



### What's Your Journalist Social Media IQ?

Social media use has become a staple and, perhaps, an expectation in the field of journalism. Have you really considered the impact of social media on the journalist? See if you know the answers to these three questions.

1. What percentage of journalists use Twitter?
2. What percentage of journalists have a blog?
3. What percentage of journalists use social media to gather news?

*Answers can be found on page 4*

*~By Dr. Teresa R. Taylor-Moore*

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### We Need You!

*By Sharon A. Honore, Ph.D.*



**We Need You!!!**

**Help make Journalism History @ AU**

- Visit: access <http://www.spj.org/join.asp> –
- List Ashford University as your local chapter
- Help Ashford become 1st Online Campus Student Charter
  - Annual student dues are just \$37.50
- Contact Dr. Rollins @Lisa.Rollins@faculty.ashford.edu and tell her you joined

**We need you!** This well-worn phrase has been adopted by our small team of faculty as a recruitment and retention it applies to you, our Journalism majors. All of our faculty are relatively new to the Ashford environment and working hard to build a dynamic online experience for students who wish to study journalism and mass communication. But, ‘we **need** you!

We are preparing for our Program Review in June (where we will introduce new courses like Internship, working feverishly to attract students to the department, and keeping up with the ever-changing trends in journalism education. Success of all of you, our students, is the driving force behind our commitment and dedication. Our dreams are big for this program!

We envision a student newsletter which features student submissions in the next few weeks. We envision a student online newspaper, written and primarily maintained by a student editorial staff in the near future. We need **you!**

The journalism program at Ashford University is growing and our faculty firmly believe that the effort we exert will yield a significant return relative to retention and expansion. Journalism rocks and this program is determined to prove, without a doubt, that ‘**we need you!**’



# Society of Professional Journalists

Join the new student chapter of SPJ and become a part of history! Once we officially establish the chapter, we will be the first online institution in the history of the organization to be allowed a chapter. Our goal is to get the chapter established as soon as possible but we need enough members to do so.

Not only will you make history by being a part of the inaugural chapter, there are also tremendous benefits that come along with being a member of SPJ. Once you become a member, there may be a day-long spring conference in your area that you will be able to attend. Remember that conference attendance and participation is a great way to learn more about the organization, the field, and opportunities that may be available to you.

Visit the SPJ website for more information about the organization at [www.spj.org](http://www.spj.org). For more information about the student chapter and how to join, contact Dr. Lisa Rollins at [Lisa.Rollins@faculty.ashford.edu](mailto:Lisa.Rollins@faculty.ashford.edu).

SPJ's Spring Conferences are day-long professional development meetings bringing area journalists, students and journalism educators together in one place to hear from industry experts on a wealth of topics. Get available details — including announced dates, locations and contacts — right here.

**April 4**

Region 4: Columbus, Ohio

**April 11**

Region 5: Chicago

Region 12: Fayetteville, Ark.

**April 25**

Region 1: Boston, Mass.

Region 7: Overland Park, Kan.

## Newspapers transforming, not dying, report media scholars

By Lisa L. Rollins, Ph.D., Ed.S.

Because technology has dramatically influenced the ways in which news is gathered and distributed, many—especially young adults—have proclaimed that they get their news online—not from traditional newspapers.

Undoubtedly, online news consumption has mushroomed, with no signs of diminishing. However, according to the recent findings of two researchers, Paul Steinle, a former United Press International president and broadcast journalist, and his wife, reporter Sara Brown, Ph.D., the hard-copy newspaper is far from yesterday's news.

In June 2010, Steinle and Brown, unable to find a funding source to explore who actually still needs hard-copy newspapers, embarked on what would become a 13-month study that covered some 31,000 miles and took the researchers to 48 states via a 31-foot Cougar fifth-wheel travel trailer and a Chevrolet Silverado 2500 diesel pickup, both of which they purchased for the specific purpose of hitting the road in the name of journalism research.

