

Friday—Panel 4: Online News status

Has it become indispensable?

Panelists:

Charlotte-Anne Lucas, content director, MySanAntonio.com (moderator and presenter)

Doug Feaver, executive editor of WashingtonPost.com, and president of Online News Association

Steve Klein, coordinator of the electronic journalism program, George Mason University

Steve Outing, Senior Editor Poynter Institute and columnist, Editor & Publisher magazine

CHARLOTTE-ANNE LUCAS: I am Charlotte-Anne Lucas. I am a relatively new content director at MySanAntonio.com...thrilled to be here today, although the lights are a bit much. Ok, thank you, thank you. I can't see anything that way. I've been a journalist for a long time, goodness since manual typewriters and I remember when I made the decision to leave newspapers and go to the web and I was feeling fairly sanctimonious about it in 1999 figuring that newspapers would pretty quickly become obsolete and the web was the future. I left at that point to go to the TheStreet.com in the words of TheStreet.com founder, Jim Kramer, (inaudible). I should have known it probably when I left the building a week before I actually went to the ?.com.

I was leaving the newspaper building in San Antonio and the Spurs had just won the 1999 NBA championship. All of us editors obviously helped put it out. It was 3 o'clock in the morning and I was walking out and the crowds in downtown San Antonio, very well behaved crowds, we do the PG-version of celebration, were driving around downtown and it was clear that even if they had seen the game on television, heard the game on the radio, or actually been at the game it wasn't, that victory was not real, until they were holding a newspaper that said, "Spurs Champs" in their hands.

And that was, they needed to have that. They came down to the paper that night and said, "we want them." Anyway, that was, in Internet years, a long time ago and the question is now whether the web has become indispensable or online journalism has become indispensable. One little thing from historic numbers that I could see is that when the Spurs were playing that game in 1999 the traffic numbers at MySanAntonio were basically flat. They didn't show any indication that people were going to the web for information on it, so.

When I left San Antonio, when I left the Express News, I actually never left San Antonio-went to work for the ?.com in San Antonio-the Express News was abandoning its business model for the web, which was to charge people subscriptions. I still think that model has some merit. Obviously, it works for the Wall Street Journal. And meanwhile the ?.com was going for a model that was not entirely unlike American Express, where the free version is ?.com is sort of the green card, it's sort of the billboard for the site and then the next higher up level people pay \$299 a year for and then for a piece, the level written by all finance professionals, \$2200 a year. And they even have some exclusive newsletters that cost as much as \$25,000 a year.

And so I would say since their last quarter of last year they turned a profit. They're working that model rather well. When, if dollars and cents is how you measure the indispensability, I mean, the fact that people are willing to pay that much is, pretty much proves the point. But looking at those numbers without the dollar signs, going into right before the

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September 11 attacks, the .com's numbers were somewhere around 800,000 unique users a week. You know, lazy summer, coming off the summer poof – Labor Day is usually a big spike for them.

On the day of the attacks one of my columnists that I just been instant messaging with was killed on the 94th floor of the North Tower, and obviously our offices at 14 Wall Street were evacuated as were all of our subscribers who made their way home over the course of what 6,7,9 hours. So traffic on the site went down because the site was primarily a work place – you know, people got onto the site from their jobs. The traffic on the site went down as they went home, but right after that TSC's usage went up to 1.5 million unique users per week in the days following it, which indicates to me how indispensable that community of online journalists and subscribers, how indispensable the site was, to those people who were then signing onto it from home.

Obviously, that's history and it was a big day for all media. I can't say, gee whiz that proves that it was, that online journalism is, indispensable and I think we all know that big news events, now we can always see them in our traffic numbers.

San Antonio came under phenomenal floods a couple years ago. The numbers spiked. And last year – oh yeah, the Spurs-the championship again, and the numbers were off the charts. And yeah, they're in the playoffs – ah well – page use. But, one of the things that, one of the ways we see it, obviously, is those news events.

We saw it on that Sunday morning that Saddam Hussein was captured and I was lucky enough to have one of my strongest editors on. We work 24/7 – a meager seven editors, and she called me at 4:30 in the morning, 4:15 I guess actually, San Antonio time and said you might want to put on a pot of coffee, they've caught Saddam and by 4:31-well, after I roused the newspaper managing editor and assistant managing editor for an email I had roused the newspapers of military reporter who was in Baghdad and got a report from him at least what six hours before he filed to the paper.

And because we are a true convergence site we had, we're half owned by Hearst, which owns the San Antonio Express News and half owned by **Belo**, which owns the local CBS affiliate ?. We had not only his report up, but we had also all the CBS videos up in conjunction with it and by, I don't know, 8:30 a.m. our time had the complete package and were almost kicking back at that point when the newspaper came to us and said, "Would you put a tip up saying we're running an extra addition this afternoon?" I was like, "been there."

We got hammered that morning by page views, by people who really wanted to see it, particularly since CBS went back to do some sports programming at noon so they came to our site to see the video clips. But we still didn't get as many page views as the Spurs stories did that day, so we try.

The, recently I got another good indication of how indispensable I think online journalism has become. We got, I got an email from members of the 217th Transportation Company, it's an Army Reserve Unit that had shipped out of San Antonio to Iraq more than a year ago and the guy sent in a, hit that feedback button and said, "Hey, we think we're about to be redeployed home again and we're really hoping to make it home for Fiesta," which is our PG Mardi Gras that actually starts today.

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And they said, "We can't find a place to send you photos but we painted the side of our truck and it says - 'Hoping To Make It Home For Fiesta,'" and I said, send me the emails, you know, I mean send me your photos.

So the next morning they sent three photos, two of the truck and one of something else, and they've been over there a year. Two hours later three more photos show up and two hours later three more photos show up and I tell them, ok, we're going to make a slideshow. Well, in the last one, in the last of their emails they said, "Gotta hop - we're being mortared." So we put together a fabulous slideshow with all of their pictures and with their telling their story and put it on our special section for Fiesta with their little trucks, well actually huge truck that says, "Hoping To Make It Home For Fiesta."

