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### Multimedia Use in Small News Organizations

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# **Multimedia Use in Small News Organizations**

Robyn Keriazes

**Introduction:**

I have heard many times that a modern journalist needs to be well-versed in multimedia storytelling. Whether you're a backpack journalist or a multitasking newspaper staff member, knowing at least the basics of photography, sound recording, videography and web design would be invaluable. I heard this in high school journalism classes and again in college, and I focused on developing these skills.

In the first semester of my senior year of college, I completed my official journalism internship with the Seacoast Media Group, a regional group of Dow Jones-owned newspapers, the largest of which is the daily *Portsmouth Herald*, serving the seacoast of New Hampshire and southern Maine. While interning for the Seacoast Media Group, I worked full-time as a general assignment reporter, writing on average about eight stories each week. While I was there, I was surprised to find that neither I nor many of the other reporters were expected to contribute multimedia on a regular basis. Although I took many still photographs, I generally did not produce online-only content. The Seacoast Media Group did produce some multimedia pieces, particularly photo galleries and videos, but overall I was surprised that years after I began hearing about the value of multimedia in journalism fairly little importance was still being given to it in a real newsroom, and it was not yet a part of the daily routine.

However, the Seacoast Media Group is in line with many other news organizations. As I began to examine other local news organizations, mostly of comparable circulation, many seemed to use little to no multimedia, and the ones that did use it each used it in a different way. This was striking to me, as it had seemed in what I had read and heard that a consensus had been reached that multimedia was a key element of the future of journalism.

Clearly this either was not the case or something was holding many newspapers back from this aspect of modernization.

To study this issue, I framed my research around the main question: Why do local newspapers use multimedia in the ways that they do? Through my research, I found that the factor that all newspapers say pushes them towards using more multimedia is a desire for better storytelling. The factors newspapers most often mention as an obstacle to multimedia use are time and budget constraints. Different newspapers give different responses regarding factors such as revenue generation, reader clicks and a desire to prepare for the future. Overall, I found that for every newspaper there are a number of push and pull factors regarding multimedia use, and it is therefore little surprise that each has tackled the problem in a distinct manner.

### **Literature Review:**

In order to examine how small newspapers are using multimedia, it is important to first examine where larger news organizations, the journalism industry as a whole and other scholars examining the journalism industry stand on the issue. This will allow me to see if there is any disconnect between the theoretical and the day-to-day experiences of real journalists.

From nearly as soon as the internet was opened to commercial activity, journalists have debated what opportunities and challenges this new form of communications presents to the industry. As technology has developed the conversation has as well. It began to include multimedia when internet speeds made streaming video and using interactive elements online feasible for many.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Moeller, Philip. "The Age of Convergence." *American Journalism Review* 16, no. 1 (January 1994): 22.

Multimedia adds to a news organization's website by allowing news to be presented in new and sometimes more effective ways. Sounds and images can convey more than words can; they can give a more accurate representation of the news at hand and give viewers more information and put them more in the scene than an article could.<sup>2</sup> Multimedia can also often convey scenes with a large amount of action more effectively than print or photography can, or make an effective medium for sharing “odd or unusual” news. It can act as a “video illustration,” complementing a print article, or tell a story on its own, whether in short form or as a documentary. As one source states,

“You'll never convey emotion in text as well as with video. Emotion is communicated nonverbally, and nothing can substitute actually seeing it on a person's face or hearing the emotion behind a person's words. Even a story that would make a bad picture, lacking interesting visuals, could possibly make a great video with enough emotion.”<sup>3</sup>

Audio clips specifically can be useful in situations with strong audio but poor visuals, including many interviews, brief reporter overviews of stories, podcast series on specific subjects, and situations with natural sound. It reveals telling details like long pauses before answering questions that print cannot. It can be consumed in contexts such as commuting where print or video stories cannot be. According to Marissa Nelson, managing editor for digital news at the Canadian Broadcasting Company, “Audio collected in the field by reporters on a breaking story has an atmosphere that paints a picture quickly. It's often very powerful, and almost always lapped up by users.”<sup>4</sup>

Multimedia is generally more interactive than an article. Depending on the form of multimedia, viewers may be able to pause it or only view the parts that interest them the most

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*Business Source Corporate*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 7, 2013).

