

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

**Day 2, April 2, 2011**

**Research Panel:**

***Beyond News Routines, Beyond News Consumption***

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### **Panelists:**

- **Chair: Tom Johnson**, University of Texas at Austin
  - **Hsiang Iris Chyi** and **Monica Chadla**, University of Texas at Austin
  - **Ahmed El Gody**, Orebro University, Sweden
  - **Angela Lee**, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania
  - **Ingrid Bachmann** and **Summer Harlow**, University of Texas at Austin
  - **Dr. Jonathan Groves**, Drury University, and **Dr. Carrie Brown**, University of Memphis
  - **Brian Baresch**, University of Texas at Austin, and others
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**Audience:** Good morning.

**Tom Johnson:** That was pretty sad. Let's try it again. Good morning.

**Audience:** Good morning!

**Tom Johnson:** All right. My name is Tom Johnson. This is my first year as a professor at University of Texas.

**Woman:** Woo-hoo!

**Tom Johnson:** Yeah! Our panel today is not about news routines and news consumption. It goes *beyond* news routines and *beyond* news consumption. Oops. I apologize, we do have a bit of business to do beforehand.

**Amy Schmitz Weiss:** Thank you so much. Okay. So I wanted to let everyone know we have every year as part of the research component, the research competition of our symposium, we always have a top rated paper for each year. And so I wanted to present that this morning on behalf of the Symposium Peer Review Committee. It's my pleasure to tell you all who won the top rated research paper. This was based on who received the top scores and comments from the judges in regards to their paper for this year. And again, it was a very tough competition. Fifty papers that were submitted and only 20 could be selected this year. So it's my pleasure—and for the person who wins this award, if you want to come up briefly to accept your award—it is for Chris Anderson of the College of Staten Island, *Knitting Together a Public: The Hyperlink, News Aggregation and the Cultures of Digital and*

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

*Analog Evidence in Web-Era Journalism.* He will be presenting this afternoon. Come on up, Chris.

[Cheers and applause.]

**Amy Schmitz Weiss:** Okay, and now I'll give it back over to Tom.

**Tom Johnson:** Okay. You know, I've just started, [and] I have already gotten into trouble with Amy. One of the things—if you saw me as a moderator last time, you're probably amazed that they asked me to return, but again—Amy either has a big heart or a short memory.

We have six papers today, and so each speaker has ten minutes. And again, there is a special ring in hell for those who go over ten minutes, next to the people who tear off the tags—the “don't remove” tags from mattresses. So with that, I will [introduce] our first presenter, Iris Chyi and Monica Chadha, from University of Texas, *News on New Devices: Examining Multiplatform News Consumption in the Digital Age.*

[Applause.]

**Iris Chyi:** Iris Chyi here on journalism. I've been doing online news, economics research for more than ten years, and I naturally benefit greatly from this particular conference because of its nature. So I thank Rosental for doing this every year. So, knowing that a lot of news professionals will be here today, this paper was written with the industry in mind. So that means we hope to contribute or to facilitate a dialogue sort of. But on the other hand, as academic researchers, we hope also to contribute alternative perspectives or more independent ones, which the perspective may not be as optimistic, but hopefully more realistic. So in other words, my research has been focusing on the money issue that John just talked about, but probably not so much about how newspapers can generate money, but why they have not been able to do so effectively.

So there are...yesterday, we heard a lot about multiplatform news delivery, which obviously is a reality, so I won't elaborate on this further. And you've seen a lot of fancy graphics yesterday, so all these devices are being used for news or are being used for news delivery.

Interestingly, *The New York Times* appeared in every single device, so that shows the industry's enthusiasm about these devices. Indeed, each device once looked fancy and interesting and they were expected to save newspapers; however, the reality is until today, even the web, which has been there for 15 years or so, still is not the primary revenue driver. Instead, I think 90% of Arab news for any newspaper company comes from the print edition. So I think it's important to look at the consumption part. So we ask, is that a reality yet? We are all excited about that, but we use that for delivery, but how about the consumption side?

## **12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism**

So, this paper looks at a range, a wide range of devices that are being used for news delivery. And we included even the iPod Touch, so basically anything that you can think of that can be used for news purposes are included in this study. A total of seven actually.

The first concept we need to introduce today is, not all devices are as “newsful.” So, we came up with a new concept, which is “newsfulness,” which I refer to as “likelihood of a multipurpose device being used for news access.” Because all these things like iPod, iPad, the reader, also the computer even, they are multipurpose devices. In other words, owning those devices does not mean people aren’t using those for news purposes. So we need to first think about the extent to which they are really used for news in particular. So we can calculate that by dividing the number of users who own it—who use it for news by the total number of owners of that device. And you can do this weekly, daily. You can have different measures.

So again, not all news devices—not all new devices are equally newsful. Okay? And I think this particular variable is worth monitoring because it changes over time. When we did a survey last August when—that’s four months after the iPad was launched, so naturally now we will expect to see a higher likelihood that it’s being used for news. So things change, so this is, I think, an important concept we try to promote.

So we did a random sample online survey of more than 700 U.S. adults. Of course, those are online. And yeah, the weighted sample is representative of the U.S. internet population. So quickly, first of all, basically, the penetration rates of these devices, meaning how many people are really owning the devices? To what extent do they use those for news in particular? Again, the distinction between ownership and used for news. So then, we can look at the ratio which is the newsfulness ratio.

So, you see some numbers. The first three columns, the first column is like ownership. Almost everybody in this survey had a computer. That’s, of course, natural. But if you talk about using that for news at least once a week, then that’s three-quarters of the internet population. If you’re talking about using that for news every single day, for the computer example, that will be only 46% of the internet population in this country. So, at the end, if we look at the last column, which is the newsfulness ratio, this one is by daily measures, meaning 47% of the owners of a computer actually use it for news every single day. So I think that’s perhaps a better measure in terms of how applicable this device is for news.

