

2006 – International Symposium on Online Journalism

Day 1, Panel 2: The Integration of Newsrooms: Should Online and Print Newsrooms Merge?

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Panelists:

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George Rodrigue, Vice President and Managing Editor, The Dallas Morning News

PABLO BOCZKOWSKI: Good morning everybody. My name is Pablo Boczkowski and I'm a professor at Northwestern University and chair and presenter in this panel on newsroom integrations. There's only going to be three presenters today because the person from The Daily Telegraph couldn't make it, as was said before. So we're going to take a little bit more time each so that we don't rush, and then we'll have plenty of time for questions. The first presenter will be Len Apcar from The New York Times. Len is editor in chief of NewYorkTimes.com and will enlighten us on the integration of newsrooms-should online and print newsrooms merge?

LEN APCAR: Good morning. I'll answer the question from the beginning. The answer at The New York Times has been "yes" both newsrooms should merge. But I should also tell you that we have no particular secret formula-in fact, I'll give you the formula. We hope it works; we think it works for our needs. I don't necessarily think we have all the answers and time will tell whether we have to adjust, rearrange, or throw the script away and start all over again in trying to integrate a newsroom of well over a thousand reporters, photographers, researchers, copyeditors, clerks, across the whole spectrum-well over a thousand spread in probably a couple dozen countries and involving bureaus and correspondents and people of all levels of technical interest, proficiency, and general awareness.

So that's where we are. This is going to be very, very down to earth. The last couple hours we've spent looking, I think, at very macro problems in the industry. I don't disagree with anything that I heard in terms of general trend lines, and the, kind of, the demographics and whatnot of the industry, and I think the trajectory, if you will, of the industry. I wish I heard some solutions this morning; I wish I heard some optimism. Let's not discard that, let's just put that aside for now and just look at the hard question of integration.

As I said, we decided, yes, we should integrate for a couple of reasons. One is, I think, that integration immediately ignites an explosion of creativity on both sides of the newsroom. And I say both sides because physically almost every newsroom I've

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walked into over the last several years, online and print have been physically separated or isolated. They were not commingled. There are some very notable exceptions: Tampa; Sarasota; Lawrence, Kansas. They've been written and studied for years and years and years-they're fine models. They're different kinds of markets than we had. As I say, I don't necessarily know that what we did is a prescription for anyone else. The second thing is: I don't think that integration could have happened successfully several years ago. Why is that? I think it's because the culture of integration was such, and the culture of the newsroom and the Internet, left you with too much of kind of an imbalance between these two powers. The print newsroom was immense-it had its own folklore, its own rhythms, its own way of doing things. And it could have easily smothered the online newsroom, which was by nature smaller. It was smaller than some departments within the print newsroom-20, 25 online journalists, say in the late '90s. That's smaller than certainly the Metro desk at the times, the Sports desk-any of these. Dispersing them into the print newsroom they would have been lost. They would have had no particular way for them to connect with other online journalists. It probably would have been a failure-I don't know, but that's kind of how I look at it over the last 10 years.

From the business point of view, there was also the concern that the competitive set was different, the technology and the ability to stay up with technology demanded the focus of an editor, deputy editors, a Web publisher, a business side that was completely focused on the Internet space. And I think that there was a lot of merit to that. And probably for first few years it made sense for sales, also, to be separate.

But now we're 10 years into this at The Times, Sales has been integrated-they have physically been integrated. They moved from the Web site's offices into the newspaper sales department just after the first of this year. Now there are sales people who sell both print and online. We have always had, in the newsroom, an integration philosophy. In other words, my producers, who are constantly going back and forth into the print newsroom. By the way, we were physically separated largely because there was not enough space in our building. That was the main reason. I think there also were so cultural and philosophical reasons early on before I got there.

We're building a new building-everybody's in the same building and everybody's in the same newsroom when the building is finished next year. So, with that as a little bit of background, we started integrating last summer and, this gives you just kind of an idea of the kinds of things we've been able to do. I'm not telling you that these are revolutionary, but I am telling you that when we talked about an explosion of creativity and enrichment-this is exactly what you got. Because what had happened, for the three years or so that I was the editor, is you got a lot of Len going around the newsroom to his former print colleagues-and I lived in the print newsroom for 11 years before I became the editor of the Web site-and I would go over there and cut deals. "Let's blog the Cannes film festival"; "let's blog the Lollapalooza music festival." "Could we do a one-minute video every week with the movie critics?" I wasn't the only one doing this-there were deputies in my newsroom, producers, there were some video people. But, basically, there was this, what I call bilateral

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deal-making going on around the newsroom. Which was all fine-the executive editor said that was great and I thought that was part of my mission. My Web publisher thought it was great. And we were creating these things all over the place and doing quite well with them.

