidate, the media industries have become the perfect laboratory for field experiments along these lines. The key at this stage is obtaining sufficient baseline data on media content to be able to measure differences (should they exist) over time. Our reward will be a greater understanding of the impacts of convergence and a more prominent seat at discussions of media regulation.

August E. Grant, Ph.D.
College of Mass Communications and Information Studies
University of South Carolina

References:

- Grant, A.E. (1994). "The promise fulfilled? An empirical analysis of program diversity on television." *Journal of Media Economics*, 7(1), 51-64.
- Owen, B., Beebe, J., & Manning, W. (1974). *Television Economics*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Steiner, P.O. (1952). "Program patterns and preferences, and the workability of competition in radio broadcasting." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 66, 194-223.

NEWSPLEX IS A LIBERATING ENTITY

In its first months of operation, Newsplex has served as a newsroom laboratory for teaching, training and research. It has also been a broadcast studio for live coverage of events related to the war with Iraq. Newsplex was not envisioned as a broadcast facility, but that is the beauty of its flexibility. As technology and the media evolve, we expect Newsplex to be the creative environment for students, faculty and professionals to keep pace with change.

Justice Stephen Breyer has described the U.S. Constitution as a "liberating document." It does not tell us what we, as citizens, may do; so much as it

gives us the freedoms to make those determinations. It may stretch the constitutional analogy, but Newsplex, too, is a liberating entity. It does not tell us how to cover the news or launch a media campaign. It gives us the facility to approach the information and communication processes with great liberty to exploit the technology without being tethered by it.

Charles Bierbauer, Dean
College of Mass Communications and Information Studies
University of South Carolina

NEWSPLEX NEWS

With the completion of Newsplex in November 2002, Columbia, South Carolina, U.S.A. became an official destination on the convergence map of the world. Professional and academic visitors have flocked to the new facility, officially christened the Ifra Newsplex at the University of South Carolina, for tours and educational presentations. Visitors in May and June included PBS President and CEO Pat Mitchell, Deputy Editor in Chief of the Austrian daily newspaper Die Presse Michael Fleishhacker, reporter Pascal Riche from the Parisian newspaper Liberation, Assistant Managing Editor Paul Osmundson and interns from the South Carolina daily The State and Dr. Jane Singer from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Iowa. The Newsplex staff also welcomed editors Svitlana Vyshnevsha, Oksana Ryabchun, and Anatoliy Drozdyk from the RIA Group, a Ukrainian multimedia company and their host, Editor Terry Plumb from the Rock Hill, South Carolina Herald, as well as thirty production managers and technical staff members from Japanese newspapers as part of the Conference for Newspaper Techniques-Japan (CONPT) tour of the U.S. Newsplex Director Kerry Northrup also conducted a highly successful live teleconference tour of the facility for publishing executives in France that was sponsored by Agence France Presse and Ifra South West Europe in Paris.

Training has also begun in the facility. In early March ten editors and subeditors from the Manchester Evening News of the U.K. were the first group of professionals to take advantage of the convergent newshandling training offered by Ifra. Since that time, Directorate members Groupe Edipresse of Lausanne, Switzerland and the Florida Times-Union of Jacksonville, a Morris Communications paper, have sent teams to Newsplex for Newsplex Roles training and instruction in other multiple media newshandling techniques. Directorate member PR Newswire sent a group of managers to Newsplex for a two-day executive briefing earlier this year as well.

Seminars and training sessions open to all are also being offered. The University of South Carolina's College of Mass Communications and Information Studies will hold Newsplex Summer Seminar on Teaching and

Research for University Faculty from July 6 to July 10, followed the next week by Newsplex Summer Workshop on Convergent Media for Advanced Undergraduate Students from July 13 to July 17. Enrollment has also begun for the following Ifra training seminars occurring at Newsplex: Newsplex Roles Training for Multiple-Media Staff, August 25-29; Adplexing-a cross-media advertising seminar, September 8-12; Media Scenarios Project 2, September 16-19; Newsplex Roles Training for Trainers, a two-day event preceding the Expanding Convergence Conference, November 2-4; Techplexing, November 17-20; and Changing Minds, Changing Culture, an editorial convergence management training seminar, December 1-3. For more information on the academic classes, visit newsplex.sc.edu. The full Ifra Newsplex training schedule for professional classes can be found at www.newsplex.org.

NEWSPLEX STAFF NEWS

The Newsplex professional staff has expanded with the addition of Geoff LoCicero, the facility's News Resourcer. The News Resourcer position being developed at Newsplex is a combination journalist/information technologies expert. Geoff has the perfect background for the position, having earned his Masters degree in Library and Information Science at the University of South Carolina in 2002. He also has experience in the newspaper industry, having worked as a sports writer and copyeditor for Scripps Howard News Service in Washington D.C.; a sports copyeditor and page designer for the Birmingham (Alabama, U.S.A.) Post-Herald, and most recently as a sports editor and page designer for The State in Columbia, South Carolina, U.S.A.