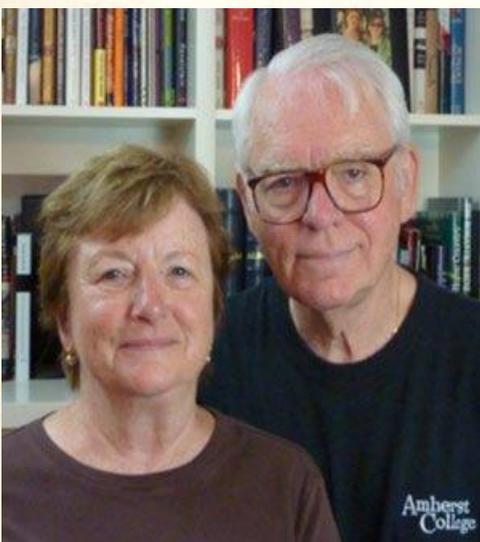
Steinle, who also served as a journalism educator at the college level prior to his retirement in 2010, said he and Brown, in their quest to visit newsrooms and newspapers in all 50 states, traveled to Anchorage, Ala., and Kauai, Hawaii, by air, taking only one three-week break during the course of their newspaper study.

**“DURING MY TENURE** at UPI (1988-1990), I interacted with many newspaper executives and visited many newspapers,” Steinle said. “I was impressed by the depth of the commitment to gathering and reporting the news in newspaper companies. In broadcasting companies, gathering and delivering news is about 10-15 percent of what the business does, but at newspapers the entire organizations seemed more committed and involved in newsgathering and news delivery. So, I found newspaper companies more *news-driven* than broadcasters (who also offer a lot of entertainment programming).”

Moreover, Steinle added, “I was also impressed by the values of the people who owned newspapers, by their involvement with their communities, and by their dedication to professional ethically driven journalism.”

As a journalism educator, Steinle said he frequently heard the proclamation that “newspapers are dying,” yet they endured, year after year. Thus, when the veteran journalist and university administrator retired in 2010, he and Brown opted to investigate the “newspapers are dying” claims first-hand.

“The ... growth of the Internet and the financial problems of the newspaper industry,” never mind the 2008 recession that “was clobbering all media that survived on advertising dollars”—both periodicals and many newspapers—only served to intensify the rumors that traditional newspapers were limping along at best, he observed. Subsequently, the husband-and-wife researchers said they called on friends “with a similar curiosity about the future of newspapers to help us,” and ultimately created Valid Sources, a nonprofit organization, and began the work necessary to design and publish a report on the current-day status of newspapers. *(Continued ...)*



***“Each newspaper’s size, its market, its financial resources, the values of its ownership and the skill of its leadership determine its status and direction. We visited newspapers that have been distinguished either for their general excellence or for their innovation. So, we did not encounter dying newspapers ensconced in hospice.”***

***--Paul Steinle***

*Media scholars Sara Brown, Ph. D., and Paul Steinle researched who needs newspapers. (File Photo)*

## Newspapers transforming (continued)

**THE PAIR'S RESEARCH** results have been posted on a website—WhoNeedsNewspapers.org—where one can eye fresh reports about a number of U.S. newspapers; namely, 50 reports from 50 newspapers, as well as what the researchers have dubbed “J-Epiphany” from 100 newspaper people and nine bonus interviews, the latter of which are interviews with industry experts.

Not surprisingly, while the research findings vary from one newspaper to the next because the industry is one that is both “complex” and “dynamic,” none of the newspapers Steinle and Brown encountered were facing demise.

“Newspapers vary greatly in their approach to the challenges facing them,” Steinle explained. “Each newspaper’s size, its market, its financial resources, the values of its ownership and the skill of its leadership determine its status and direction. We visited newspapers that have been distinguished either for their general excellence or for their innovation. So, we did not encounter dying newspapers ensconced in hospice.”