2 Grant, Angela. "Backpack Journalism: Get a Camera and Go! It's the Only Way to Learn." *Quill* 96, no. 2 (March 2008): 16-17. *Communication & Mass Media Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 7, 2013).

3 McAdams, Mindy. *Flash Journalism: How to Create Multimedia News Packages*. Amsterdam: Focal Press, 2005.

4 Briggs, Mark. 2013. *Journalism Next: A Practical Guide to Digital Reporting and Publishing*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: CQ Press, 173-175.

in a non-linear manner; they may be able to change the sizes of text or images. Because it is online, new content may also be added at any time.<sup>5</sup>

Online multimedia can also be more a form of community journalism than traditional print often can. For example, rather than being narrated by a reporter, videos, photos or audio on a news site may be submitted by readers, or they may include the opinions of non-reporters to a fuller extent than a quote in an article can. Some videos allow people to narrate their own stories rather than having those stories be narrated by a reporter. Some consider this to be the best of both worlds, as it allows more voices to weigh in on the news but still with direction and compilation from reporters and editors.<sup>6</sup>

One problem with video or audio journalism for the web is finding what style is particularly suited to that medium rather than to television or radio.<sup>7</sup> For pieces that require a large amount of editing, this can become a major time commitment. According to Miami Herald photographer-turned-videographer Chuck Fadely,

“Video requires roughly 10 times more work on an assignment as [still photography] and then 100 times more work as you're editing it. Imagine filling a 16-page special section with a hundred pictures--out of a routine city hall meeting assignment. That's shooting video. You have to shoot every detail in the room, every angle, every expression--just to get a few seconds of video to put on top of the few seconds of audio that you've edited down from two hours of tape.”<sup>8</sup>

Many journalists have relaxed their expectations for technical quality of multimedia somewhat. Based on the success of sites like YouTube, many have concluded that online

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5 McAdams, Mindy. *Flash Journalism: How to Create Multimedia News Packages*. Amsterdam: Focal Press, 2005.

6 Jacobson, Susan. "Emerging Models of Multimedia Journalism: A Content Analysis of Multimedia Packages Published on nytimes.com." *Atlantic Journal Of Communication* 18, no. 2 (April 2010): 63-78. *Communication & Mass Media Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 7, 2013).

7 Lancaster, Kurt. 2013. *Video Journalism for the Web: A Practical Introduction to Documentary Storytelling*. New York: Routledge, 6-13

8 Layton, Charles. 2007. "The Video Explosion." *American Journalism Review* 29, no. 6: 24-31. *Communication & Mass Media Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed May 4, 2013).

video does not need to look like televised news as they assumed it would in the early days of digital news. This has made video journalism more feasible for many.<sup>9</sup>

Some scholars have noted a gap between the theoretical possibilities of multimedia in journalism and the actual practices of regional news organizations. A 2008 study of ten newspaper websites around the world showed that seven of the ten studied newspapers used multimedia to enhance one-fifth or less of its online content. Picture slideshows made up most of this number. The author described this as showing that online journalism hasn't lived up to predictions and multimedia is still seen as an optional aspect of online storytelling.<sup>10</sup> A 2009 study found that most of the online video content was shot by staff photographers rather than staff videographers, while most online audio content was collected by print reporters, and most reporters spent less than ten percent of their time on online content, causing the author to conclude that the average newsroom was not fully convergent.<sup>11</sup> A study done in 2008 showed that while editors agreed that the internet held a large amount of potential for journalism and interactivity was important for reader engagement, the newspapers' actual practices did not always follow those beliefs. Because of reasons including time constraints for reporters and editors' beliefs that they can provide and organize better news than readers can on a customizable or interactive feature, news organizations have been slow to adopt these features.<sup>12</sup> Another study suggested that due to tight budgets newspapers have been expecting staff members to do more with less rather than hiring new multimedia experts. With an already-full schedule, this leaves little room for multimedia production and

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9 Briggs, Mark. 2013. *Journalism next: a practical guide to digital reporting and publishing*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: CQ Press, 201-203.