As you can see, the computer, especially desktop and laptop, they are not as fancy, not as portable, but they are actually the most newsful among the seven different devices that we look at here. And the lower ones include the iPod Touch, which may not be really surprising, but also other smartphones, meaning Android phones, for example. So that’s the...so, any guess how

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

many devices? So we moved this from each device to individuals who are using these devices. Any guess how many devices are used for news within a week? At least once a week. Any guess? [No audible response.] Two? That's too optimistic. So actually when we look at per person, [laughter], unbelievably 1.2. Again, the key thing is "for news," not...yeah, everybody is using computers every day, but only 1.2 devices per person for news access within a week; at least once a week.

What's more astonishing are these: 24% of the respondents did not use any of the seven devices looked at to get news on a weekly basis. 57% use only one device, which is more likely to be the computer. Ten percent use two devices for news. But also only 8.5% use three or more among these seven devices to get news at least once a week. And I believe all of us here belong to that little group. Okay.

So, we also looked at the technology cluster, which states actually we found that using one device for news is possibly associated with using another device for news. Okay. And quickly, predictors. Age, income, education, student identity, [and] news interest predict the ownership, but income and student identity dropped when you try to predict used for news. Finally, enjoyment. As you can see, we don't see a lot of variations in terms of how enjoyable these devices are, but in comparison with traditional formats, which is print newspaper and TV, one thing we can conclude here is newer devices are not more enjoyable when used for news. And then my colleague... [Inaudible voices.] Yeah, sorry about that.

**Monica Chadha:** Well, that's because I took barely five minutes in the last conference, so I have a good record with Dr. Johnson. So, very quickly, just to conclude, newer devices are not quite as newsful. You know, people still prefer older platforms. They prefer to use the computer as compared to other, you know, like iPhones, iPads, and the other devices that we looked at in the study. The primary point that we are trying to make is that media companies should exercise more—should exercise caution when adopting a more technologically deterministic approach. Technology doesn't mean it's going to save us. We still need to focus on other things. We still need to look at consumption and users before we put all our eggs in the technology basket.

News use on multiple devices is not yet a reality. And we are focusing [on] a very small audience. Only those people who use these devices for news might end up using newer devices. We are not really—we are not getting more people coming in. It's a very concentrated sample that we are looking at, so we have to be careful about that.

And we basically think legacy media will continue to play a more important role. It's not out yet. It's not dead so far. And it will continue to play a role in providing news to the interested consumer.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

And finally, we also have to be aware if we are going to go with aggregators and we are going to go with device manufacturers, we are letting them lay down a lot of rules for our content and for revenue. So, is that really the way to move ahead? That's something that we need to think about.

And finally, just because you're getting more product doesn't mean that will translate into more profit. So media firms should evaluate how users respond to their cross-media products before investing more money in it. And any more questions?

[Applause.]

**Ahmed El Gody:** Thanks for having me here. Actually, I've been a fan of this conference for the past ten years. I was looking forward to having the opportunity to come one day to this conference. Today, I would like to share with you thoughts of my dissertation. Luckily, I did like my *seminarium*, which is like close to final dissertation, on January 10<sup>th</sup>, just 15 days before the start of the revolution. [laughter] So, I don't know if I was lucky or if I was not -- I don't know exactly what was that idea.

But I've been studying Egyptian newsrooms now for the past ten years, and I was inspired by doing something close to a Gabe Tuckman study on newsroom operation and the news routine. But I wanted to see, where does ICT fit within that production?

Quickly, the Egyptian print media has been classified as an authoritarian media for the past 60 years. Believe it or not, there is around 160 laws articles that govern the relationship between the government and the media, the media between itself, media and production, and media and society.

Journalists in Egypt are more or less like government employees in that sense. They never cross the line of moving from the government to the people or moving towards the needs of the people. Online journalism in that sense started back in 1994 when they wanted to have a newspaper online. It was just like for prestige that Egyptian media is now online—ha-ha-ha—in that sense. [laughter]

Really, it was just like in the shovelware. Now ten years after, it is still in the shovelware era. All of the news are just copy and paste of the original content or more or less they are a copy of government PR releases that are transferred to the newsrooms and then they are transferred into the newspaper, now into the online word.

So the Egyptian news industry, it did not fit within the society agenda. Government newspapers circulation dropped 80%. Only 3% of the Egyptian population watch Egyptian television. What helped that was the introduction of ICTs. With the introduction of the Internet, the one mistake that the Egyptian government did is that it left the Internet free. It did not confiscate

## **12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism**

it. It did not put too much laws and regulations on the use of the Internet, so more Egyptians started to communicate in cyberspace. Now there are almost 23-million Egyptians [that] are online, with a 38% annual increase in high-speed Internet subscribers. Mobile subscribers are 65.4 [million]. [Keep] in mind that there are only 80-million Egyptians, so almost 84% of the Egyptian population are hooked to the mobile world, and there are 38-million personal computers present.

ICTs became a political empowerment tool. The Egyptians started utilizing the technology in order to debate current events. Many silent actors started to use the Internet effectively in order to create sort of like a second virtual public sphere. What we saw back in January 25<sup>th</sup> is that that virtual world moved to the real world in that sense. Citizens quickly harnessed the ICTs creating online new sites, blogs, V-blogs, YouTube, whatever. Whatever there is, you will find it. There are 3.2-million Facebook users. 1,135,000 blogs and 3-million [You-Tube] users. Egyptians are by far the most social activist users in the Middle East region. So in that sense, in Egypt, we have like these two spheres: a traditional sphere and an online sphere. The proliferation of the independent media helped also in that idea.

Back now to my study. Where does ICTs fit? Let me start by giving the conclusion in case I don't have the time to... [laughter] The idea is that many people would say that the Egyptian revolution started because of the Facebook users, but like nobody asked that.

[Video stops. Next video begins.]

...newspapers and news media. So it was not only Facebook revolution, it was independent media and opposition media revolution. It is because of the utilization of ICTs inside the newsrooms giving room to the citizens to be part of the news production, and in that sense, being more active in creating local hyper, local media in production.

Now, studying the Egyptian media, I studied three newsrooms: Al Ahram, a governmental newspaper, Al Dostor, an opposition newspaper, and Al Masry Al Youm, an independent newspaper. Looking at Al Ahram, it's a very traditional newsroom. It is by far the largest news organization in the Middle East. Almost six million—I'm sorry—60,000 people working in the Al Ahram institution. Its newsroom is highly centralized. That newsroom actually 190 telephone lines and only seven computers. [laughter] Where you can find the computers, they are just next to the editors, so that the editors would see what their journalists are looking [at] online.