But, you would always face the issue of, "well, how much time does the reporter have?" And, "he or she has other things to do." And, "it's not that big a priority for us." And, yada, yada, yada. Well, once the executive editor and the publisher said, "we shall go forth and integrate and we shall produce great things," all those other issues-funny thing in newsrooms, they melt away. God bless newsrooms-they're one of the last bastions of autocracy. Because when the executive editor speaks, it just flows down. And I had gotten to a point where I was telling Bill Keller, the editor of The Times, "you know, for years assigning editors would make the assignment, think about photos, think about graphics, but when it came to the Web it was always an afterthought. If we can only make that instinctively a thought at the beginning of the assigning process instead of the end." And what we finally decided was the only way to really make that happen was to put the Internet front and center in the newsroom. So the result has been a number of blogs that you see here-we started a blog in Food; in Real Estate, that's the Walk Through; in Wine, that's The Pour. I don't pretend that blogging is revolutionary-we had blogs before there was integration-but it's a way to get writers and desks involved and to take ownership of a particular part of the online report.

And here you get to see a little bit of podcasting as well. Other kinds of enhancements, whether they're video or the MyTimes personalization page that we'll be unveiling later this month, will have a series of personal MyTimes templates offered to you by times correspondents and columnists that readers can follow. Again, same kind of additions and enrichments. Separate new sections now in Business on Deal Book for a very narrow but very, very interesting, very newsy Wall Street section that looks at mergers and acquisitions and multinational business developments. Again, all owned in the newsroom, co-produced with producers online-producers now having desks in Business, in Foreign, in National, In Week in Review. And all that's to the good.

This gives you a sense of integrating video as a way to tell stories in a ways the paper can not. From an integration point of view, video has been a way to involve the staff in doing movie minutes, of video storytelling that goes beyond a minute or two into three- or four-minute documentaries, mini-documentaries, interviews with correspondents and writers on various projects, and allowing folks to use video, and allow readers to decide how best they want to engage with the story.

Podcasting has also been a result of integration. No question about it. We have now between 15 and 20 podcasts up on iTunes. These range from the front page as a podcast for about five or six minutes-a summary of the front page done by a reporter in the newsroom on the Metro desk who has a great radio voice who said, "I'll try it." And he's willing to try it. Again, that's integration buy-in. We also do most emailed-those are the two most popular right now on iTunes.

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Let me talk a little bit now about kind of the guts of how integration works. I drew this diagram to show you how we think about developing verticals, developing sections, getting the newsroom involved in developing a Movies section, a Real Estate section, a Travel section-all of which are on the table now for further development.

And at the center of this is a character-product manager-that has never existed in print newsrooms before, at least to my knowledge. But we had them at the Web. And the more we looked at integration and tried to study systems and organization charts, the more we thought, "You know, the product manager really should be in the newsroom-the combined newsroom." The product manager is someone at the hub of the wheel here who deals with editorial, deals with sales and marketing, deals with information and technology, deals with design. Doesn't necessarily make assignments, but works on editorial strategy with the producer and the editors involved in those particular sections. A product manager has some profit and loss responsibilities, but they're really sensibilities-not so much an account or financial responsibility in terms of trying to make the business profitable. That's everybody's goal, but the way.

But this is a product manager who's primarily dealing with vendors when you need third-party content and feeds. It's someone who is also trying to understand the sales goal as well as the editorial mission of what the Travel section should do, for instance, working with IT and a project manager to get it built properly and launched on time, and, of course, making the whole user experience elegant, simple, nicely designed visually as well as in terms of the actual user interface. We really felt, the more we thought about this, that the newsroom had to own all these functions and that they had to be embedded into the newsroom as part of integration. So the print newsroom-we're getting used to the idea that, when we launched a redesign of the Travel section (it hasn't come out yet, but we're working on it), the product manager is really the hub of the wheel.

They're driving the process, getting all the stakeholders together, getting all the print editors and reporters who are involved in the Travel section around the table, understanding what sales' needs are, understanding what it's going to take to build the section.

This gives you a sense, again, of how we operated before-and I'll show you a slide in a second about how things have changed. In the very early days, we thought there was a lot of advantage to staying separate. So separate, in fact, that New York Times Digital was formed as a separate subsidiary of The New York Times Company. It had its own CEO, and that CEO had individual operating folks reporting to him, including me as the editor over here on your left. And we were basically as separate as The New York Times Media Group or the New England Media Group-those were basically newspaper entities. New England, primarily, is the Boston Globe, which, of course, is owned by The Times Company, and The New York Times Media Group is predominantly, but not totally, predominantly The New York Times newspaper.

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We had broadcasts, we still do, and we have regional newspapers. But this was how we functioned. We were about 200 people at NewYorkTimes.com; New York Times Digital also included the other newspaper digital property which was, is, Boston.com. That has been split up. And so today, what happens in an integrated site is that, under The New York Times Media Group, that part of NYTimes.com comes under the newsroom. So the executive editor Bill Keller, and his masthead editors are in one box. The Web site comes under that. And the Web site is basically on a par now with the desk heads-Metro, Sports, Foreign, National, you name it. And below that, we felt strongly, again, that the newsroom had to have design control, had to have responsibility for part of information technology that builds the site-not necessarily that maintains the network and the ability for the servers to serve the site, but functions primarily with the project. In other words, the information technology folks who were involved with the content management system with the launch of our redesign this week, all of those components would live within the newsroom's responsibilities and control. And finally, product development, as I explained would also be a function now in the newsroom.