And the next morning, I have to read you, I cross my fingers saying, "please respond, please" you know, "please, get back to me that you lived." The next morning the sergeant who had sent this to me said, he said, "thanks so much," he said, "since conditions have gotten better over here we get to check MySanAntonio.com for the news back home in San Antonio pretty often." He said, "someone in my unit came up to me this morning and told me they saw pics on the website and I was like 'wow, that was fast.' So here I am checking my email and I'm just now reading your reply."

So here are these guys that have been over there for a year who are checking into the website as an indispensable part of their home. And fabulously, we're able to correspond with them, and even though the Express News military reporter is back in San Antonio, these guys have agreed to shoot pictures all the way home. Hopefully they'll show up toward the end of next week and we'll have our own foreign correspondent's report and I would love to see more of that.

But I think it, in many respects, proves that it, the web, or online journalism is indispensable. On the other hand, the guy's first emails to us indicated that they were having family members mail them copies of the newspaper too. So, a little of this and a little of that.

The other panelists who are on today with me have much bigger numbers and a much more, I think, a much broader view of what's going on and whether we really are indispensable. The next person to present on this is Steve Klein, who is the coordinator of the Electronic Journalism Program at George Mason.

STEVE KLEIN: The tough thing about going at the end of the day is, first of all, I've heard all your good ideas and I'm sitting here taking notes wildly saying "say this, don't say that, try this, don't try that." I've got arrows and circles all over the place. Also, we're kind of tired so I didn't want to dumb down my presentation but I did want it to be, I wanted it to be fun.

Secondly, I don't want to go any further without thanking Rosental for inviting me back to Austin where I spent a very happy year and a half, not all at one time, really about one week a month, working down the road on Mopac at DrCoop.com, where we did some very - very, very good work and spent about \$125 million dollars very, very quickly. Not all of which I got. Yeah, I know it's one of the reasons we went out of business as quick as we did. But I got enough out of it so that I could afford to teach, which I'm doing now.

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So, I also want to thank Rosental because this is the fifth year of this symposium and I spoke at an earlier one and I've seen what he's done year to year and I think what he's doing to further internationalize this symposium and spread the message amongst ourselves and to help others see what we are doing all over the world is truly remarkable. So, I just want to thank Rosental for what he does.

I really only want to make a couple points and I hope I don't take too long to do them. The two points revolve – really I was kind of fascinated by the, just by the word indispensable, and by the way Nam Thai at George Mason University helped me with the video portion of this program. He's probably watching on the, he's probably watching right now, so I wanted to make sure that I mentioned that.

I figure I might as well define indispensable. It's really one of those of words that doesn't leave a lot to the imagination. It means absolutely necessary, essential or requisite. So, you know, I asked myself all throughout putting this together, you know, is this truly an indispensable medium right now. And secondly it also means incapable of being disregarded or neglected. Is it an indispensable source of news?

Well, while I was on the plane last night flying from Dulles to Dallas to Austin and not being wired – and I choose not to be wired too much when I travel. I figure it will catch up with me. It usually does and it's usually at this point of the semester the students that I don't necessarily want to catch up with me, but who are in a big rush to catch up with me.

I was just absolutely dying, cause I'm a huge Detroit Red Wing fan and they were in a key point in their series with Nashville and so I kinda found out how they were doing the old fashioned way. As soon as they told us we could turn on our cell phones I called my wife and I forced her to turn on the game on ESPN and give me the score and thank god the Red Wings were winning 4 to 1 and I could relax and feel good for a couple days.

Ok. So are we indispensable? In 1995 I had been a print journalist most of my career, really about 25 – close to 30 years. I had been at the Lansing State Journal; I came to USA Today where I joined Gary Kebbel who was Deputy News Editor. I was College Sports Editor, became Sports Editor and I think, Gary can disagree with me if he cares to, I think we thought we were going to become indispensable and we were going to become the new way, we were going to replace newspapers. This was going to happen very fast and if not indispensable, we were inevitable.

I think one of the things that we found out - that downstairs they were kind of afraid of us. Downstairs being the newspaper. They were kind of afraid that we might be inevitable and they weren't quite ready for us to become indispensable, so we met with a certain degree of resistance, which to this day unfortunately still exists and makes it difficult for us to become as indispensable as we might care to be.

When I walk around the George Mason campus and I think, "Well what's indispensable?" Cell phones are indispensable. All my students around them, they're doing one of two things: They're walking around; everybody's got a phone in their ear, even if they're walking with somebody. They're walking, talking to the person they're with and they're talking on their telephone. So you to listen on everybody's conversations.

And we have to actually put in our syllabi the other instructors here, Clyde you probably have to do this too, you know, we just have to absolutely forbid them to have their cell

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phones on because I get easily thrown off if anybody's cell phone goes off. Yeah, I know and I made sure – mine is loud and it plays an annoying song to differentiate itself from the other cell phones. You know I get distracted very, very easily so if a cell phone goes off I mean it's like god knows what I'd end up talking – I even, sometimes I think forget who I am. So, my students know this – they think it's very funny. Sometimes I think they leave their cell phones on just to distract me.

The other indispensable form of media that every student brings to campus is not necessarily an ipod, only the wealthier or the more fortunate have an ipod, but they've all got something plugged onto their ears, you know, and they're just kind of moving and groovin' and having a good time and sometimes I think kind of I'm left out. I wonder if they're all listening to the same thing, but they're all kind of moving to their own groove so that's – I – this is terrible Gary. My homepage, which should be USA Today.com out of old habits – actually my homepage has been MSNBC for a long time. I just find it works very, very well for me.

Question is does it work very, very well – this will be my second point – does it work very, very well for my audience? I thought I should stick to what I know and what I know are my students and I should stick to what I am, which is a teacher. But I don't just teach, I learn. I learn everyday from the students and they taught me a great deal in terms of how I was going to go about giving this presentation and what it was I thought I could offer.

So has online indispensable? I think despite my 1995 dreams and Gary's 1995 dreams, not quite yet. We're not there. I mean it probably was indispensable to me last night on that plane wondering how the Red Wings were doing, but it wasn't there for me. Maybe it could have but it wasn't, and I would go beyond that to say until it becomes ubiquitous, not until it becomes so easy to access that it become really transparent. That you just can't avoid it – that it's there for you when you want it, how you want it. It just surrounds you like surround sound.