Newsplex Training Director Martha Stone was one of 10 journalists to receive the prestigious Knight International Press Fellowship this year. Martha is spending the summer in Budapest teaching and consulting with the Centers for Independent Journalism in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.

In addition, Newsplex staff and College faculty members have been on the road making presentations about Newsplex and convergent journalism to a variety of professional organizations in the past few months, including the Radio-Television News Directors Association, the Associated Press Managing Editors of Louisiana and Mississippi, the Broadcast Education Association, and the Newspaper Association of America at NEXPO.

Julie Nichols
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***** CONFERENCE INFORMATION

ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS
COMMUNICATION

2003 Convention

Kansas City, Missouri, U.S.A.

30 July to 2 August 2003

PRE-CONVENTION WORKSHOP-JULY 29, 2003

The daylong pre-convention session on media convergence begins with an interactive panel discussion titled "Promises and Pitfalls of Convergence." The panel is moderated by Cecilia Friend of Utica College. Panelists include a mix of researchers and media practitioners now holding various academic positions. The panel will take the form of an interview and open discussion led by facilitator, Randy Reddick.

Panel Participants:

Clyde Bentley is associate professor of journalism at University of Missouri. He worked in the newspaper industry for 25 years before earning his doctorate at the University of Oregon in 2000. He is a member of the Center for the Digital Globe and head of the AEJMC Newspaper Division.

Dane S. Claussen is associate professor in the Dept. of Journalism and Mass Communication at Point Park College in Pittsburgh. Claussen has been editor and/or publisher of six daily and weekly newspapers; a newspaper management consultant and mergers/acquisitions broker; and author of several books.

Elizabeth Osder is a visiting professor at the USC Annenberg School of Journalism. She has been an editor, producer, and consultant for publications, broadcasters, and online services including The New York Times, NPR, Financial Times (UK), Time Warner and The Poynter Institute.

Randy Reddick is professor at Texas Tech University School of Mass Communications. He spent 18 years in newspapers as reporter, editor, and company vice president. He is lead author of *The Online Journalist* (1994-2001) founding editor of FACSNET (1995-2001) and a new media consultant.

Jane B. Singer is assistant professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Iowa. She has 15 years professional experience in print and online newsrooms. In 2003, she conducted weeklong case studies in four "converged" newsrooms around the country.

CONVENTION

The AEJMC holds an annual convention in August, featuring the latest in technology as well as special sessions on teaching, research and public service in the various components of journalism and mass communication -- from advertising and public relations to radio and television journalism to media management and newspapers. Workshops deal with incorporating diversity in the curriculum, teaching media management, and professionals in the classroom.

At least eight papers specific to media convergence research will be presented:

State of Convergence Journalism: United States Media and University Study
-- Carrie Anna Criado and Camille Kraeplin, Southern Methodist

Conceptualizing the Convergence Craze: A Three-Dimensional Model of Multimedia Curriculum Reform
-- George Daniels, Alabama

Bridging Newsrooms and Classrooms: Preparing the Next Generation of Journalists for Converged Media
-- Edgar Huang, Karen Davison, Twila Davis, Anita Nair, Stephanie Shreve and Elizabeth Bettendorf, South Florida-St. Petersburg

Facing the Challenges of Convergence: Media Professionals' Concerns of Working Across Media Platforms
-- Edgar Huang, Karen Davison, Stephanie Shreve, Twila Davis, Elizabeth Bettendorf and Anita Nair, South Florida-St. Petersburg

News on the Web: How Much Print and Broadcast Top News Converge in New Media
-- Jin Xu and A.J. Baltes, Bowling Green State

To view the abstracts, visit:

<http://www.aejmc.org/convention/03Abstracts/03ctpabs.html>

The Convergence Continuum: A Model for Studying Collaboration between Media Newsrooms
-- Larry Dailey, Lori Demo and Mary Spillman, Ball State

Cultural Convergence: An Examination of Intergroup Bias and Journalism
-- Vincent F. Filak, Ball State

The Sociology of Convergence: Challenges and Change in Newspaper News Work
-- Jane Singer, Iowa

To view the abstracts, visit:

<http://www.aejmc.org/convention/03Abstracts/03newsabs.html>

For additional convention information, visit:

<http://www.aejmc.org/convention/index.html>

NEW RESEARCH FOR NEW MEDIA: INOVATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S.A.
4-6 September 2003

New media offer both new research techniques and new communication arenas to be studied. This symposium will bring together researchers who have been applying new media technologies to traditional research areas and those applying traditional research methods to new media studies. Invited speakers will discuss their application of new research methods. Symposium participants will serve as discussants, elevating the examination of these techniques and their implications for research.