All and all we think integration has done some great things already. We're glad we did it-I think it's taking us quite well to the next level. And so I thought about it as I was coming down here that if you can think about integration here on campus, maybe you can think about this for the University of Texas (groans, laughter). Anyway, thank you. (Applause.)

PABLO BOCZKOWSKI: Thank you very much, Len. Our next speaker is George Rodrigue, who is vice president and managing editor of The Dallas Morning News.

GEORGE RODRIGUE: Well Len had an MBA do his slides and I did mine myself, as you're about to find. I run the newsroom at The Dallas Morning News-a challenge-and the Web is becoming an increasingly big part of you know the good stuff and the bad stuff about all that. Reasons to actually pay attention to this discussion are few. I think, like Len says, we think we've solved some problems, but not the big problems we were talking about this morning. We've solved the, sort of, tactical problems. Also, if you want to get a job in journalism, it may be worth taking a few notes-we'll see.

Here's what we used to be-a monopoly. You could be almost a stone cold moron (laughter) and make money in newspaper-ing if you were lucky enough to be born owning a printing press-right? You could be the least public spirited guy in, oh let's just say, the state of Oklahoma and run a profitable media empire. This is the chart we were talking about earlier where you compare daily circulation to U.S. households. Times not only are changing, they have changed.

Now we've got to be smart, and that's the hard part-right? So the question all of us face is how are we going to transition between the print world, where we all lived rather comfortably-smart or not-into a Web world where we have a million different competitors and a thousand questions every day about where we should spend our

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time and our money. This is kind of what we think we need to do—we need to bear in mind that Web and print are very different, need to look to each medium's strengths, try to be as efficient as we can, and try to reach new audiences.

The key thing on this slide is—you've got to reach new audiences because if all we do is put out content on the Web, what we have done is undercut the value of our franchise without actually growing audience and probably losing revenue. So finding new ways to really touch citizens' hearts and minds is priceless. And we can do a better job of that on the Web.

I'm not going to go into the lengthy multimedia stuff that is hyperlinked to each of these slides. If you want to—and some of it's pretty cool—go ahead and get the presentation and, you know, click and look. It's all outside our firewall so you should be able, in theory, to see anything I've got a link to here. But I think that what we've discovered over time is that the stuff that you don't think about in print is the stuff that works best on the Web. Building connections—and that could be emotional, it could be social, it could be commercial, but that's where a lot of the power lies and that's where we've been trying to put a lot of our emphasis.

So, as with The Times, but on a smaller and more modest scale, you'll see a lot of the same stuff on our Web site. You know, why not bring John Cornyn down to the office or take a laptop to his office and have a chat where Texans can ask the senator questions directly about immigration policy? Why not have a site—we call these things Neighbors—where people can gossip with each other, rate their favorite lawnmower, talk about which home repair companies are good, which are bad, and so forth and so on? And why not do more citizen journalism? For one thing, it's free; for another thing, it's often more interesting than what we do. We launched a bunch of citizen journalism things mostly to save money, I'll be frank, but also because we thought, "gee, we are not as local as we need to be in the areas, even in inner-city Dallas, we're not as local as we need to be." So we launched a bunch of little publications and lo and behold, the editors of these things became the most popular people in the community, and they have gotten stories that our Metro staff never thought of, and now I find myself paying the Neighbors editors, who are chronically underpaid—I hope they don't ever see this video-freelance money in order to write stories for Metro because they have better contacts than we do. And we find that the Web is an amplifier for this. So that's pretty cool.

How to do this? The truth is, as Bill Clinton might say, we ought to build a bridge to the 21st century, but we haven't yet. And so, in many cases, we just have to jump—and we're kind of jumping in the dark, which makes it interesting. So: procedure. First, you've got to preach the gospel of change. I will say, I agree with Len completely on the cultural thing. It was a big issue. When the Web started, I was probably among them, a lot of editors thought, "why would I waste time with this? We have a newspaper to put out here, by golly, we'll give 'em the news when it's good and ready to go." We were not hospitable to the Web. I would say, to sharpen the point about cultural change, fear, envy, hope—powerful motivators. And I think that, at this point, there's probably no one in my newsroom who doesn't think, "you

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know, if I don't get better at this Web stuff, my career could be short, nasty, and brutish." So that is, I think, a piece of the cultural change.

Build on staff expertise and enthusiasm-there's a lot of that in everybody's newsrooms, there's way more talents than we're using out there. Provide time and tools for key talent. David Leeson is a photographer in our shop-if you are an editor for another newspaper, forget you heard that name because you can't have him. But he's brilliant-I mean, he's crazy, he was in South Africa when I was a kid and he came back with a bullet hole in his face and we said, "David, what happened?" and he said, " Oh, I got shot." We didn't know he's been shot, really, he's just that kind of guy. And a couple of years ago he said, "I'd like to do more on video-I want to learn more on video." And we thought, well okay. He said, "I'd like to just kind of disappear for a while and do video." And we said, "well, good on you-all right, we'll give you that opportunity. If there's a war or something we might need you to come back." And he said, "okay, for something like that, I'll come back." And David just disappeared.