So, I want to show a scene that some of you may be familiar with from the movie "Minority Report." So this is where I have to have, I have to switch here, and I may need Amy to do this or I might not, let's see. How does a medium become indispensable, yada yada. Let's see how this plays...

Movie plays

There we go, sorry, trying to be seamless. I like mouses more than these touch pads. Ok, so when was the last time that a medium became clearly indispensable? And I would say that, and the second question that I'm going to ask is so what news sites, what websites are students accessing, how are they accessing news, ok.

We've seen some wonderful presentations here today and you know some of the stuff that Michael showed us, I use that stuff all the time, I love it. But are my students using it? Is, are future audience using it? Are we preparing them? You know, they're good with the technology but is that what they want? I like Gary's question a lot. He said that you know who are we doing this for. Not why are we doing this. I understand why we're doing this. We're journalists and we push the envelope and we want to present news as, in the best way we possibly can, but who are we doing this for, and I think this is something we have to keep in mind all the time as we're doing what we do at the places we do them.

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I give a popular culture quiz at the start of all my classes, ok. And I put up 10 pictures – I put the names underneath them, ok. Fred Durst and John Ashcroft – they all know who **Fred Durst** was. I had no idea who Fred Durst was until - It's Limp Bizcuit or something, I've never heard anything by **Limp Bizcuit** – I'm sorry, I guess I need one of those headsets so that I know what it is you folks are listening to.

Or John Ashcroft. My students don't know to the degree they should know, who John Ashcroft is. And I can't think of anybody in America today that you better know who is than John Ashcroft. They just don't know who he is. A lot of them think he's Donald Rumsfeld or vice versa if they have any, any clue at all. And maybe I'm just at the wrong university – I don't think so. But a lot of them don't know. Paris Hilton or **Hamad Karzai** – everybody knows who Paris Hilton is, ok, everybody – 100% on that one. Hamad Karzai, unbelievable answers I got on that one, ok.

You can do all the wonderful, you can do a whole Big Picture on him Michael, ok, and I, I still don't know if I can get the horse to the water, ok. I mean, you'll do a wonderful job, but will they take in it? They all seem to know who Hilary Clinton is. She seems to be a figure that both transcends popular culture, and maybe something they should know. Popular culture my students know – 100%, ok.

I want to go back again, because I've actually skipped the clips I wanted to show you on 'when was the last time that a medium became indispensable.' And this one has started a little bit but I'm not going to rewind it. This is from the program, "JFK Breaking the News." Did anybody see that on PBS? Very nice program about when television became an indispensable medium and – I'm sorry – in 1963.

Movie plays.

(Inaudible) became an indispensable medium. So the question to ask yourself is are we at that point now with online journalism.

Movie plays.

(Inaudible) ...for online journalism with online news, ok. And I'll come back to this in a minute. Hopefully that stopped that. Good. I'm going to go right back to it. I wanted to insert those into slides and Nam told me, he said it was just to "hinky" so I didn't do it.

Where are my students getting news? My more sophisticated ones know what the vocabulary is a problem but they know what Dennis Miller said yesterday on CNBC. They know what Jon Stewart said. They know news with a laugh, with a joke. In other words, it's kind of like cough medicine that goes down easily. It depends how you present it to them, but if you give it to them with a laugh they'll swallow it. So, last time I'm going to go back to ? the videotape here. Just a couple short clips here from this.

Movie plays.

They don't know this stuff but when they go to tell me what happened in the news they get the facts wrong.

Movie plays.

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I'm going to run through these very fast now. Young people are the hardest audience to reach, the hardest to reach segment of the political news audience. This is according to research that came out from the Pew Research Center for People and the Press. And again, how many students are still in the room? I think this is ok. You are the better students, ok, I'm not talking down to you, ok. I mean, you're here in this room, but how many students go to the University of Texas – not all of them, many of them, chose not to be in this room for whatever reason. So, again, I'm not saying that you aren't news sophisticated – many of you are, but most of you aren't, ok.

And just a couple facts, which you pretty much read for yourself about how students take in some of this information. This one I found very interesting. One out of every two young people say they sometimes learn about the campaign from comedy shows, which is a much higher rate than older Americans. For these young people they're learning something new, a lot of them, they didn't get it from Brokaw. They didn't get it from Jennings. They didn't get it from Dan Rather. They got it from Jon Stewart. His facts are pretty straight. It's just the way he's delivering the facts and that seems to go down pretty easy for them.

So, you know, is online news indispensable? You know, is Dan Rather, who's been pretty indispensable in his medium, been pretty indispensable since 1963? You know, are we? I don't think we're here yet and I think that little ? on the face kinda matches...

End of tape.

STEVE KLEIN (Cont.): We can get there. I agree with Naka. We're getting there. We will get there, so. Let me get out of the way here.

CHARLOTTE-ANNE LUCAS: ...From the web, Steve Outing, whose official title is, boy this is a long one, Senior Editor Poynter Institute and columnist, Editor & Publisher magazine, besides that being an all around friendly guy.

STEVE OUTING: I am Steve Outing and currently working for Poynter Institute and I've been writing for Editor & Publisher for quite a few years now. Whoa, what happened, missing a slide. I'm sorry – this is very strange, one of my slides disappeared. But at any rate, I've been in the online news business now for about 10 years. In fact, in December was my 10th anniversary. I left the print world in December of '93 and so, anyways, I thought it might be just a little bit fun to look back a little bit and just to see how far we've come.

I do kind of agree with Steve that maybe we're not quite indispensable yet but certainly, partly. And certainly we've come a long way since we started out. And actually the slide that's not showing up, it's strange, I have this cartoon that's been sitting in my files for a long time. It was printed in 1995 in the NP and it shows this online guy sitting at this desk underneath some stairs, a tiny little cubby hole, and a couple of print people with smug looks on their faces and he's saying, "Don't get too smug – one of these days we may be trading offices." And that's kind of what it was like when I first started out in this business. Now, I kind of feel like I was, I wasn't quite here at the birth of this thing, but at the very beginning.