For Dostor, it is more and more mobilized. The problem with the Dostor is that it doesn't have enough economy in production. It is basically each room has its own [newsroom], like it has several newsrooms. Each section of the newspaper has its own form of newsroom. And at Masry Al Youm, it's very modern. Depends on a super desk editor, assignment, and more a

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

relationship between journalists and the editors. Very decentralized. Looking at the infrastructure, at Al Ahram again, they have firewalls and censor the content of the Internet; whereas, at Dostor and Masry Al Youm, they are more open.

Now quickly looking at what journalists use at the—I'm sorry—on the Internet, we'll find that Al Ahram are mainly using traditional tools of press releases, telephone, fax, wire service, but none of the new forms of ICTs; whereas, that was present in independent and opposition. In a typical day of technology used inside Al Ahram, at Dostor, Masry Al Youm, we will find that the highest technology that the people in Al Ahram are using are the fax for receiving the government orders—what to publish for the next day, in that sense; whereas, in Dostor and Al Masry Al Youm, they are more using interactive media and interactive material.

Now, that was the first study, ethnographic study inside the newsroom, so that they were kind enough of letting me see what journalists are using or what are the bookmarks of the news organizations. And what I found out [is] that there is more and more involvement of audience in both Dostor and Al Masry Al Youm news organization.

Jumping into the conclusion, [laughter], just quickly back reassessing my previous point of view, is that ICTs in most newsrooms did not evolve. They are stuck. I'm sorry. They are not evolving. They are not revolutionizing the use of ICTs. Statistics figures witness that there is little in government news organizations involvement of ICTs. Actually, if we go back to the website or the platform, it's that the online production does not belong in the newsroom, it goes to another building; whereas, it was more and more apparent in Dostor and Al Masry Al Youm.

I would love to talk more about it, but I don't have the time, but thank you very much.

[Applause.]

**Angela Lee:** [Thank you] for having me. It's an honor to be back here again today. *Is the medium the message?* I would like to begin my presentation with a quick story. When McDonald's was looking to improve the sales of their milkshakes, they hired a bunch of researchers to help them figure out how to do that, and most researchers focused on the product. Should their shakes be thicker, colder, or sweeter? Except for one person. Gerald looked at the customers instead. So he spent 18 hours one day sitting in one of the McDonald's just observing what people were buying, and this is what he found: Most people who bought the shakes got it early in the morning, they were always by themselves, they always only bought the shakes itself, and they never consumed their shakes in the store.

## **12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism**

So, who are these people? It turns out that they are morning commuters who are looking for a kind of breakfast that's easy to be consumed with one hand, that's not too greasy, and that takes a while to finish. And so when we think about breakfast, we don't usually think about the shakes, but this is what they found. So, there are a bunch of different kinds of milkshake mistakes. For example, over indulgence will be a kind of mistake, but I don't want to talk about that today. [laughs/laughter]

So, a milkshake mistake by definition in our case would be the ones that focus only on the shakes itself. If it wasn't for Gerald, we would not have known that most people who bought the shakes were the morning commuters. And so it should never only be about the content or the product itself, but it should be about how and why people use the thing itself, and that will be the focus of my talk today.

So it should not be a surprise to most people here that online, only a handful of websites get most of the traffic even though there are billions and millions of possibilities out there. And this is what Matthew Hindman talked about in terms of *The Myth of Digital Democracy*. And we have found in research that this has been explained by branding and source credibility or trustworthiness. So this is not the puzzle.

But what about this one right here? This is the popularity of the top ten news sites from 2009. Arguably, they all give you content from trustworthy sources. So, what explains for exponential differences in popularity? I would like to suggest that this has to do with process gratifications, which is your immediate experience with news consumption, and that I will explain by the five features that we'll talk about really soon.

So in the past when we talk about different news media, it usually translates into different media experiences. For example, when we talk about newspapers, either it's local newspaper or national newspapers. When we read a newspaper, it's pretty much textual and pictures, and the same thing goes for audio and television. But what about the Internet if we think about the kind of websites that we have? So, the Internet changed things by offering the same platform for everyone to fight for audience attention. And so what this means is that it's no longer a competition about content itself, but also about the medium and the experience. So the Internet offers new ways to consume news. For example, we get more choices today, and that also offers us different ways to measure and study online news consumption.

So I would like to ask, what do we mean when we call online news a news medium? How does it differ from other news media? And what do we mean when we say the Internet is a new media? I would like to suggest that in order to answer these questions, we need to first understand the medium attributes of whatever it is that we're calling a medium.

## **12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism**

And this is where I turn to using gratifications. In the paper, I talk a lot more about the paradigm evolution as criticisms and my counter criticism to the criticisms. But here, I will just mention that I'm talking more about process gratifications, which focus on the actual experience people have when it comes to consumption.

So I offer five media-specific features and gratifications that explains online news as a medium, and the first one will be interactivity, which is probably nothing new to the audience here. This is basically interaction interplay between consumers and the producers. And Ha and James even talk about audience-oriented, which is the kind of choices that we get as far as content goes, as well as source-oriented. That's the reciprocal communication between the user and media. And people have called interactivity the golden standard of the Internet.

The second one would be immediacy, which is about having timely updates of breaking news and things like that. Multimedia will be the amalgamation of texts, pictures, audio, and video, and that gives you a more engaging and creative way of offering the content, which gives you richer process gratifications. And information availability just to be sure. It's pretty much giving you a plethora of information to choose from that goes beyond what the news websites offer. So this could be hyperlinks to additional information from other sites or other sources.

And the last one is usability. The Internet is the first medium that allows for much more channels and content choices to the consumers, so this is the first time that we're allowed to forego any choices that we deem less user friendly without having to worry about maybe we're not getting the same quality.

And so I'll just jump quickly into the hypotheses. Basically, I'm trying to argue that if I'm right about the process gratifications, then the more the top sites use these five features, the more popular the sites will be.

And in the interest of time, I'm just going to the results. Oh, just really quickly, all of the websites were recorded last summer in June for the entire month using a free software in Mac, and I used T-Test and maximum likelihood regression in SEM.