And then we had a war. And David went over to Iraq and he won a Pulitzer Prize for still photography and he won an Emmy for video because he had gotten really, really good at this stuff because he's been staying up 20 hours a day learning video. I mean, he had really gone off and done it. We gave him a video fellowship and he became, like, a Ph.D. in videography. You've got to do that-you've got to have pathfinders. If you don't have them in your newsroom, hire one. But you've got to do something like that. And now we're holding basic classes so anybody can get some level of expertise if they have the interest.

The other thing we're trying to do: we've broken up our Web operation also in terms of moving it out to the desks. We have experienced editors-maybe we'll have three video editing consoles. One person who really knows what they're doing will be there, the other two will basically be empty. And so, if you want to come by and do a project, the person who knows what they're doing will be there and can help you. A lot of informal learning in addition to the formal learning.

Okay, here's the part I'm supposed to be talking about-the structure. This is not rocket science. It's basically, you do the easy stuff and you try to eliminate redundant jobs, and then you try to apply a good structure to solve whatever problem the particular staff is wrestling with. And that could be a Web issue or a print issue. So, we used to have a bunch of folks in our Web site lovingly handcrafting every page on our Web site-I don't know if everybody here had that experience but, if you're the editor, or certainly if you're the finance manager, that seems pretty weird. Because you're paying a set of copyeditors on the print desk to edit and headline and move stuff around, And then you're sending the thing over to the Web and another crowd of very similar people are doing exactly the same thing for the Web. So we're trying to do more with auto-publishing, which frees the former clickers and draggers to do much more high-level work. They're happier; we're happier.

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Metro. We had an issue early on with Metro-not an issue, just a situation (laughter). We had a deputy Metro editor coming in the mornings trying to get the section (inaudible) and there was an assistant Metro editor, we had Metro reporters. And then we had a parallel structure on the Web. And, again, you know, if you're me you're sitting there thinking, "why is this happening?" And I have to say, these folks didn't always get along great, so what we did was just give it all to the Web. The early morning-if you're in TV you know the term "day part"-the day part is way more important for the Web than for print. So we said to the Webbies, "you guys own the Metro staff in the morning-from six in the morning 'til 10 in the morning you own the shop. You need help, they'll give it to you. You get to choose how our resources are deployed for that part of the morning."

And I have to say, it has been a good experience. We've had a much more responsive desk because the Webbies are thinking like a TV station. Whereas before we might get one story out of the morning crew, you might get three now. And they're usually quite good and they can start a dialogue between our readers and our staff very early in the day. So it's a great start for the morning.

Okay: sports. Here's a very different situation. We have-if you haven't seen The Dallas Morning News Sports section, look at it, it's fantastic. It's always been fantastic. And they were dying to get their hands on the Web. And the interesting part was-the Web editor was dying to get closer to Sports because he knew those guys or-some of them are women and they're good too (laughter)-he knew them and he said, "I'm not using them. Right now I'm off in my little cube. I need to get out there." We got him out there and same kind of explosion that you noted with Len's thing-we've got blogs. You know, when we did high school recruiting. Big thing in Texas-it's kind of like professional football in New England only the crowds are larger (laughter). And recruiting day, for when colleges tap high school students-that's huge. We sent a bunch of sports reporters out to high schools with laptops and they were doing a moment-by-moment blog on who's getting recruited by whom and this turned out to be a gigantic audience draw. I mean, who'd have thought? I thought it was a profoundly strange idea when they suggested it to me but, you know, I try not to say no. And it turned out very well.

Our Rangers reporter said, "you know what? Channel 8 (our sister station in Dallas) is at the Rangers training camp-why don't I do a video update of Rangers training?" I thought, well, sure, why not? And it turned out to be one of the most popular things we put up on the Web because these guys are stars-I mean, for our audience, seeing what the Morning News baseball writer looks like and what he sounds like is actually a pretty good draw-plus he speaks well on TV and he's a darn good looking guy. So, big win all around.

Citizen video-they started doing that. One time our Sports editor got on our blog and said, "I heard this rumor of a kid sinking an 85-foot shot at the buzzer at a high school game. Anybody got that?" And the kid's mom read the blog and said, "I got it!" And that turned out to be the most popular bit of video we put up on the Web

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that day. Podcasts, breaking news, sports (inaudible), and Leader Board, which is out sort of amalgamation of who's doing what in sports around the area.