So anyways, I thought I'd – one of the first things that I did when I, after leaving print, was wrote a research report for Jupiter Communication – interviewed dozens of newspapers about what they were doing online, and I blew the dust off of that the copy that I have

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and went back and looked at some of the numbers, which are pretty shockingly low by today's standards.

Back then, people were still doing BBS's – bolt board services. Here's one – the Arizona Republic was doing one, it was a free home buying BBS that you had to sign up, go for and it had a whopping 3,000 users a month. Couple of others – Fort Worth Star Telegram is one of the oldest ones. It had 4,400 people paying, I forget how much a month. Proprietary online services at the time were certainly the, had the most traffic, the New York Times on AOL was getting a whopping 400,000 visits, your page views a month.

I just want to breeze through these. I just thought it might be interesting to show you where we've been 10 years ago when my hair was not gray. And here's some early, here are the websites – the San Francisco Examiner was getting all of 65,000 hits and hits were, if you remember, not a page view, a hit was, you know, an element on a page, so one page was more than one hit. So, really miniscule.

Some of this stuff I'll breeze through really fast because we've probably heard some of this today, but here in the U.S. Internet use now is at 63% of just about everybody. More than half of those people, so about 31-32% of the people go online in this country every single day. 65% of Internet users have purchased online - pretty significant statistic.

This is just something I plucked off the web earlier this week cause I thought was fairly interesting showing the numbers are fairly consistent from baby boomers, people from 38-56 versus the younger people from 18 up to their mid-30's. Numbers are fairly consistent, which I thought was a fairly promising figure.

Let's see here. Anyway, what I thought I would do is just – I went and grabbed some current stats from a couple of major sites, and it's hard to compare websites today with legacy media, but it's a bit of apple and oranges comparison, but we can do a little bit.

MSNBC.com I think is one of the more interesting ones because we can somewhat compare to the cable channel. And so I asked them for some numbers this week and right now they're getting between 4 and 5 million unique visitors each day. Pretty nice number. When they have a big story that's often at a peak at 9 or 10 million. Michael might have more up to date numbers. They're giving me the figures of 21.6 million unique visitors per month – that was in February and that represents about a 22% growth in the last year. And typically they're the #1 or #2 website, depending on the month. Sometimes they go back and forth with CNN.com.

So, kind of interesting then to compare that with the cable channel. This is the overall MSNBC – cable is the – I think the last figures I could find, looks like about a year ago, it was ranked as the #35 cable network versus, you're looking at the #1 or the #2 website in terms of audience. CNN, I mean MSNBC cable, typically has around 318,000 visitors on average at any one time during more popular shows. I tried to find some numbers for some of the more popular MSNBC cable shows. Sometimes it will boost up to maybe 7 or 800,000 for something really hot. The Condalesa Rice testimony – I saw a number for, they had about 470,000 viewers on that. So those web numbers look pretty nice.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: It's totally apples and oranges because that 318,000 viewers on cable is a 15 minute average. It's a snapshot. It's like simultaneous users on a website and obviously the 4-5 million unique users a day is a cumulative number. So at any given time our audience is actually probably smaller than that 318,000 users, but over the

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course of a day we accumulate many more users. I don't know what the cumulative number ? we don't typically track that. The other thing is just to throw out that on the website side the 4-5 million unique users a day ? internal measure at the 21.6 million unique users is a ? number. And again, I think our Nielson number for unique visitors a day is about half that 4-5 million and our internal number for ? is about ?.

STEVE OUTING: Ok. Thank you. So anyways, the numbers that Michael will let me get away with – that's still fairly, that's still pretty substantial but the figure that I find pretty disturbing and its MSNBC.com and every other site is the amount of time that a typical user spends in an entire month. This 19 minutes – for the average visitor in the month of February 2004 was from MSNBC.com. The folks gave me the figure this week. That's fairly typical. I think one of the higher numbers that I've found, I'll show that in another slide, is up to about 45 minutes in an entire month for NewYorkTimes.com. So, you know, and this is the #1 and #2 website in the country. So. That's a number that definitely concerns me.

Here's the latest stats from NewYorkTimes.com. So, where MSNBC was reporting with internal numbers 4-5 million a day, New York Times, which is required registration site, is reporting 1.5 million total daily visitors worldwide. Monthly, about 13.4 million and 1.6 million of those on a typical month are from the New York market. So, 424 million page views worldwide and 77 million for the New York market.

And again, I just wanted to show something up there, just to kinda show the growth, but I mean I recognize these are all apples and oranges comparisons. But the print addition of the New York Times right now is about, daily, about 1.1 million circulation. Of course, readership is more than one reader per print copy so it's actually a little bit larger than that. But what's interesting is the websites, that figure of 1.5 million total daily visitors worldwide, represents about 3% growth over a year ago. Whereas, you look at the print addition growth - it was about .5% in circulation.

And in terms of time spent on the NewYorkTimes.com, again, 45 minutes a month per visitor, which is a pretty decent number. And typical user will have looked at about 40 page views per month. Now, then you look at the Readership Institute numbers about print readership – these numbers of course are all over the map – but the largest chunk of newspaper readers, devoted newspaper readers, spend between 15 and 30 minutes a day on the site.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Could you say that again - on the site or on the paper?

STEVE OUTING: This is on the paper. I was just trying, I just grabbed some quick print readership numbers to try to put it in comparison that the web is still, we're still pretty far behind in terms of how much time people spend on this, so there's one measure that I would hope that we could improve.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Do you have, on the 45 minute ? Do you have data on the how many ?

STEVE OUTING: Yeah, unfortunately I don't have that number. I'm going to wonder if anybody from the NewYorkTimes.com here would have that. (inaudible) Yeah, I didn't have that. I've got the 40 page views per month, so you can surmise that it's once or twice a week. Those are the type of numbers that I typically hear.

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AUDIENCE QUESTION: I think, I don't remember, but I think the New York Times is in the 7-10 times a month range, something like that. I think, but I'm not sure.

STEVE OUTING: So, anyway, I think an interesting discussion would be to figure out what we can do to maybe get some of those numbers up and I have few ideas on that. I think one area where NewYorkTimes.com certainly is, or New York Times digital, certainly is indispensable to the New York Times company. These are the latest, the latest figures from March 2004. Pardon? – First quarter, sorry. This is why I didn't go into broadcasting.