So as you may have predicted too, supportive of my hypotheses, the top three of the top ten websites consistently used more of the features than the bottom three of the top ten that I was comparing. And so supportive of my second hypotheses, we do see that the features do predict popularity of the top ten sites.

And so the question becomes, which of the five is the strongest predictor of popularity? It turns out it's information availability. And I'm sorry that I

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

cannot go into details, but I encourage that you look at my paper. Pretty interesting; although, I may be biased. [laughter]

If we look at this chart right here, this is how the six websites used the five features that we have. And interactivity did not score on the first hypothesis, but this is explained by the fact that all the six websites pretty much use the same amount of interactivity features. But one that comes really like a large gap is when we look at information availability, especially if you look at Yahoo. They give a lot of information.

And I'll move to the next slide. So some take-home lessons for the professionals. We do see that the more popular "top site," the more feature-heavy they become, and that's the five features that I explained earlier. When we think about information availability, what does that actually mean for practitioners? This includes having special sections or reports on select topics, having more choices of whole stories, having different sources, and using hyperlinks to different websites' information. That's what people like the most from what I'm finding.

And I would suggest future study to look also at the mid-range of the top ten news websites. I didn't have the money to run the study including the middle section, and so I would encourage people to do that, and also to maybe track how the five features predict popularity over time, and to actually interview the consumers, because after all that's really the best way to know what they are thinking—to just ask them.

And so I'd like to conclude by saying that change in Internet-use diffusion and online media landscape leads to ever-evolving news consumption patterns. And this requires empirical research to both understand the causes and the effects of consumption patterns. But in order to do that, we need to first understand how the Internet appeals to consumers as a news medium, so we can maximize the medium-specific strengths to better match 21<sup>st</sup> century audience demands and desires. And I would also like to say that news consumption studies should not only be about the content anymore, it should also be about the medium or the platform as we talked about over the past two days.

So my last slide—*Is the medium the message?* I would like to suggest that the medium is not the whole message, because the whole picture includes other things such as news quality, news brands, and many other things. But the medium does tell us an important and compelling story that deserves and ought to be heard. Thank you.

[Applause.]

**Summer Harlow:** Yes, two Knight Center people. So it's actually really exciting to be presenting a paper instead of in the audience. Last year at this time, Ingrid and I were sitting in the audience, and we heard a presentation

## **12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism**

that was very similar to what we're going to be doing. It was a study looking at, I believe, Canada and the U.K. We looked at each other and we said, "Oh, we should do that in Latin America!" So that's sort of where this presentation is coming from.

So, basically what we decided to do is look at newspaper websites in Latin America to see what sort of participatory features and interactivity that they are allowing for their readers. We wanted to know how much readers can actually get involved in the news process. We wanted to find out whether or not they are providing these web features that encourage reader participation, and we thought it would be particularly interesting in light of the digital divide that is in Latin America.

So, we approached this from various different theories. First was looking at gatekeeping. And this is the idea that Mr. Gates, how he looked at what news goes into a newspaper, deciding, "Okay, these are the stories that are going to be in tomorrow's newspaper, and here's why I'm deciding this." And we also approached this from the idea of citizen journalism, parajournalism, participatory journalism, [and] collaborative journalism. What does it mean when the citizen is brought into the news process?

And then, of course, the digital divide, which these days it's not just about who has access. It's what kind of computers you have access to. What sort? Do you have broadband? Do you have high-speed? And do you even have an interest in using these new technologies?

So in order to conduct this, we did a content analysis. We did 19 Latin America newspapers. These are the flagship newspapers that we chose. It's every country from Mexico down to Chile, except for Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico started out in the sample, and then they changed their... They put up a paywall actually, so that sort of meant that was the end of the inclusion of them in our study.

Our timeframe was December 9<sup>th</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup>, because that worked for us. And we coded a total of 2,304 articles, so we did a lot of articles. And additionally, we also coded the homepages of every single newspaper. And our inter-coder reliability ranged from .81 to 1, so decent.

We decided based on the literature that we were going to look at three different aspects of the features that these newspaper websites were offering. The first was multimedia, and we defined this as things like video, photo, mobile devices, links. In other words, the very basic elements that you are not -- that are not text.

Then beyond that, one step up is this idea of interactive features. And these are things like the ability to share via email, to share via Facebook or Twitter, or to search the website, or to provide a listing in the most popular newspapers, or, I mean, stories of that day.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

And then the final step above that would be participatory, and that is the ability for readers to report corrections, to email a reporter, to submit a citizen report, or to comment on a particular story.

**Ingrid Bachmann:** What we found actually surprised us at many levels. I think one of the main things is that the varying degree of adoption of these technologies. We couldn't find a pattern in terms of all these newspapers had all these features and this other newspaper had none. It will be sometimes it will seem random for us. Some newspapers will have, say, a Twitter feed, but they will not have a Facebook one. And it's as easy to add the button as it is in both cases.

So when we talk about the homepages, most of the newspapers had RSS feeds, all but one had a Twitter account and a Facebook account, but only two had a YouTube listed on the homepage, despite most of these newspaper having video actually. About the interactive features, these were one of the most popular and most produced, including the most popular ones on the search features. Reporting errors, only one newspaper, Brazil's *Folia* had a reporting error feature in the homepage. Most of them had a way to contact the editors at the homepage, like "Contact us," a generic one.

When we look at the stories, and this is the surprising part, less than a fifth of all the stories that we analyzed had a link in the story, at least one link. We're talking about, in 2,300 stories, we found on average .6 links. Five newspapers of the ones analyzed didn't include any link at all in any story. Zero at all. Nothing. I mean, their policy was no links, which is completely surprising, especially when it gives you more page views. I would say, like, "Don't you want to lead your readers to more stories?"

Photos was the most widely used multimedia feature. And I guess you can interpret this that the newspapers keep having that print medium mentality. They are still being textual and pictorial, but not much [more] than that. Less than 10% of their stories had video, audio, broadcasts, infographics. And even if you think about the videos, about half of them weren't actually produced by the newspapers. They were YouTube videos.