The newspapers included in the WNN research, in fact, are alive and well in large part because their leadership is “thinking beyond the limits of their newsprint, presses and delivery routes, the researchers contend. “Most still call themselves newspapers or media companies, but are re-conceptualizing themselves as multi-media, multi-platform news and information companies that deliver content through newsprint and new electronic Internet-connected channels,” Steinle noted.

One of the most surprising findings, he shared, is that “so many people who write about these companies are not reporting on the aggressive steps many newspapers are taking to rethink and perpetuate the unique information services they deliver to their communities.”

Per Steinle and Brown, among the 150-plus newspaper people they interviewed, the commitment to newsgathering, not to mention the intelligence of those engaged in reporting news, is high. “Our nation is fortunate that so many bright people, who are interested in observing their communities and reporting truthfully about their observations, are engaged in this field,” Steinle said.

“(T)HERE IS STILL a significant portion of most communities who want their news delivered in the traditional newsprint package, with its unique characteristics of portability and random-access, and with the benefits of the contemplative nature of its presentation,” Steinle reported. In turn, it’s a safe bet—at least per the WNN findings—that newspapers will endure for at least another couple of decades, if not longer, provided “their unique qualities are valued in an otherwise Twittering future,” he said.

### 1. What percentage of journalists use Twitter?

- 59 percent of journalists worldwide use Twitter

### 2. What percentage of journalists have a blog?

- 34 percent of journalists have a blog

### 3. What percentage of journalists use social media to gather news?

- 51 percent of journalists worldwide say they use what Oriella referred to in the study as “microblogs” (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Weibo) to gather new stories

Oriella PR Network (2013). “*The New Normal for News*” Retrieved from [http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/journalists-twitter\\_b45416](http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/journalists-twitter_b45416)

## Faculty Spotlight

### *Dr. Teresa R. Taylor-Moore*



*“Many people have had great ideas that have changed the world. Many others have had great ideas that remain only that—ideas. It is only those ideas that are effectively communicated that become a reality.”*

*~Dr. Teresa R. Taylor-Moore*

Dr. Teresa R. Taylor-Moore is an Assistant Professor in the College of Liberal Arts at Ashford University. She holds her PhD in Mass Communication/Speech Communication from The University of Mississippi, a Master of Art in Mass Communication from The University of New Orleans, and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with a minor in Speech Communication from The University of Southern Mississippi. Taylor-Moore has taught in higher education since 2000. She has served on the faculty at The University of Alabama in Huntsville, Mississippi State University, Tougaloo College, and Jackson State University, and as an adjunct for Tulane University and Belhaven University.

In 2007, she began instructing online for the Communication Department at Kaplan University. Taylor-Moore has taught courses in public speaking, introduction to communication, introduction to mass communication, communication theory, persuasion, media law, media ethics, business communication, communication and conflict, and other special topics. She also has a variety of research interests including mediated portrayals of women in television, the effect of mediated technologies on interpersonal communication, and communication in the online environment.

Taylor-Moore joined the faculty at Ashford University in June 2013, and for her, it was a dream come true. She says, “Because I understood the power of communication--both mediated and human communication--I wanted the opportunity to connect with others from all walks of life in places all over the world in my career. At Ashford I am able to do that and also able to study how to do it more effectively using various technologies. Here, it is not just about what my students learn from me, it is about what I learn from my students. In the online environment, my students are able to take me to places I have never been because they share their experiences with me through their discussions and assignments. I can think of no better way to study the impact of mediated and human communication than that.”

Taylor-Moore encourages prospective students interested in the Communications field to strongly consider Ashford, saying, “Many people have had great ideas that have changed the world. Many others have had great ideas that remain only that—ideas. It is only those ideas that are effectively communicated that become a reality. In order to be successful in whatever it is you wish to do in your personal or professional life, you must be able to effectively communicate with yourself and with others.” She believes that, “Education is a journey that will expand your horizons, widen your borders, and increase your altitude. You will be amazed by the things you will see, the people you will meet, and the knowledge that you obtain.”