So New York Times digital revenues were 6.8 million versus the newspaper group at 92 million. So digital actually represents about 7.4% of the newspaper groups revenues. So compared to, let me go on the next thing.

Well I think one indicator to follow up on that point is just how, just since the web is growing while print still stays relatively flat. And, again, I think it's fairly, certainly indispensable to the corporation.

I just thought I'd talk a little bit about Lawrence – the Ljworld.com, which is the Lawrence Journal World in Kansas, which is a college town. And it's the newspaper that has really taken the Internet extremely seriously, much more so than, you know, any other paper with a circulation of 22,000. It's a converged operation. They have a local cable news operation, which is the bulk of their, bulk of their money comes from that. And three websites, and one that I think is particularly worth looking at is Kusports.com.

And got some numbers from them this week. Right now they're averaging around 13 million page views a month, and in terms of how many people that represents the numbers are kind of squishy. Generally the count individual IP's that come in and so the problem is that anybody that comes in from the University of Kansas is represented as one unique IP. So, I think it's a very squishy number but we can possibly say that we might have as many as 100,000 users coming in on a typical month, looking at Kusports.com. That's a number I don't think they particularly want to be quoted on but that's about the best we could do. And there's no way that the newspaper has that many readers.

But, another really important website for this newspaper is Lawrence.com, which is a city entertainment site. And it's really oriented toward young people, from teenagers up to about age 25. And very few readers of Lawrence.com are over 25 and they go with young as age 14. Interesting little tidbit – it's down there at the bottom. You probably can't see it because of the table is that there was a, they recently had advertising beer buy and the company wanted only online. Typically they're selling print and online together but now they're starting to get advertisers coming in and asking for pure online buys.

As I mentioned web revenues for these guys in Kansas – they're still dwarfed by the cable news operation, followed by the newspaper – they made only \$700,000 a year in revenues last year. But that was with absolutely no dedicated sales people and this year they're going to hire, they have it in the budget to hire, two full time web sales people. So that should be interesting, to see what happens there.

Rob Curley is the New Media Director there and the sites are really, really important to the company long term because this is a small paper where the trucks only go out about 20 miles and the cable wires only go to Lawrence and through sites like Kusports.com then they can actually reach the entire state. And they're doing that and they're really

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increasing their audience. The newspaper only reaches about 34 miles and the websites reach through the entire state. As well as to, you know, with Kusports it's also Kansas alumni, whatnot.

So, are we indispensable yet? Yeah, I certainly say that some sites are. Obviously, when there's a huge story we all go immediately online and. But I'd say the majority of sites are not. We're certainly having a lot of developments within the industry where we're getting there. The WashingtonPost.com's continuous news desk, which Doug will I'm sure talk about a little bit. Having that available through the day where to get into an office where TV can't reach. I fully think that's starting to make us more indispensable. And we're getting news out there as fast as television.

I worry that in most cases, local newspaper sites just aren't quite there yet and local television sites even less so. So just what can we do to make our sites a little bit more indispensable and maybe get those numbers up, get people visiting more times per month and spending a little bit more time here?

I guess we talked about this all day but I totally agree that we want more original or web original multimedia interactive content. I absolutely believe that that will make a big difference. You know, I do worry that, I mean MSNBC.com, of course, has probably been doing more multimedia than anybody for a long time and still their monthly numbers are still not great, so I wonder if maybe we're still fairly early on and we don't know exactly how yet to create the best multimedia.

And actually tomorrow morning I have to speak again about this I-track. The main reason I was coming down here was to talk about this I-tracking project that we're doing at Warner and one of the things, one of the parts of that project that we're doing, is looking at how people interact with multimedia and looking at how, looking at comprehension of text versus multimedia. So, when we have probably another month until we release all of those results but I hope that, and subsequent research might help us learn to do multimedia a little bit better, to make it even more engaging and make the comprehension a little bit better.

I guess I would just love to see a little bit more of the 'out there' stuff on traditional media websites. And recently I've become a fan of web log called **wonquet**, which is part of **nicadenten's** growing web log company. And this is a writer, fairly creative writer, who is in D.C. and is kind of a gossip, gossip column and political, cultural observations about D.C. It's the type of thing you probably never find on the NewYorkTimes.com or WashingtonPost.com because there's, it's profane, it's some of, a lot of the humor is maybe a little bit over the line and but it's really engaging writing. I encourage you to go take a look at it. Really engaging writing and is developing quite a loyal following.

Morford is a San Francisco Chronicle SFGate.com columnist whose another person who really kind of crosses the line a lot, and he's one of these writers who people love him or hate him. He's got a lot of enemies. But he's one of the biggest draws on SFGate.com and I really feel like, get more people like that and I really think that will help our cause. Especially with some of those folks that Steve was just talking about. I think they need to find more stuff like **Wonket** and **Morford** online if we hope to attract them to our newspaper, television websites.

Citizen, participatory journalism...jury is still out on that. We can look at South Korea where there's allmynews.com has been wildly successful. It's got, I forget the exact

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numbers, several, many thousands of citizen reporters. Somebody knew the number? 26,000, ok. You know I don't know where that's going to go but I really definitely love the idea of getting people more involved.

When I first got into the Internet it was through copyserve?, it was through discussion forum – that was my first introduction to the Internet. And I still remember how powerful that was and at that time, when I first got into it, getting news online wasn't even a blip on anybody's radar screen and I surely think that continues today. And what Michael was talking about, with getting, allowing people to leave their mark on the big picture whenever they see it - I think more of that will help our cause.

And then, I'll skip the next one because we talked about registration earlier, about we have to be indispensable to advertisers and what was talked about earlier today with all the user registration and really fine tuning the targeting. I really think that will help a lot.

And one last point was just about what Google and Yahoo were doing. I think Peter Zollman may have mentioned a little bit about local search and I know that's the next big thing that I really want to start looking into myself. Google has been indispensable for a long time and it keeps becoming more indispensable in more and more areas and I think local searches is the next big thing.