In terms of interactive features, only half of the stories have a Facebook "like" button. But even less than that had any way for their reader to engage, I mean, to participate more directly with a story. So half of the stories, you could give a "thumbs up" to the story, but you couldn't edit. You couldn't fix a typo. You couldn't let their reporter know that there is a mistake in the story.

70% of the stories included reader comments, but one of the things that also surprised us is that this wasn't a widespread use.. So in some newspapers some of the stories would allow reader comments and then some not. And we couldn't in certain cases identify, what was the pattern? "Oh, it's all the

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

football stories that you could comment on." No, it's not all the football stories. "Oh, it's all the entertainment stories." No, it's not all the entertainment stories. Although, the entertainment ones actually were the ones that allowed for more commenting.

We also wanted to explore whether there was anything that could explain the adoption of these features. We tried to correlate this with press freedom levels in each country. There was no significant relationship there. We tried with a human development level of each country. There wasn't a relationship there. We did find a significant correlation though with Internet penetration rates. And it makes sense. For countries that have more access to the Internet, they can use more of these features.

So in conclusion, like we said, we think that these newspapers are pretty much still thinking too much as "We are print media." They are just going online, but they are not using or embracing the whole potential they have with the Internet. And arguably, this has to do with the digital divide, with having the means and the human capital, for example, to do these things. But the engagement of readers is done at a very basic level. Like I said, it's like they can "like" our stories, but don't you dare copy or edit our stories or fix our copy. So that surprised us.

So, I think this is -- we think this is actually food for thought for, what are newspapers going to do in the future? I mean, they have all these features they could use. There's a lot of interactive potential. And it's up to them to decide, what is it that they're going to do with it?

[Applause.]

**Dr. Jonathan Groves:** [I'm Dr. Jonathan Groves] from *The Monitor*. Thank you very much. Thank you, Rosental and Amy. This is a great conference and I'm honored and humble to be part of this. Carrie and I talked about it, in the interest of time, we're not going to tag team it, so I'll just handle the load for this go-round, but she's here for questions. She's my research partner in crime. And thank you to those of you who didn't sneak off and go to the Kraft Beer & Cheese Panel that's just down the hall. [laughter] I was little tempted myself to go there and bail, but I didn't.

It's very interesting hearing the conversation in here. And I think any of us who were here this morning that was listening to Gustavo and listening to his inspirational words, especially those of us who have been investigative journalists, realize the conundrum we're in. How do we do this good work and get it out there and get people to listen and understand the reality of the web? And that's what informs our research. We really take that to heart when we get in these newsrooms and look at these legacy newsrooms and say, how can they change? Let's understand the organizational change.

## **12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism**

And what we've talked about here over these last two days, in terms of innovation, we've talked about it in new technologies, new ways of telling stories, new ways of doing things, but we haven't talked a lot about, you know, how do we get there? You can't just snap your fingers and start to produce amazing online content. As John Thornton said, "It's hard. This is hard work." And if you're trying to affect true change, especially at an institution where the routines are so ingrained, you have to understand people's values and beliefs. And that's really what we were doing here.

And what we did is we spent 13 months studying *The Christian Science Monitor*. It was three full weeks in the newsroom—December 2009, July 2010, and January 2011—to sort of track their progress as they abandoned the daily print edition and went to a print weekly and went to web only. We spent three weeks interviewing people, shadowing newsroom staffers, observing meetings, studying documents, just getting inside their heads to see really what was going on.

And our method for doing this, when we analyze organizational change, there's three really big ideas that we use when we look at this. One is disruptive innovation. You want to think about, what is the news job to be done of the audience as you're trying to innovate? And what's difficult about this is, there is what we produce as journalists, what we consider news—the congressional budget battles, the investigative stories that we've been talking about—and then there's what the audience wants—Charlie Sheen. How do you compete with that? That's what gets the traffic and that's what you have to deal with. So in this framework you have to decide, what is good enough content on the web to get the job of news done? That's what Christianson tells us.

Thinking about your milkshake mistake, I'm glad you brought that up, Christianson talks about that. What is the job to be done for the milkshake? And that's what they were looking at in that. And to do this, organizations have to have emergent strategy. You have to be bold [about] experimentation. You can't sit there and analyze to the nth degree with all your Excel spreadsheets, "Am I going to get ROI?" You've just got to get in there, and as some people have said here today, you've just got to be willing to fail and fail fast.

There's also diffusion of innovation. Once you have this innovation, how does it spread through the organization? You learn about it. You persuade the staff to do something with it. Then after persuasion, there's the decision to take it on. Then you implement it. And then confirmation that this indeed is what it's worth. And when you're watching that innovation spread throughout the organization, you have to understand the culture of the organization and really look at, what are the underlying assumptions? The unspoken values that inform what people are doing and how they do their jobs. Argyris calls this "the theories in use." There's what you say your values are and then there's what you actually do. And that's what you have to understand.

## **12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism**

Because when you understand that, that's when you can truly change. And so that's what you have to do in looking at this. And that's what we did when we went to *The Monitor*. We took that look at it.

So, the thing about looking at *The Christian Science Monitor*, it's a storied organization. They won seven Pulitzer Prizes, founded in 1908. Same year the first School of Journalism was founded at the University of Missouri, my alma mater. Sorry, had to get that plug in. It's funded largely by The Christian Science Church, which makes it kind of a unique animal. And that's what becomes the issue here, because the church is going to cut the funding to the newsroom. They get \$12-million a year from the church. That's going to go to \$4-million in 2013. That's what we call an organizational change—a critical moment. That's when you have to make the hard decision.

They were a daily newspaper distributed—this is not a misprint—via mail. They would print, and then a day or two later, the subscribers would get the newspaper, which informed how they did their journalism, because they had to be more analytic. They had to be more enterprising to convey that information. So what they did, John Yemma came onboard in 2008. Background as an editor at [Boston.com](http://Boston.com). He previously had worked at *The Christian Science Monitor*. Deep journalistic credentials. Deep online editor credentials. Comes in, says, "We're going to go web only." Comes up with a plan with the publisher, Jonathan Wells, and they switched to a web-only daily and a print weekly.