Taylor-Moore serves the College of Liberal Arts at Ashford University as a member of the Student Publications Committee, The Innovations Committee, and she is also a member of the Ashford Faculty Scholars Committee. Taylor-Moore lives in central Mississippi and in her spare time, she takes pleasure in baking, writing, traveling and spending time with her husband and family.

# Convergence Journalism

## *No Boundaries*

By Sharon A. Honore, Ph.D.

Convergence journalism is the buzz phrase for media professionals. In short, it involves the production of news across existing and emerging multi-media platforms. Note that the key phrase here is *production of news*. The reporter must stay current on the latest innovations affecting newsrooms, identify potential story opportunities, participate in weekly (or more) story meetings, and conduct ongoing research into the wants and needs of their primary audience. Media organizations expect new hires to demonstrate critical thinking skills which include developing story ideas that highlight voices from under-represented populations not traditionally heard in mainstream media.

Media companies gather, disseminate, and share information over a variety of platforms, thus creating the concept of convergence. Journalists have, historically, studied one medium, such as traditional print or broadcast, and anticipated a career in their chosen field. However reporters, in the 21st century, have the ability to write and deliver news content in a various formats.

Mergers of media entities and technological innovations gave way to convergence journalism in the 1990s. There has been much discussion over the precise meaning of convergence and a fully converged newsroom or newspaper. "Convergence generally means that all component platforms available for delivery to a Web-based operating system contribute to the overall information product. It also implies that information sharing and enhancement takes places along the way" (Killebrew, 2002).

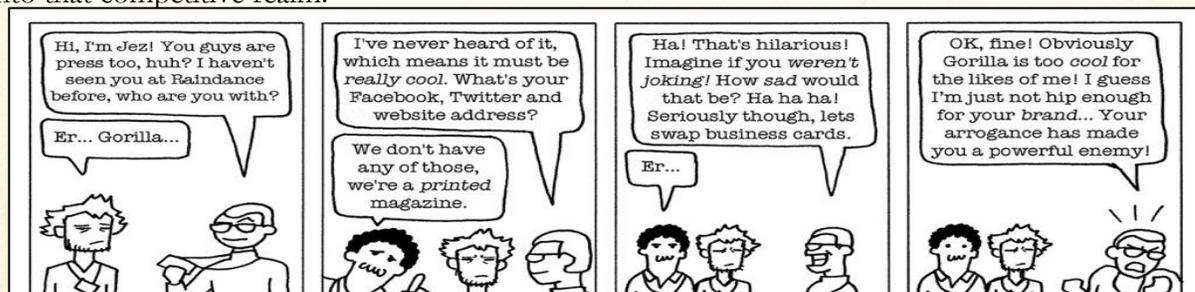
There have been several comprehensive national studies to determine the extent to which media industries and university school of journalism programs are embracing convergence journalism. Key findings of research conducted by Professors Carrie Criado and Camille Kraeplin (2003) from Southern Methodist University include the following:

- University journalism programs have moved toward convergence. Just under nine in 10 of the college administrators surveyed said they had incorporated, or begun to incorporate, cross-platform training into their coursework
- Sharing content and/or staff with another media platform –(nine out of 10 newspapers and eight out of 10 TV stations) suggest that both newspapers and TV forged convergence partnerships,
- Journalism educators and media organizations identify convergence as significant to the future of the profession.

So, what does all this mean for Ashford graduates in the Journalism program? It means the following for our faculty:

- better prepare our students to be equipped with the necessary skills.
- demonstrate innovativeness in teaching and commit to professional development.
- work to present our students with information related to networking and career opportunities.

Convergence journalism is not a trend, it is here to stay. We will make sure that you, our students, are prepared to enter into that competitive realm.



Killebrew, K. (2002). *Distributive and content model issues in convergence: defining aspects of "new media" in journalism's newest venture*. Paper presented at The Dynamics of Convergent Media Conference (November).

Kraeplin, C. and Criado, A. (2003). *Building a case for convergence journalism curriculum*. Journalism and Mass Communication Educator, Spring 2005, 47-56.