Photo. Here's a deal where, rather than a merger we just gave a function to the photo department. Remember David Leeson, right? So the Webbies were saying, "We've got to do more video." Why is that? Well, probably because the publisher says we've got to do more video. The photo people were saying, "We want to do more video. We've got stuff; we see stuff." Side note: photographers see stuff-they don't get stuff by the telephone. So tremendous resource there, which we're not using. And the photo department was dying to take this over and we gave it to them. And, again, if you click on the word "archive" or if you go to DallasNews.com/photography, you'll see some of the stuff they've done. It's pretty wonderful and what it really does is bring home often the emotional power of a story. Sometimes it's depth and sometimes it's just listening to a guy talk when he says what it's like to drive up to the scene of an accident where his entire family has just died. So, you can't do that in print.

Business side, also-we, like The Times, are trying to do more with our verticals and the only thing I can add here-I mean, this is the old site. It's kind of pukey-it's a search frame and nothing else, a search frame and an ad. So we added a ton of content to it. And that's what happened with page views. You can see from the early June to mid June period a sharp increase in people coming and spending time on our Real Estate page. There's not trickery here-this is not because we were buying Google search results. This is because the content was better. So if you're arguing for more resources in your newsroom, show this to your publisher.

Advantages to integration: passion for content, expertise, you can see it-it's a good way of making the most of a lot of talented people. Limits: well, a lot of this is better for the traditional stuff than for new stuff. It's evolutionary, it's production-oriented, it is not revolutionary. If you want a revolution, you probably need to assign somebody to stage a revolution. You probably need to do-well, here's, this is just my philosophy, if my publisher see this I may be in deep, deep trouble-I would say our Web team if, I were designing it, would be responsible for measuring audience satisfaction, setting production standards for the rest of the newsroom-"you guys promised us a breaking news story every hour-you're not giving it to us. What's up with that?

Research and development. And that could be the kind of social networking stuff that-is it Rufton?-is really good at. You know, it could be that kind of thing. Any kind of new product thing I think needs to have a core group of people who own it.

And then maintenance and construction-because you don't want your newsroom people sort of willy-nilly trying to fix the Web site. "Hey, there's a busted link on the Sports page, let's go in there and fix it." You'd want to have actual skilled professionals messing with the mechanics of the site.

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So I'd say those to me are the core things that Web folks ought to do and the newsroom need to help in every way it can. But I don't mistake myself for a Web revolutionary. (Inaudible), which I will not bore you with. And then, there's a ton of appendices on little mechanical things that, I thought, we learned that maybe you guys could use, but, again, I won't bother reading them to you. So, thank you. (Applause.)

PABLO BOCZKOWSKI: Good morning everybody. I'm Pablo Boczkowski again. I teach at Northwestern. And, a couple of caveats before I go into a presentation. The first one is that I'm not a practitioner; I'm not in a newsroom. I'm a sociologist who studies newsrooms. So the presentation probably will have a slightly different angle. The second thing is that this is really, as you will see in a minute, a work in progress. So feedback will not only be welcome but much needed, so please speak up in the Q & A or afterwards. And, the third thing is that Rosental, and George, and I have been exchanging emails over the past week to try to decide what to do, what to talk about, and things like that. And so, what I realized early on in the round of exchanges was that George and Len were going to talk about actual integration processes. So what I thought I would do to add a little bit of a different perspective to this panel would be to talk about the study that I'm doing about a company that has decided not to integrate-that has not integrated, that is operating in a different context-to try to think whether there are some things. Some lessons, some take-aways that we can learn about whether to integrate or not and how integration would unfold in a situation in which online and print evolved separately for longer periods of time in a context with less pressure to integrate financially.

So this study is what I call "News at Work," and the study that I launched about a year ago is a study of organizational, editorial, and technological transformations that have taken place in the production of news, in the content and form of the news product, and in the consumption patters. When the news is produced primarily for an audience who consumes it at work and while they are working, be that at the workplace or their home, but at the time and place of work for people. Why focus on this? Because over the past three to five years, the consumption of online news at work has grown dramatically and we see transformations having to do with the production of content and the consumption of content. And that basically has amounted to a new mass market for news consumption.

Before 2000-2001, the people who would get the news at work would be people in media, in government, and maybe cab drivers. But for most of us regular consumers, that would not take place. What has happened in the past three to four years has been that a new mass market has emerged-and that has created interesting challenges, at least for those of us studying the production of news. For instance, we know, it has been highly studied and it's quite a bit codified, how the news gets produced for the traditional print environment. This is an infographic that The New York Times puts together in its annual report, at least it did so in the second half of the '90s, that details hour by hour how the process is supposed to unfold. So this is very, very well codified. (Inaudible) we know very little about how this happens at the pure phenomenal level for content that is produced not for

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people who will get it in the morning the following day and will be consuming in the morning, in the evening, and to and from work, but will consume it throughout their work hours starting at eight or nine in the morning to about six or seven in the afternoon.