And this is the reality that we all know—declining circulation. It looks pretty bleak. If we're supposed to be a national newspaper and we're going from 220,000 to 52,000—and I've got three minutes left—that's pretty bleak.

The mission of the organization, "To injure no man, but to bless all mankind." And in the newsroom, we found a deep commitment to monitor journalism; what they call "solutions-based" journalism. And they looked at it as being non-sensationalistic; that we want to bring light, not heat. And what happens is we found in being in this newsroom that web-first undermines not only the craft of journalism, but the craft of *Monitor* journalism, and there's this internal conflict we have in the newsroom in facing that. It's a fundamental conflict.

And one interviewee told us at the beginning of the study in December of 2009, "I mean, we're up there with all the different newsiest online organizations in Google. The downside would be we're doing a lot more sort of culture war stuff, headlines with Palin in it, and like, gee-whiz electronic gadgetry stuff simply to get traffic. Little blogs that might be a good read, but don't have much reporting if any are sort of what gets all the traffic, that and photos of the day. So it's a little disheartening to be traipsing through the jungle risking your life in areas that I cover for my readers if that's not going to get any traffic at all. All management seems to care about is traffic."

## **12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism**

And what's hard in this picture is when they started this and made this decision, they had three-million page views a month. By the time they brought in blogging, frequent updating, and by the time the decision [was] made, "We're going to do this and implement a new content management system in December 2009," their up to 9.5-million page views. Their goal is 25-million. They hit it in July. Because they have change agent Jimmy Orr, online editor, who's very bold and very abrasive, and he breaks a few eggs, and he gets people mad, and he says, "We're going to do things a little bit different way." And it fundamentally rocks the world of the newsroom that has said, "You know, we usually have two days to do a story." "No, you're going to do two stories in one day, and they are going to be 500 words a piece, and you're going to be updating as much as possible, and you're going to be looking to Google to get what your story ideas should be, because that's where our traffic is coming from. And the reality is, if we don't do this, we're gone."

So they get to 25-million page views by July 2010. Jimmy Orr feels like this is successful, and he moves on. Goes on to the *L.A. Times* as their online editor. In January 2000 then, Dave Scott, the international, long-time international editor, respected newsman, becomes the online editor. Things calm down. They level out at 19.4-million page views. [Someone gives him the time limit.] Yes, one minute, okay.

The reason that's important is the pendulum swung. You had change agent come into the newsroom who had to rock things up and shake things up, and then what happened is he went all this way changing them out of their routines. Then you have a new -- you go back to your traditional international editor, who brings things to a new normal. And that's what has to happen, and that's what happened at *The Monitor* that we saw.

I put a little asterisk by this for you baseball fans. The 25-million page views was deemed by the newsroom as a little bit of not a legitimate spike, because they were doing anything they could to get those page views. Cranking wire copy up there, churning and burning, and it was just like anything to get page views in order to hit that target.

So, the conflict that we saw in the newsroom is that there is the success of page views versus *The Monitor* ideal. How do we deal with that? Because success breeds acceptance. And when they saw their page views were going up, they said, "We are relevant in this new environment. We need to stay."

So, for those of you that are journalists, we thought this would be helpful. The four-prong strategy that they took: Increasing the frequency of updating, updating regularly and often; using Search Engine Optimization for their headlines and their blurbs; monitoring Google trends for hot topics and immediately turning around a post to make things happen; and using social media to reach new audiences.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

The update frequency. They were having reporters do two shorter stories, 500 words a piece, instead of a 1,000-word story. Now you will see reporters do several blog posts. They call it riding the Google wave. They use blogs to get information out more quickly. It's not edited as much, so accuracy becomes an issue. We see this a lot—the balance between immediacy and accuracy. How do you deal with that? You use lists to summarize and synthesize. Don't just use key words, use key word phrases. Use Google News and Yahoo News to identify your topics and hit them hard. Ride that Google wave.

This is a case where they did this. They repeated the phrase "divorce rate" in order to turn on Google and get anybody who's searching on divorce rate to their site. As journalists, this is kind of like, is this good writing? We have to go to Google to tell us what we should be putting in our headlines? We saw lots of conflict with this in the newsroom.

Then lastly, you incorporate... [Given time limit again.] Sorry. Okay. Sorry. Just wanted to show the page views. Their page views have gone -- have continued to rise using this strategy. Sorry.

[Applause.]

**Brian Baresch:** You may have seen on the State of the News there was a killing of some U.N. personnel in Afghanistan sometime in the last couple of days that they think was spurred by that Koran burning in Florida. Anybody see that before I...? [No audible response.] How did you hear about it?

**Man:** NPR.

**Brian Baresch:** NPR. How about anyone else?

**Man:** Google News.

**Brian Baresch:** Google News.

**Man:** New York Times app.

**Brian Baresch:** New York Times app.

**Woman:** Al Jazeera.

**Brian Baresch:** Al Jazeera. Anybody hear it through social media?

**Woman:** [Inaudible.]

**Brian Baresch:** Yeah. Yeah. Social movement of news, it's going all over the place. I don't need to belabor that point. I just wanted to use an

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

example. One of the primary vehicles for social movement of news these days is Facebook, and that's what we were studying.

I think you've all seen this quote from some unnamed college student in a study that Brian Stelter wrote about a few years ago. [Quote on screen: "If the news is that important, it will find me."] And I personally follow this news strategy myself. Between Twitter and Facebook and occasionally looking at Google News, that's basically how I get my news. I don't have a TV. I don't subscribe to a paper. And I don't regularly go to news sites.

Our idea was to see, what kind of links are people posting on Facebook? We know people post news, but they also post other stuff. I looked on my feed this morning at a bunch of music videos. "Hey, this is how I'm feeling." And it's this news thing here. So one of the questions we looked at is, what's the nature of the link feed that people are getting?"

In a recent Pew Study, 92% said—this was last year—92% said they get their news from more than one platform. Dr. Chi had a few numbers along these lines. The State of the Media Report that just came out said that 41% of Americans said they get most of their news about national and international issues from the Internet. That cohort is 17% larger than it used to be. Purcell et al. found that about half of Americans say that they rely on the people around them to tell them when there's news they need to know.