So this graphic is just – Yahoo Maps, which has recently introduced this new feature, which is very cool. You type in an address – I typed my home address in there - and over on the right you can click on “food and dining” and find a map of all the pizza restaurants, Italian restaurants and whatnot. And then you just put a mouse over and it will pop up and then there will be a link to maybe a restaurant website with a menu, driving directions. All sorts of stuff.

What I'm kind of worried about is that this technology for local search is going to be difficult and expensive and we're a little bit, and that the Google's and the Yahoo's of the world are just going to take off with this stuff. And I really hope that the newspaper industry can maybe learn some lessons from the past and try, try and offer something comparable and not just let Google take this over. And I pretty better stop, so.

End of Tape.

DOUG FEAVER: I kept out of my biography in your program the fact that I'm a University of Oklahoma graduate. Considering all the noise we've been hearing about 'Hook 'em Horns' and that kind of obnoxious stuff, I just thought I would point to the most recent results of the Oklahoma/Texas football games, for those of you in the room who are aware of them, and let it be known that Big Bowl was obviously extremely represented in this room today. That's great. I love being the last speaker on the last panel of the day. I think it's pretty terrific. Can we have everybody please stand up, just stand up for a minute. Thank you very much. All right a little bit of this, yeah, all right good. Now we can go on from here. As soon as uh, we're almost ready, you're all right, go ahead.

I've also, cause I don't have this here but I'm gonna suggest if – the mic – I need to stand by the mic. That's an excellent suggestion. I'm gonna suggest on the entire indispensable question, I've got a slide here – what, we're getting, it's going away by the minute. ...That if JFK's assassination was the moment that made television indispensable, I would suggest that 9/11 may be the moment that made Internet news indispensable. Certainly, the breaking component of it and the other, in terms of what happened to all of us websites with some sort of International reach that day, in terms of frankly just astounding

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traffic, that in some cases we haven't matched since on a given story, suggested the power of the medium that could reach people at work in ways that nothing else can.

And it's just sort of playing of that, I think that we have all seen, and as Bill Grueskin pointed out this morning here, we have here's a good story that grabs more audience for one particular thing, that kinda happens at the right time – you don't lose all the audience that you did. So there's a peak, it drops, you know, sometimes it drops like a stone. But it doesn't drop all the way back down to where it was. And that's been the history of certainly the Times, certainly of our site, certainly of the Journal, certainly of the other major news sites. And I'm quite confident that's the history of the strong local sites that are covering your communities and covering them well and going from there. How we doing here Amy? ("Good.") All right. Ok good.

So the whole question of, and the other point I want to pick up on, I'm just sort of grabbing from things that were said today. We've heard several versions of this today. I think the issue of indispensability also has to, is all tied up in the issue of, presentation on the web, and I don't think we've solved that problem yet. I think that whole question, we're, the whole question of do we have – is our enterprise journalism that was, that Roger pointed out so – is our enterprise journalism the stuff that makes great newspapers important, important beyond their ability just to deliver the same thing that you could just read in the AP or that you could see on the evening news, that you could catch on the CNN headline report. That that wonderful stuff has not found its way onto the Web yet in ways that are readily understood, that are readily navigable. And that whoever figures that one out first is going to be the big winner. Right now we've got a lot of back and forth, so I've – those are the major points that I want to come away –

Now, I'm gonna, once we get goin here, run some slides on some – that I grabbed from a marketing department. You'll see quickly, this is a journalist trying to deal with the marketing department in terms of how we pull together some data and it is not, I did not run through the design department, so if we get it up it won't be pretty. Gary –

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Well, I'll tell you what. Clyde just said about, you know, the fact of curling up with the newspaper, expecting the newspaper and are you going to do with the website. A personal example is if my morning Washington Post isn't there, for any delivery problem, and it's not on my doorstep when I go out and get it, I immediately then go to the website. And what's happening is, ironically I think, if there is any delivery problem it's teaching me that the website is indispensable. Because the website's always there. And if the paper's not there the moment I want to go get it in the morning, for whatever reason, I, it's not that big of deal anymore because I go the website.

DOUG FEAVER: It's interesting. It's clearly the website, I mean we know from our journalist statistics, that the Washington Post can be two very interesting things. Now, one of them is that the website is taking some audience from the newspaper, some paid subscriptions from the newspaper. On the other hand it is also the source, a huge source of new paid subscriptions for the newspaper. An interesting thing 'cause on every article page of the website there is a "Subscribe to the Post" button, which of course only works on the Washington market. We're not a, we don't have national distribution, unlike the Journal or the Times or USA Today.

But the ? balancing act there between how much, on the business side, how much are we helping and how much are we hurting in terms of the long run. Now one thing that I think, and Peter will certainly talk about this certainly this morning, that very clearly is

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going from the print side to the Internet side is the classified advertising space. I mean, that's very, it's a whole lot easier to search things on the Internet than it is to read pages and pages of agate and try and dig out that apartment you're looking for, that classic car that might be running around in somebody's garage.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Well, and although the economics are different, to me, it's still, it's all the Washington Post. Yeah, so if the paper's not there, I go to the website and it's, it's the Washington Post brand. The whole thing is the Washington Post to me.

DOUG FEAVER: Yeah, I'm glad to hear that. On the other hand, if we're going to succeed as a website we're going to have to do some things. And Steve was making that point. We have to do some things very clearly that are not just in the print or newspaper. We have to take advantage of the medium and we have to take advantage of it big time. And we have, the stuff that Michael was showing and at ? MSNBC, and again, has absolutely led the area, led the world, in terms of the multimedia stuff. We have done a lot of it ourself. We have invested heavily in doing photo galleries, in doing video of our own. I mean, we had our own videographer in both Afghanistan and Iraq. We won a lot of prizes for that stuff. And to the question you asked, Michael, earlier, how much of an audience does it get, there we are. How much of a – all right.

How much of an audience does it get? It's a very good question but we feel we need to be investing it until we can, so we can take advantage of that audience so when we figure out how to solve the underlying presentation issues. Thank you...? Ok, great. Thank you.

Well, all right, as you see I have an exciting opening slide there that says "Indispensable-question mark." You may not be able to see it – that's what it says underneath the table there. Now, this is Neilson net ratings real data for the news category; rolled up, this is everybody. This is Yahoo, this is Google, this is the Times, this is the Post, this is all of the smaller sites around the country and it's unduplicated. So, I mean these are users, unduplicated users, going back to 2001, which of course was the year of 9/11, which is what we were talking about a little bit earlier. So, while it may or may not be indispensable at the end of the day, it darn sure is growing and it's certainly becoming more and more a part of our business.