So, the study, this is the broad project design-I will talk about the first phase only today. The study, based in Argentina (and I will go into why Argentina in just a minute), has a first phase that looks at the production practices, and I did that studying Diario Clarin, which is the largest newspaper in Argentina and Marco Palacios here, who is a longtime Clarin person, now in El Nuevo Da in Puerto Rico, suffered from me and my team. I've seen him and his staff for quite some time. Then the second phase will examine not just the production, but the products: what's the shape of the products? What do these products look like? And the final phase, that I will launch in the fall, will look at the consumer-what people are actually doing while they are at work with the news that they get online.

So a couple of words on Internet in Argentina to frame the context. Penetration, broadband access, all of that has been growing dramatically, and Internet at work has been growing quite a bit too. And most of the people who get the Internet at work also read the news, and advertising expenditures having been going on also quite well. That's Argentina.

The newspaper industry in Argentina, a couple of, sort of, dissenting factors from the U.S., just to set the context, it's not a local industry, it's mostly a national industry and it's highly concentrated. Two-thirds of the national markets are owned by five players. They have a fairly large share of the advertising pie, and that proportion has been steady for the past decade. And, as some of you may know, Argentina suffered a tremendous financial and economic crisis in 2001. The industry has recovered quite well, as some other sectors of the economy in the past few years and shows no major sign of decline, at least for the short-term future. All of this is important because, when I decided to situate the study in Argentine, I realized that some of the same trends having to do with the consumption of news at work were taking place like in the U.S. and in other parts of the world, but there are significant differences regarding the context.

Because print is in relatively good health, because the pressures of the financial markets are not such as the pressures that you experience here, that gives us a different context in which the online players have been given more autonomy-editorial, strategic, structural, and commercial-so they can evolve their enterprises. Basically because a whole lot of lack of interest on the print side-which is doing very well, thank you very much; we don't want to bother with those guys.

So what I thought, in terms of situating the study there, was that I would be able to have a natural experiment of how a new model of online production evolves in a context in which there are less pressures to integrate and might give us, sort of, a more pure or intense view on how this model looks like, than what you would have in a context such as the U.S. context, in which there is a lot of pressure to integrate,

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mostly because print is in somewhat of a financial trouble, having to do with consumer trends and the role of capital markets as we heard before.

So what does the study consist of? It's a study, as I said, of Diario Clarin's online newspaper. Just one word on Clarin: Diario Clarin is the flagship of Grupo Clarin, which is a fairly large, the largest media holding in the company, which is a major player not just in print, but also in cable television, radio, ISP, etc., etc. In 2004 they had almost 8,000 full-time employees and annual revenues of three-quarters of a million dollars, U.S. Diario Clarin is its flagship news operation, print. It has about 400,000 circulation-at least that's what they had in 2004. Clarin.com had about-it was hard to count because (inaudible) while we were doing the study-but about 50 people working on and off in the newsroom. The traffic during the week was about 400,000 unique visitors Monday through Friday, decreasing dramatically Saturdays and Sundays because people are not going to the office so they're not getting the news. And I did not get actual figures in terms of revenues, but people are very happy there in terms of growth. Not just growth of the traffic, but also growth of advertising revenue. And, the other reason why it was interesting to look at (inaudible) is because Clarin's online operation was getting most of its traffic from eight in the morning until six p.m. in the afternoon. This was actually happening as we were doing the study and it was quite dramatic.

Just one anecdote: as I was doing some of the final interviews with people in the newsroom in December, the finance, the secondary finance from Argentina, Roberto Lavagna, resigned or was fired depending on who you talk to. This was arguably the second most important political figure in the country after the president, the architect of economic recovery. It was a big, big news story. The story, Marcos may be able to fill in the details, but my sense was that about 3:30 p.m. in the afternoon the rumors started to circulate. Newspapers online say, "Oh, there is a press conference at the Pink House,"-we have a Pink House and then a White House-"something big is going to happen." This is probably the most important political story of the year, even more important than the national (inaudible) that had happened. The press conference took place about five-ish or some. And so, you would think that people would actually stay at work, would not go back home, because that was the most important political story of the year. Now, the curve was exactly like this, okay.

So being at work is the major independent variable that explains online consumption patterns, okay. So how did we do this? Together with a team of four local researchers, students, and one instructor at the local university, we went inside Clarin.com for nine months. For the first three months, we did 30 hours of observations of work practices per week. Basically, one person, one of my research assistants, shadowed someone-for instance, Marco suffered that for about four hours one day-we shadow each person in the editorial staff at least once and take notes almost minute by minute on what that person was doing.

So all that, sort of, (inaudible) 100,000 words of field notes. And after that, we interviewed 40 of the people-in-depth interviews about an hour, an hour-and-a-half

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each-between the months of July and December. Transcribed all that and that is, I got the other transcriptions recently, 300,000 words of transcriptions that we will begin to analyze fairly soon.

What I'm going to be talking about today is the (inaudible) of observation. What we did with the observations is that each observation basically presents a narrative account of what a person does. We started to realize that there were major patterns going on in how work is organized and what kinds of (inaudible) from work depending on whether it was hard news or soft news-developing stories on one side and features, general interest type of stories. So we developed a coding instrument and hand coded each one of these 100,000 words to see whether among critical dimensions there were major differences having to do if whether the content was breaking and developing stories or whether the content was sort news. And we know, from experience and from the literature, that there has been some difference between hard and soft news production. But what we found is that the difference is greatly increased in this new context.