10 Quandt, Thorsten. "(No) News On The World Wide Web?" *Journalism Studies* 9, no. 5 (October 2008): 717-738. *Communication & Mass Media Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 7, 2013).

11 Russial, John. "Growth of Multimedia Not Extensive at Newspapers." *Newspaper Research Journal* 30, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 58-74. *Communication & Mass Media Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 7, 2013).

12 George-Palilonis, Jennifer. *The Multimedia Journalist: Storytelling for Today's Media Landscape*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

training.<sup>13</sup>

Some scholars also believe that newspapers' websites are not incorporating multimedia into their sites effectively enough. Rather than integrating multimedia into the website, they're relegating it to a special multimedia part of the site.<sup>14</sup> According to one article, "It's not enough to simply throw some video into the mix. To keep readers' attention and enhance the audience's understanding, it's critical that each ingredient in a rich multimedia stew is placed precisely where it makes the most sense." According to this article, posting video and graphics related to each news article isn't the same as producing a coherent, effective multimedia website. Instead, it gives readers too much to sort through. Newspaper staff should determine not just what multimedia to include but how to present and combine it. One option to solve this is contiguity, or placing multimedia at the point where it is relevant in the article. This appeals to readers' desire to have the choice to utilize multimedia elements while still taking in the story in a linear manner, and research has shown readers learn more from these stories than traditional or nonlinear ones. If the presentation isn't coherent or is too overwhelming, they are likely to leave the site.<sup>15</sup>

Another book suggests video games as a possible presentation style for news of the future. For example, it describes a game depicting the life of a Somali pirate to illustrate the risk-reward decisions they make. Such games can be either short or longer and documentary-style. According to the author,

"What if Yoshi the dinosaur from Super Mario World needed health care, and he had to buy insurance at the going rates? What if the dynamics of New York City racketeering laws could be operationalized in Grand Theft Auto? These possibilities

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13 Walker, David. "Multimedia Revolution." *Photo District News* 27, no. 8 (August 2007): 30-34. *Business Source Corporate*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 7, 2013).

14 Walker, David. "Multimedia Revolution." *Photo District News* 27, no. 8 (August 2007): 30-34. *Business Source Corporate*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 7, 2013).

15 Yaros, Ronald A. "Mastering Multimedia." *American Journalism Review* 31, no. 4 (August 2009): 28-31. *Communication & Mass Media Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 7, 2013).

suggest how journalists might think about what they do in new ways, instead of simply translating old media for digital distribution.”

Additionally, the author suggests, online infographics could adopt some elements of games, while puzzles and quizzes could also be incorporated into online news.<sup>16</sup>

An article from 2010 states that some news organizations that were once dedicated to producing multimedia news have slowed their multimedia production and eliminated staff positions. These newspapers listed in the article include *The Washington Post* and *The Dallas Morning News*. The reason this article gives for a decline in multimedia journalism is a lack of capacity for online search engines to pick out news. For example, searching YouTube for videos about a major event isn't likely to result in videos generated by news organizations being near the top. However, the article posits that multimedia journalism is still vital to reaching young people online and that it is possible that one day search engines will develop a more accurate way of bringing viewers to good multimedia news stories.<sup>17</sup>

Conversely, other scholars have suggested that a lack of multimedia on many news websites may be attributed to user disinterest in them or a lack of effectiveness in their ability to convey information. One 2000 study showed that readers recalled more about news stories on a made-up website that used only text and pictures than one that also incorporated audio or video. They rated the site with just text and pictures the highest in site design and coherence and said it was the one they were the most likely to revisit. They also ranked the site with just text and pictures the highest in news quality and credibility. The readers did, however, recall more of the advertisements on the pages with audio and video. According to the author, this is in line with past studies that have shown people do not remember audio

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16 Bogost, Ian, Simon Ferrari, and Bobby Schweizer. 2010. *Newsgames: Journalism at Play*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10453051> (accessed May 4, 2013).