All right, this is one of the marketing department slides. This is from the Online Publisher's Association. A number of us in this room are members of the Online Publisher's Association, or the bosses of a number of us in this room are members of the Online Publisher's Association. And this is some sample demographics that they have done on Internet Users and it's probably now by gender, and these cute little things that social scientists like to come up with depending on various categories that you're in. But you can see the age breakdown of the sample.

Now this is not the important chart. The important chart is the next one but I want you to see here's the age breakdown of the sample. 18-24 years – 9%. 25-30 years, etc. of the people that were surveyed here.

And now we're breaking into two categories. The way people use the site, or what people think of the site, and how it compares with offline media – newspapers – or whether there's a difference between their use. And, as you can see, when you get to the "faster to find what you were looking for category," online really wins over the "no difference" category or anything else.

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But as you get on down this table – can you see the bottom line – the one that says, “more informative” down at the bottom there. That’s where online is least regarded as useful and, but all of the “no difference” still very high. The offline numbers grow as you go from “faster to what you’re looking for” down to “more informative.”

? various categories more useful, easier to use, playing a more important role in your day. But I’m encouraged by the fact that the online numbers are pretty good all the way across, and the “no difference” numbers are quite good all the way across. Now maybe I’m wrong to be encouraged by that but we would like the online numbers to take a little bit from the “no difference” numbers because that would make our business models look better.

All right, so, rolling all this stuff together, again, as these wonderful people in marketing do, and giving you a nice green bar on the right, a left bar on the left. “We prefer offline:” 45% prefer our website, 55% - a slight majority – prefers online over offline. Yes?

AUDIENCE QUESTION: What’s the sample of people that we’re looking at? Are these print readers or online - ? – so this a sample of online...

DOUG FEAVER: This is a sample of online users but some of them, yeah?

AUDIENCE QUESTION: ...but some of them get the paper ?...

DOUG FEAVER: ...some of them get the paper, right. And this is another one of these things that social scientists come up with, is one of these four square things that I’ve never entirely understood. But you can see that the top two bars – ‘onliners’ and ‘multichannelers’ - are frequent and then... So that runs across the top and then on the bottom you have ‘infrequent dabblers’ and ‘offliners,’ but they’re also ‘frequent offliners’ in the lower right hand corner. We don’t care much about them, all right. But you can see that – ok – that’s, now.

Where am I going from here? This is the wonderful thing you can do with PowerPoint – you can keep clicking on the inner button and more panels start filling it. Ok, ‘onliners.’ Frequent online use, again, the age 18-34 – 40%. That’s a pretty good number. ‘Multichannelers.’ This is online, offline television newspaper, what have you, and all you guys who are ? members have this basic information running around somewhere in your publisher’s offices.

You can just see the numbers as they’re changing. And again this is the ‘frequent users, multichannelers.’ But what this does, in digging into this data, the main take away from this slide, despite the beautiful shading and the colors and all the numbers and everything, is that the online audience skews younger and the print audience doesn’t; or the print audience is certainly skewing older. And we know, again, from our internal numbers that we are losing the young reader, the newspaper is losing young readers to the online. So when I’m saying “we” I’m talking about the Washington Post is losing readers to the online, the WashingtonPost.com is picking them up.

This is an unreadable slide, but the central take away here is that the people use online: Major benefits of online activity = Keep current on news events – “I can do that more easily than I would be able to do that offline.” Again, that’s both the advantage and the Achilles’ heal, the potential Achilles’ heal.

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There's some more on this. Why do you use the Internet? 'Breaking news,' that's 64%. 'Brief overview of world news,' 'world news and developments,' etc. but when you get down in depth analysis the numbers begin to go down.

Now opinions and editorials, I'm actually surprised by that number because the opinions and editorials numbers, that's only 12% on this slide but I know it's a very strong part of the audience to WashingtonPost.com. So that's a national sample that I have some questions about at least if I'm taking what we do internally and spreading it out.

Wide spread sports coverage – there's no question, that's big. I mean, the returning of Joe Gibbs to the Washington Redskins may be the biggest story that we've had short of 9/11 in the last decade, in terms of WashingtonPost.com and its interest.

Now these are slides that I made, and you can tell that they're very high quality and a lot of work went into them. Continuous news – continuous news has become very important to us at WashingtonPost.com. Now let me make it very clear, the term 'continuous news desk' was one I stole directly from the New York Times. Naka, I'm aware of that, all right. They did it first. They called it that first and now. The idea they stole from us because we had something earlier that we called "P.M. Extra," which was our first run at taking advantage of the Post newsroom during the day to get Post writers to contribute to the website on something other than a morning newspaper schedule. Could we come on, let's get these, you know the people that wander in between 10 and 11 o'clock, drink coffee, read the Times, complain about their editors after news meetings and everything they finally, in the middle of the afternoon, and then they go like crazy and then it becomes crisis time and they do four hours of work in 30 minutes late in the day. That doesn't help me while I'm getting killed in the morning by the television networks who have a great story that I'm forced to stick with the AP on. Doesn't help me a bit.

Well, the Continuous News Desk that we have now has five people working full time and getting content to us. The first one comes in at 5 a.m. in the morning and is writing for us – it's **Fred Barbash**, who used to be our London correspondent. Before that was a national editor. We have a couple just terrific people doing that job for us, doing a terrific job, getting us Washington Post quality content all day long. Now they work with the reporters, that the beat reporters on given subjects – the first choice is always that beat reporter do the job, write a story if they're available.

Secondly, that they help. Essentially it's a rewrite desk. I mean, in some ways this is back to the future. It's "get me rewrites sweetheart," I mean, and get it up in a hurry. And we have found this is very successful for us. It has certainly improved our news report and what we can do under the WashingtonPost.com in the day.

All right, use the medium. We've said it. Everybody has said this today, what can we do that takes advantage of what you can do online. And I think Steve made the point particularly well. If I could get to an Internet browser here, I will, yeah, here we go. Yeah. I think that is important.