So we started this research with one very simple question at the phenomenon level, which is, "What is the model-give us a description of the model-of content production for a public who gets the news at work and when they are working?" And what we found is that there isn't one model, like what The Times produced in its infograph. There are two very different models. So what I'm going to be showing you about this are basic results having to do with four critical dimensions of editorial work in which there are major differences.

This was the first screen of the homepage of Clarin on the Internet almost a month ago when they didn't make their redesign. Hopefully, we sort of exited the newsroom before that happened. And, basically what you see is that the homepage is divided into two parts. This side of the screen takes 50 percent of the screen all the way down and it's devoted to breaking and developing stories, hard news, basically, and it has one dedicated unit in the newsroom that produced that. The other 40 percent is soft, feature news and, again, it has its own unit. So there are basically two units, each of which is charged to produce each of these two parts.

So we found major differences, as I said before. For instance, in what part of the story people work on. The people who are producing breaking and developing news-where they are working on a part of a news story, 88 percent of the time they're working on the headline, or the lead, or whatever you can see on the homepage. As Robert said before, the consumer of online news, especially hard news, is a homepage consumer. This in homepage journalism for the most part. The model of production was adapted to this. Only 10 percent of the time, people who were in the hard news unit were producing content that goes into the body of the text, on which you have to click at least once to get there. People who are on the soft news production side, 70 percent of the time that they were working, were working on content that you can only access at least by clicking once from the homepage-it's not the headline, it's the body of the text.

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Second: how long did it take? So we divided into four categories: less than a half hour, half hour to two hours, two hours to a working day, more than a working day. And what we found is that 85 percent of the content that is produced, that is published for breaking and developing news is produced in 30 minutes or less—an average, I would say, about 18, 19 minutes. And another 11 percent takes between half an hour and two hours, which means that 96 percent of the content is produced in less than two hours, right. So it's a very fast production cycle. Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom.

Soft news production, even though it was on the Web, it basically mimicked or repeated the daily production cycle. Eighty percent of the stories were produced in more than one day. The thing is if you are producing content, say, producing a story, from start to finish—"Oh, we should write about this," and then, boom, it goes live, and you have 18 to 20 minutes to do that—you basically have very little time to do primary sourcing. So this is a model that draws from information that comes from elsewhere. Ninety-six percent of information that was used to produce a story comes from other media and only eight percent comes from the print side. This is not a repetition of the print side—this is the wires, cable television, and newspapers online, many other feeds that come to the newsroom, but are not automatically posted. This is editorial work—it's just a different kind of editorial work. It's editorial work that has to do with deciding what stories to cover with the placement and the rotation of the stories, with the headlines, and with conveying editorial information in about 20-25 words so that will be a way of distinguishing your newspaper from the competition, which is also doing exactly like this. So this is not automatic, this is not '97, '98, this is not an automatic feed from AP or Reuters—this is editorial work, it's just a very different model of editorial production.

In the sort news side, still the majority was coming from other sources, but 25 percent was generated locally and there was a sense that that was growing. For those of you quite interested in statistical analysis, I used a couple of tests to test the statistical significance of the difference between proportions—and all of this is quite significant at a very good level, actually.

We know from having done this for many years that there are basically three major distinctive characteristics of the online environment that distinguished it from print or broadcast as a publishing medium: immediacy, inter-activity, and multimedia. So we coded the notes asking, "When they are taking advantage of one of these three new opportunities that the Web presents to people, which one of them are they taking advantage." Unsurprisingly, hard news journalism in this case is a journalism of immediacy—real-time publishing and constant updates. Soft news journalism is a journalism of interactivity—of links, of polls, readers talking back, and so on and so forth. In this case, multimedia featured very little in the question in both of them.

So this is what I mean by two models. The model for hard breaking and developing news is a model of online news production based on contextualizing, through the elements that you see on the homepage—through the headline, through the lead, through the placement, the rotation. It's an almost real-time publishing—no base, no

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fixed cycle. It's dynamic and it's fast-boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. It's what we call a meta-mediation model in which you mediate other media-you are not producing your own information. You are, for the most part, mediating, because you are not putting that automatically on the Web, you are mediating what other sources do. And it's a model based on immediacy.

Soft news coverage is traditional journalism, interesting enough. In this case, the soft news unit was charged with developing new, enumerated ways of storytelling. And what has happened so far is this actually has replicated a whole lot of what (inaudible) journalism is about. It's about storytelling, daily production cycles, having your own info, and adding interactivity to that.

So what does this mean for newsroom integration? It means many things for other issues having to do with the public sphere, with what society gets in terms of news, with the fact that the news has been commodified and will continue, probably, to be commodified in the future.