17 Drew, Jill. "See It Now!" *Columbia Journalism Review* 49, no. 3 (September 2010): 38-43. *Communication & Mass Media Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 7, 2013).

recordings as well as text. It also suggests that people become more passive and distracted while taking in these forms of multimedia.<sup>18</sup>

For a 2007 article on multimedia, San Jose Mercury News photographer Richard Koci Hernandez said, "Everybody is throwing whatever approach and style at the wall, to see if it sticks." This quotation underscores the idea that many newspapers are still figuring out whether and how to utilize multimedia.<sup>19</sup>

Although there is a significant amount of study regarding multimedia use in newspapers, much of it seems to be limited to larger newspapers. The multimedia that they use and the resources available to them are generally quite different to what can be seen in smaller, localized newspapers. Additionally, it is difficult to find research that reflects the current state of multimedia use. This makes the subject of multimedia in journalism difficult to study because while research from several years ago may be useful as background information and may still be pertinent in some ways, technology changes rapidly and so do people's online habits. It is likely that a study from even just a few years ago is no longer entirely accurate. For example, it may not take into account recent and pertinent trends such as the large growth in smartphone and social media use. My study will update this research as well as extend it to the smaller newspapers that do not typically receive a large amount of academic scrutiny.

### **Multimedia at Larger Newspapers:**

For the world's largest newspapers, multimedia tends to be very different from what I

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18 Sundar, S. Shyam. "Multimedia Effects on Processing and Perception of Online News: A Study of Picture, Audio, and Video Downloads." *Journalism And Mass Communication Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (September 1, 2000): 480-99. *ERIC*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 7, 2013).

19 Walker, David. "Multimedia Revolution." *Photo District News* 27, no. 8 (August 2007): 30-34. *Business Source Corporate*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 7, 2013).

observed as an intern for the Seacoast Media Group.

The most recent video on [newyorktimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) at the writing of this paper illustrates some differences between this source and smaller ones. The video is about the election of a new pope. An advertisement plays before it that cannot be skipped for several seconds. The video itself is four minutes and 25 seconds long. It has several segments, using video, audio clips of interviews, audio clips from the scene of the announcement of the new pope, videos of interviews with experts, and pictures overlaid with audio. The video is high-quality and appears to have required lots of editing. Credits at the end of the video list eight producers, five additional sources of photography, and one source of additional video.<sup>20</sup>

Other videos about the election of the new pope were also posted online the evening that he was chosen. This includes a video of the pope's inaugural speech that does not include any outside audio or comment but does cut between various shots, including shots of the crowd. This video was produced by Vatican Central Television.<sup>21</sup> Another includes interviews with New Yorkers commenting upon the election and the role of Catholicism in the modern world.<sup>22</sup> Yet another shows the scene at the Vatican when white smoke rises from the Sistine Chapel.<sup>23</sup> This illustrates how the *New York Times* uses multimedia to cover a major news story: with several videos within a short period of time showing various aspects of the story and incorporating various viewpoints. Each video takes a team of people to shoot and edit. Through the use of advertisements that run before videos, the videos also gain

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20 Berenstein, Erica, Channon Hudge, Alyssa Kim, Marcus Mabry, Pedro Rafael Rosado, and Ben Werschkul. "A Look at Pope Francis." March 13, 2013.

<http://www.nytimes.com/video/2013/03/13/world/europe/100000002116277/a-look-at-pope-francis.html> (accessed March 13, 2013).

21 "Speech by Pope Francis." Vatican Central Television, March 13, 2013.

<http://www.nytimes.com/video/2013/03/13/world/europe/100000002116186/speech-by-pope-francis.html> (accessed March 13, 2013).

22 Berenstein, Erica. "Catholics Speak: Filling the Pews." March 13, 2013.

<http://www.nytimes.com/video/2013/03/13/world/europe/100000002116132/catholics-speak-filling-the-pews.html> (accessed March 13, 2013).

23 "White Smoke Rises." Vatican Central Television, March 13, 2013.