Here we go. Okay, I said that. You might say we're going from the old line ink economy into a link economy. We've heard bunches of people already talk about how the... [chirping noise] That sounds like my alarm tone. Oh, I'm awake. I'm awake. [laughter] Talk about how one of the things... I mean, Ingrid was just saying, "Why do you not have links? You can get more page views that way." So, we've got... So, we're moving from, how much ink can you get to how many links can you get? I shared this with a friend of mine at another school. He asked if ink stained wretches are being replaced by link stained wretches. Oh, man, I got this underline blue stuff all over me.

So, what I call the social filter is sort of a technological version of the oldest political tool, which is word of mouth. In terms of Facebook, which is what we studied, it's becoming a top referrer. Talking Points Memo said they've gone from 0% to about between 5 and 6%, if I remember right. Is that right? No. Almost 20% of their links coming from social media and almost half of those are coming from Facebook.

So, what we did was we basically figured out a survey. Another part of our group did some more stuff with that survey, but we also asked people who took the survey if they would let us friend them, if we weren't already friends, and look at their links. And we asked them to post the link as well, so it ended up being a characterized, stratified, snowball sample. And we got close to 100 people. We eliminated some foreign language people, because we wanted to make it U.S. centric.

## **12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism**

So we ended up with 78 people. 38 of them posted some links. Here's a big glob of people who didn't. And it was interesting. We coded up to 15 links. We started September 14<sup>th</sup> last year and decided to go back three months or 15 links, whichever came first. So a bunch of people had no links. A few people had 1, 2, 3, 4. And then we've got this big glob of about 16 people who got to 15 before we reached the end of the study period. And I think some of them would have kept going. If I knew much about graphs, we might see a power wall curve here.

I'm running low on time, so I'll just breeze through this. Here's the ages of people who are linking. We ended up merging the 55's into the rest. This is a little bit different from Facebook's overall demographics. Normally, the 35 group is bigger, but the 25 to 34 group is really posting a lot.

Here's our genres that people were posting. News constituted about 21% of the links that we saw. General interest, which was sort of a catchall category, was about the same. People were posting products, "Here's a cool thing that I make or that I use." Commentary, satire, features, and so forth.

And on the topics, current event [and] politics, not very much. Over here, sports, art, and entertainment, that's Charlie Sheen. [laughter] See, Charlie Sheen is still prominent even on Facebook. You can't get away from it. What we didn't do and what we probably will do is compare this distribution with some content analysis of regular newspapers and so forth to see if we're getting a similar mix.

I'm running short of time, so I'll skip the -- so I'll mostly skip the breakdowns by sex. Women posted more in general. So they posted more of most of the links. Primary medium. Most of the links were to text articles. A lot of them had photos with them, but the photos weren't primary. A lot of people posted videos. Like I said, music videos. "Hey, here's a song I hadn't thought about." Not much was primarily interactive.

So, let me put that back, because I'm not quite done. I've got a conclusion or two. There weren't a lot of comments. There were a couple of links that got more than 20 comments. Most got one or two or none, with a mean of about 2.1. 'Likes' were even less significant. Links posted by women tended to get more comments than links posted by men. I'm not sure what that means. We're still noodling out a lot of the implications.

So, about half of the people we looked at posted links. People in age group 25-34 tended to post more than their older and younger people, which is a little contrary to Facebook use things in general. [Time limit given.] One minute. Thank you. Then there's not a lot of interactivity going on. There weren't a lot of... You can share a link somebody else posted, but that was well under 10% of the total.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

So, this is sort of a picture of what you get on your newsfeed. You can see it's a mix. There's some news in there. It's competing with other stuff. I want to reemphasize this was extremely exploratory. We're just trying to get a basic picture. We basically had no budget. We didn't have any sophisticated online crawling tools or anything like that. So, we just took a look.

Future studies we can take a little -- use more analytical tools, take a comparison of genre and topic distribution with those on maintain stream media sites, and use APIs to gather data and so on. Another problem—Facebook keeps changing its nature, changing the feed, changing its privacy settings, so it's kind of tough to stay on top of. But that's what we did.

[Applause]

**Tom Johnson:** Again, if you'd like to ask a question, please come to the microphone. And just a reminder, introduce who you are, where you're from, what your secret agenda is. No, you don't have to do that. [laughter] First question.

**Chris Anderson:** Hi. Chris Anderson, professor at CUNY. Question is for Carrie and Jonathan. It was a fantastic paper. Really, I liked it. I guess it's sort of a strange question, but would you classify your paper as... [microphone noises] Would you classify your paper as a tragedy or a happy story? [laughter] Because, you know, you could sort of, if you were writing a polemical piece, right, you could frame the data you got very easily as, you know, either success, you know, "*Monitor* partially reinvented," or, you know, "Noble professional journalists pulverized by, you know, management and web metrics." And, you know, I thought it was good you didn't quite take that tone in the paper, but, you know, personally, how would you tell the story?

**Jonathan Groves:** Well, there's tons of data, and our paper was probably was too long as it is, and we could have gone longer. I guess the issue that... I think it's somewhere in the middle. I hate to be that... If you're from Gustavo's perspective, I would think it's a tragedy, because, really, if you look at what *Monitor* journalism was, and I think people who loved *The Monitor*, would say, "It's not what *The Monitor* was." I wasn't around at the time, so I didn't get into the fact that they were blogging about Tiger Woods. They're blogging about, you know, celebrity journalism. Stuff they never would have done in the past. And these journalists are just wrestling with this and saying, "Well, we can either be relevant and have people read some of what we're doing, and maybe what we'll do is they will happen upon the good journalism. So, Tiger Woods brings them here and then maybe they will find that *Monitor* journalism." And really, the hopeful part of the narrative was at the end when they were making the swing back, it was like, okay, at the beginning, they're saying, "We don't belong here. We're scared." But then at the end, they are saying, "You know what? We have some success. We *do* belong here. And maybe what we can do is work within this new

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

format." So maybe a *Monitor* story isn't one story with five sources that's 1,200 words. It's four blog posts that have one thing each, but still has that sense of solutions-based journalism.

The other piece of this is, they're still not making money. So they are hitting their goal, and they thought when they hit that goal, it was like, "Here comes the ad revenue." But the ad revenue hasn't been coming. So, that's... It's gonna be a little scary to see what happens next year.