But, for the purposes of this panel, the first thing to realize is that, when it comes to breaking and developing news-when it comes to hard news-this is a qualitatively different model of news production than the traditional model of sourcing, writing extensively, daily production cycles, having time to analyze and reflect and go in depth, and so on and so forth. What this means is that, if this model, which I don't know if it's replicated in other units, that are newspapers that are doing this or not. I don't know that for a fact. I have an (anecdotal evidence) that tells me that, yes, this is quite common in many places and probably will continue to be common because it's a good way of developing your resources economically and validating your resources economically, so the incentives are such that it will probably continue developing. If this model continues to develop independently and then we try to integrate, that will have tremendous implications for both sides. First of all, online, an integration would actually mean a decrease in terms of the speed and a decrease in terms of the volume. This model is based on a lot of rotation and a lot of volume, and the assumption that, when people are at work, people have 90 seconds to read, 60 seconds to have it at attention-they've got many tasks that they still want their news, right. So what they want to get it that. I don't know whether that is actually what happens with the consumer so much, so that's why I'm launching in the fall a year-long study of consumption behavior. But this is based in speed and volume, which would suffer in case of a hypothetical integration.

On the other side, for print, a model such as this one compromises or could potentially compromise issues having to do with accuracy because in 20 minutes there is only so much you can do if you're actually building all your own sources and developing your own story, to fact-check and do things like that. You compromise issues of depth because, for the most part, this is homepage journalism. And again, it's quite functional to what Robert was saying before, that people online actually want the headlines from Yahoo, and here they have they headlines on a newspaper, which actually gives it an editorial treatment, but only at the headline level, or at the homepage level. And it actually could have issues having to do with reflexivity, which

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is a code word for analysis, which is what newspapers have done very, very well, especially in the past 50 years, in terms of presenting and analysis of the story-and what, perhaps they may be going towards more and more so in their print edition in the future.

And also, and this is something, another interesting idea, it was raised before by George and Len, that two very different cultures that evolve in two units that operate with very different production models. The longer that these production models remain separate and independent, the more difference there will be in terms of the cultures of these two. So the integration of two very different production models in this case would also entail very important cultural changes that should not be underestimated by anybody trying to integrate something like this.

Thank you very much.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: I have a question for Len and George. Len, first for you: how many product managers do you have within the newsroom? And, for George: how did the Metro staff take having the Web be their directors for in the mornings?

LEN APCAR: Product managers-let's think-we have one in Travel, one for Real Estate, but within Real Estate there are some product managers within that group that do Autos, and other parts we have a product manager for Classifieds, and within that we have one for Jobs, Real Estate, and Autos. We have one for Business and Tech, and we have one for Entertainment, which includes Movies and Theater. I might be missing one or two others but that's-there's four and two sub-managers, maybe there's another six or seven in there. And I can see that growing a little bit. Particularly in the areas where you have to enrich the sections with partnerships and other kinds of outside content.

GEORGE RODRIGUE: With respect to the question about the Metro staff's reaction to being managed by a Web editor-it was probably the same thing you see with any organizational or cultural shift. Some people were really happy, and when the editor on metro who we said, "guess what, you don't have to come in at 6:30 in the morning any more, he went away happy" (laughter). There were some people in the chain of command on Metro who, I think were too gentlemanly to say so, but had doubts about the plan. Two things probably saved it. First off the message from the top was, "we've got to do it this way." And second, we chose a very, very good, strong editor to run the morning desk. She could have taken the job of any Metro editor and I think that she earned respect quickly for doing a good job.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: We're actually part of a delegation by the State Department visiting Austin, Texas for the week and we're here participating and we're journalists from eight different countries visiting this program. Now the question is coming from an Azerbaijan journalist and the question reads as follows: "These papers constitute the largest revenue for news agencies. This question is more related to the first part of the panel. This revenue is significantly reduced with regard

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to online media. Is this an indicator that the news agency is going to be less important and is it true to call the butcher as the other speaker said?"

LEN APCAR: Oh, this question is for me? (laughter) We still write a very big check to the Associate Press and Reuters and I'm sure we will be for quite a while. I think it's too early to say. Let me step back and answer the question this way-a lot of the doom and gloom around the question of what will pay for these newsrooms is a very valid question. I think we don't really know the answers yet, but the answers may evolve and that we can't dismiss the technology or certainly the evolution of what's going on in newsrooms. We've got to proceed with our own transformation and what makes sense for us and not worry about, "well, what's going to pay for the 1,000 people in The New York Times newsroom of the 500 in George's newsroom, or whatever. There are people whose job it is to worry about that but that's really, frankly, not our job. Our job is to deliver news and something that people want to read and the agencies understand this-the Associated Press and Reuters-they are going through their own transformations and they have their own integration issues and they have their own evolutions, which are going at different paces with different success rates. So, does it all mean that this is all going to come crashing down because the basic financial underpinnings are not there to support this infrastructure. The answer is, well, if you look at all the evidence that was presented this morning, the answer is yes. Should you pull the plug, lights out, and send it to the slaughter house tomorrow, the answer is no.