We have columnists – a very popular one that we launched was Leah Gentry's former colleague and good friend, Dan P?, called "White House Briefing," has been a terrific, very fine audience driver. Dan goes through everything that most of the papers around the country have written about that's gone on in the White House the day before and is putting that on our homepage about 10 a.m. in the morning and it's sort of a White House version of the Romanesko Thing.

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Howie Curtz? Has been our media writer for years, does a column for us five days a week. We have one called "NFL Insider," for the football fans. Maybe the second most important thing in the Washington – if it's not the first most important thing. So, we're covering that strongly.

I think that's enough. We've dealt with technical problems and what have you and let's go from there. All right.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: I have a question for Doug. I happen to notice on your slides that all of your ages, you know, there's nobody after age 54. There are a few of us that over 54...

DOUG FEAVER: - Yeah, and I'm one of them Roger, so yes...

AUDIENCE QUESTION: ...No actually one of the interesting things we've found in talking with retirees that actually retirees seem to be a group that's growing in interest in using online. And they've always been the traditional newspaper readers but we're starting to see a loss of those readers for print as they, you know, they're more mobile; they're going out and doing things. I think it's a mistake to think that it's all of us older people that are not interested in technology and it's only young people. As a professor too at Kent State I find that many of our students are just as perplexed by the technology and anxious about it as many of the older people I know too. So, I think there's a danger there in being too –

DOUG FEAVER: - I actually completely agree with you. I think it is a mistake. I also think it has to be easier to use. Most start with email and I think this is where that, and then you can begin to see where it goes from there. I'm not suggesting that we should ignore that demographic. To the contrary, I think we've got to reach out across the board as general interest news sites, to do things across the board. But in terms of where, where the audience we know we're not getting at all, we're worried about obviously that...

But, you know, all my professional career, which started in newspapers obviously before anybody ever heard of the Internet, we've been worried about the 18-34 group and along about the time that they got married and started having children and being in PTA meetings and worrying about the city council and the service station coming down on the corner and the zoning commission and all that stuff, that became subscribers to the newspaper. I think that's what's changing now. They're not becoming subscribers to the newspaper at the magic age of 34-35. They're very happy with what's happening on the Internet.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: There's a, I think another part of that we haven't really discussed is the education, especially in K-12 where younger people are being more exposed to computers and online and not being exposed to print. I mean, I've had students in our journalism program in my courses who have told me they never had a newspaper in their home, in their lifetime. And, to me, that's very frightening.

Another point I just want to make is the online/offline – I think we need to change that terminology at some point because what you're really talking about is getting your news from a computer monitor. Whether it's online or offline is really not the essential issue, versus a television screen versus ink on paper. I just wanted to make that point.

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One other thing for Steve on Internet usage: Internet usage numbers are always very high, but my understanding is that a large part of that usage is really email. And that the fact that people are going online regularly on the Internet during the day is mostly checking email and interacting, or as my students do, instant messaging – constantly – rather than going to news sites for news and information. But if you had any breakdown on just email or instant messaging, interpersonal type communication, versus going out and seeking information from the websites...

AUDIENCE QUESTION: The numbers that I recited were just for news websites. I mean, I think there is kind of a transition going on because, obviously because, of the Spam issue. Email's perhaps a little bit less popular. Now we have things like **RSS?** Readers coming on and while that's kind of a geeky technology, hopefully that will become more mainstream and that's a way for us to put information out there in a, hopefully, Spam-proof channel. So, we'll probably see some changes in the next couple years.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: I'm all for Spam-proofing.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: ...? info is consistently in the 3rd, 4th, 5th most common web activity. Email, search, news.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Should I ask a question from here? Gary. From someone who emailed the symposium, my question to Gary is that you said that majority of your customers still use dial-up and, therefore, AOL is still considered as a dial-up service. What are you doing as AOL to encourage your members to switch to Broadband, especially considering the fact that AOL Broadband prices are the highest in the industry? What, if anything, does AOL have in store to speed the customers to switch to Broadband?

GARY KEBBEL: AOL News, what we're trying to do is to a, we have partnerships with CNN, we have partnerships with ABC, so we're presenting a lot more video. We're not doing the Big Picture type things. We're not doing the Flash things. But we're audio and video – we're including a lot more audio and a lot more video in the stories – and for big events we're doing a lot more live streaming. So, for instance, the President's press conference was streamed live. We really started the live streaming with the invasion in Iraq. ABC News live was our main partner for streaming live that whole time and, with their cameras up in downtown Baghdad. And, like I said, the main thing is presenting our additional content in, a lot more content, in Broadband from CNN and ABC.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Well I'm trying to synthesize a lot of things that got said here for the last couple days. And just one thought I had that I guess I'd like the panel's thoughts on in general. Last night at dinner I was talking Gary at dinner from AOL about what the most popular hit, or popular content, on AOL has been. And he said one is this and the second one is "weird stuff." I'm not sure if "stuff" is the word he used...

GARY KEBBEL: Yeah, for example, the most popular one is that famous Internet video of the whale blowing up. I guess that got more hits than anything.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: ...And I'm kind of looking at some of the other things going on. Steve Klein talking about what his students use for news. And I look at my own children and when I watch them on the Internet – well, just recently, they're going to all these sites to have the Quizno's Singing Rodents. And students in my classes, they're going to sites, just weird stuff, like jackass kinda daredevil kinda things.

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And some of the examples we saw in here today, of Michael's for example. Let's take some of our Academy Award nominees and dress them. And even Naka, the example he used on child prostitution, it has kind of this lurid angle, it's going to attract some readers. So, I guess what I'm kind of thinking – I'd like your reaction it – is do we have to offer some kind of freak show on these online sites in order to get them into the door, into the theatre I guess, to see some Shakespeare. Or some Ibsen. Is that what it's going to take to attract a younger audience to online content?

AUDIENCE QUESTION: I don't think that's any different from print or from broadcast. It doesn't mean that there isn't plenty of good, solid content mixed in with it. I mean, look at what Michael showed us, ok, maybe that dressing up the stars is a bit of freak show, but look at all the good stuff that it's mixed up in with it...