For additional information, visit:

<http://www.inms.umn.edu/convenings/newresearch/main.htm>

HIGHWAY AFRICA CONFERENCE

Department of Journalism
Rhodes University
Grahamstown, South Africa
8-10 September 2003

Highway Africa will examine the intersection of journalism, technology and the "Information Society". Within this, a strong theme will be on understanding the policy and regulatory issues around convergence issues - and the role that journalists play in developing national policies.

For additional information, visit:

<http://www.highwayafrica.org.za/>

4th INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT ON NEWSROOMS

IFRA PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE
"Expanding Convergence"

Ifra Newsplex at the University of South Carolina
Columbia, South Carolina, U.S.A.
5-6 November 2003

News organizations are beginning to take notice of the kind of news content and functionality that today's news consumers require, and are implementing strategies to deliver on consumer demands. By analyzing users' news consumption behavior and explicit responses, news companies have learned that their readers, viewers, listeners and surfers want more interactivity, more multimedia content, more choices in news and time-shifting, and more opportunities to multitask.

Summit4 will focus on how news companies are responding to what users want, and about strategies to shift from a media-focused organization to a user-focused company. Case studies and academic research will explain the opportunities and challenges associated with the shift in focus.

For additional information, visit:

http://www.newsplex.org/program/training_summit4.shtml

ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH CONFERENCE

"Expanding Convergence: Media Use in a Changing Information Environment"
College of Mass Communications and Information Studies
University of South Carolina
Columbia, South Carolina, U.S.A.
6-8 November 2003

The rapidly evolving media landscape is producing new patterns of media use that are having profound implications on the competitive media landscape, the daily operation of media organizations, and our understanding of the theoretical forces that underlie media use. The purpose of this conference is to provide a scholarly forum for understanding these evolving patterns of media use from a variety of perspectives ranging from the theoretical to the practical.

For additional information, visit:

<http://newsplex.sc.edu/cfps.html>

ONLINE NEWS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

Chicago and Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A.
14-15 November 2003

This conference will bring together hundreds of online journalists for two

days of professional networking and focused discussion of issues critical to the digital news industry

A banquet and presentation of the 4th Annual Online Journalism Awards will culminate the ONA conference. The awards will be presented to reporters, editors, photographers, designers, producers and news outlets that have demonstrated excellence in online journalism in the past year. Attendees will have the opportunity to question award honorees during the annual "Best of the Best" program.

For additional information, visit:

<http://www.journalists.org/Programs/Conferences.htm>

BROADCAST EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

49th Annual Convention & Exhibition
2nd Annual Festival of Media Arts
Las Vegas, Nevada, U.S.A.
16-18 April 2004
Call for Papers closes 8 August 2003

The BEA2004 Convention theme is Bold Vision, Fresh Thinking: Untangling Media's Gordian Knot. The theme lends itself well to examining new approaches to the vexing issues of media's intricate societal entanglements. Each panel should strive to seriously think about, challenge, and/or discuss the issues that arise from emerging technologies, changing regulatory policies and increasing media consolidation-and to do so in daring and innovative ways. The theme is intended as a focus for the convention, but does not imply that convention sessions must conform.

For additional information, visit:

<http://www.beaweb.org/bea2004/callprop.html>

***** ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEWSPLEX AFFILIATE PROFILES

Each edition of The Convergence Newsletter will include at least one Newsplex Affiliate Profile. The purpose of including these profiles is to increase awareness of the manner in which the study and practice of convergent journalism has been integrated into the curriculum.

To facilitate comparisons across schools, we offer the following, general outline that should be followed in preparing a profile of your curriculum:

1. Narrative description
 - a. Overview of program
 - b. How convergence is addressed in curriculum
 - c. How new media are studied in curriculum
2. Other descriptions
 - a. Curriculum
 - b. Sequences
3. Courses
4. Faculty
 - a. Number
 - b. Names and background of key faculty
5. Degrees Offered
6. Facilities and Student-Produced Media
 - a. Print
 - b. Broadcast
 - c. Online
7. Funding
8. Other notes

We encourage all programs that offer courses in convergent journalism to submit a profile to The Convergence Newsletter editor convergence-editor@gwm.sc.edu. In addition to publishing these descriptions in future editions of The Convergence Newsletter, we will post them on the Newsplex Academic Web site: <http://newsplex.sc.edu/>

RELATED LINKS

For information about our Academic Affiliates, visit:
<http://www.newsplex.org/affiliates.shtml>

Newsplex at the University of South Carolina Web Site:
<http://newsplex.sc.edu/>

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