**Tom Johnson:** Next.

**Hazel Feigenblatt:** Hazel Feigenblatt from Global Integrity again. My question is about the study on the Latin American websites. And I was wondering if you checked out any of the legal environment that these websites work on. I work at Costa Rica *La Nación*, which is included in the study. Something that was discussed for maybe a couple of years before opening comments and writing blogs was that anything that anyone writes on the website is legally potentially a problem. You can get sued for anything any advertiser or anybody says, even on the Facebook page of the newspaper. So that's something that, you know, to allow comments means having people monitoring like 24/7. So I was just wondering if that was something that you analyzed in other countries as well.

**Summer Harlow:** We didn't actually --

**Ingrid Bachmann:** Specifically.

**Summer Harlow:** -- specifically look at the legal aspects, but we did mention at least in our discussion, as well as in the review, looking at the factors that are involved. That yes, this means somebody is going to have to be monitoring the comments. And other studies have shown that there is a cost benefit analysis. So if it's not worth an editor's time to spend however many hours to make sure people aren't writing libelous things on your website, if you don't have that, that manpower, that resource, then you're not going to spend that money to hire that person to do that, which means then you're just going to shut off all sort of participation from readers.

**Ingrid Bachmann:** I would add to that, first, this was an exploratory analysis. We plan to expand this to other newspapers for each country and all of those things. Reader comments were among the most common ones. 70% of the stories had reader comments. And I guess that now the next step is actually see, for example, libel issues with commenting and all those things. Because that's when we started realizing, okay, it's weird the pattern we see for the comments. You know, it's not all the stories. It's certain stories. But, for example, countries that have issues with, let's say, free speech, recently, the most common, I would say, recently that we know of, for example, Ecuador, Venezuela, all of those stories allowed comments. So it's not as if they were, "Oh, I have to be careful of what they say," for fear

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

of, say, government surveillance or something like that. We didn't see those kind of things. And the other thing is that we kind of counted for that when we were trying to check press freedom, because the Press Freedom Index of Freedom House actually accounts for those kind of issues, whether just commenting something can put you in jail.

**Glenn Frankel:** Hi. I'm Glenn Frankel. I'm the Director of the School of Journalism, one of your hosts today. [laughter] Ahmed, so, all right, social media did not cause the revolution in Cairo. It had a role though. And I'm just kind of wondering whether the timing of the revolution, whether the fact that it finally happened now, because so many of the conditions had been there for so long, and yet, why does it happen today? [I'm wondering] how much emphasis you would put on ICT [and] social media. The sort of slow but steady growth of this kind of alternative culture to the, as you pointed out so well, the overwhelming bureaucracy and state-run nature of information. Is it responsible for it happening in February 2011 or are there other factors that really pushed it over?

**Ahmed El Gody:** No, the timing was -- the timing was just about right. Like, everyone was thinking that soon the revolution is going on or soon there will be a revolution. And that was like the hot topic of discussion in independent and opposition media in the relation to social media. What I meant is that social media played a role. It is more or less the utilization of the social media within independent and opposition media platform. It's like, for example, if I can use some of the discussions that we talked about today, it's like, people on Facebook, like, "Read Ibrahim Eissa's article in Al Dostor this week. See what his point of view [is]." And then they would take his discussion and discuss it on Facebook. "Look at [this individual]'s discussion and look at this and this activist's discussions in opposition and independent media." Those are the discussions that were more or less utilized and formulated in social media, and that led to the revolution. The thing [is] that everyone knew that on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January, that people will start a movement. The revolution or the social revolution did not start only the 25<sup>th</sup> of January. It started actually in 2008 on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, or 6<sup>th</sup> of April, I mean, a movement on Facebook. And again, it was the utilization of independent and opposition media and its discussion in social [media] or in this virtual atmosphere.

Everyone knew about that the revolution is going on, and everybody knew that the people will go down to the street, and actually people were. The government undermined the number of protestors. They thought that there would be like 10-20,000 people, but there were 100-120,000 people. And when they went down, there was more and more utilization and more and more discussion on the social platform and the opposition platform. Opposition media came out and they said, "Okay, now it is the time for people to go out in the street. Facebook is not anymore the platform. It is the people are the platform." And then you would find the reporters, journalists down on the street reporting live what is going on. And they'd

## **12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism**

publish it not only in the newspapers, but in the newspapers, independent and opposition, TV stations, as well as Twitter and Facebook.

And that was also -- it seems like when the government closed the Internet on January 28<sup>th</sup>, the revolution went on and on, because it wasn't able to stop independent and opposition newspapers from printing or independent and opposition TV stations from broadcasting. And in fact, there were more and more discussions, more and more heat in that sense.

**Nikki Usher:** Thanks. Nikki Usher at USC. I also had a question for you. I was curious just about all we hear in the U.S. media is that it's pretty dangerous to be an opposition journalist, and I was wondering what it was like for you to be doing work in opposition newsrooms and just to, you know, as a researcher be physically present and doing research in a newsroom that seems scary to me to be doing work in.

**Ahmed El Gody:** Of course, in Egypt, it's easy that you can go to jail. It's the easiest thing that you would go to jail, because of the emergency laws. You can easily just for saying anything that does not please the government, you will be thrown into jail regardless if you are a journalist or a researcher in that sense. In fact, one of the reasons that I had to do my research at Orebro is that it was not security cleared from the university. So I was very much passionate. I wanted to do this research, so that is how I wanted to do it. I wanted to go outside in order to have more opportunity to do that. The government controls the newsrooms in that sense. And you can find government, more or less, agents in each newsroom reporting on what other opposition people are doing or reporting on their critiques, and that is more and more scary.

The thing is, when you have 99% of the journalists are now on the opposition, and 1% of the journalists are within the government platform, and that more and more people are on the opposition side, then the government just could not do anything about it. That movement of more and more journalists became more and more encouraged to step in and be more courageous in stating their points of views, in that sense.

**Nikki Usher:** Thank you.

**Tom Johnson:** Okay. I think it is about time for lunch, and so I want to give a big hand for all of our presenters.

[Applause.]