<http://www.nytimes.com/video/2013/03/13/world/europe/100000002115933/cardinals-choose-a-new-pope.html> (accessed March 13, 2013).

revenue directly. Video is accessed via a multimedia tab, and it is also featured on the home page. The *New York Times* posts videos frequently in categories ranging from sports to style. They meet ends ranging from providing expert commentary on an event to allowing ordinary people to have their say, whether it's through commenting on an event or telling their own story.<sup>24</sup> The video page of *The New York Times* appears very similar to that at the other largest newspapers in the nation, including *The Washington Post*<sup>25</sup> and *The Wall Street Journal*.<sup>26</sup>

To gain more clarity regarding multimedia use at larger newspapers, I spoke with Thea Breite, senior video editor for *The Boston Globe*. With a weekday circulation of 215,712, *The Boston Globe* is significantly larger in circulation than the local newspapers being analyzed in this paper.<sup>27</sup>

Like many other large newspapers, *The Boston Globe* has embraced multimedia in a way that few smaller newspapers have. There, a team of video journalists, as well as staff photographers, produce multimedia pieces regularly. According to Breite, “It’s just part of daily journalism. It’s in everyone’s vocabulary, so it’s changed tremendously. It’s not like a little appendage somewhere that only does video or spotlights something once a year – it’s every day.” *Boston Globe* staff generate a variety of different kinds of multimedia, as well as constantly reassess what they are doing and what they could be doing better, she said.

According to Breite, the largest factor pushing her and the newspaper into multimedia use, she said, is its value as a storytelling device. Through its ability to tell stories in new ways – such as including natural sounds and allowing subjects to speak in their own voices – video can convey emotions and put the reader in a scene in a way that print and photography

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24 “The New York Times.” <http://www.nytimes.com/> (accessed April 21, 2013).

25 “Video.” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/videos?hpid=z4> (accessed May 4, 2013).

26 “WSJ Live.” <http://live.wsj.com/> (accessed May 4, 2013).

27 “Boston Globe Circulation.” March 2012.

<http://services.bostonglobe.com/advertiser/newspapers/audience/default.aspx?id=12712> (accessed May 5, 2013).

often cannot. She added that the value of multimedia as a storytelling media and the type of multimedia that should be used depends on the story. For example, a documentary style is more fitting of some stories, while a reporter talking into a camera is more fitting of others.

According to *Boston Globe* Deputy Managing Editor of Multimedia Bennie DiNardo, multimedia is also beneficial to the organization because it generates clicks and reader interest. In some cases it can also generate revenue directly, such as through video sponsorship, particularly of sports videos, or indirectly, as a large number of page views can attract advertisers as well.

Breite said that an obstacle to multimedia use is the problem of constantly evolving equipment and training. Over the past few years, tools such as small video cameras, still/video DSLR cameras, and iPhones have each become a staple for video production that staff had to be trained on anew, and new editing systems have as well. Breite has completed training including a six-month program in new media at the Rhode Island School of Design, training with staff members who already knew how to produce videos, bringing a person in to the photo department to teach them techniques in using Garage Band, and teaching herself other techniques. Breite cited the financial and time investments necessary to produce multimedia as a possible deterrent for some newspapers. A problem is that the industry has not yet found “the sweet spot,” she said – nobody knows the perfect formula for using multimedia yet.

### **Research Questions:**

The main question I addressed in my research is: Why do local newspapers use multimedia in the ways that they do? Additionally, in order to address my main research

question I first needed to answer the secondary question: How do local newspapers use multimedia?

I examined only local newspapers, and here I defined “local” as including New Hampshire and Maine. This limited the number of newspapers that may be examined, which was useful because it allowed me to examine the website of every newspaper within this area and speak with staff members at a significant number of them. I also chose this limitation because it limited the pool of newspapers in the study to relatively small ones. The newspapers I examined range from 8,888<sup>28</sup> to 43,397<sup>29</sup> in circulation. Limiting newspapers to this small-to-medium-sized readership meant that the newspapers should be fairly comparable in the resources that they have, eliminating this as much as possible as a variable in selecting multimedia usage. Each of the newspapers I examined was also daily. I chose this limitation to eliminate another independent variable that could possibly influence the way that multimedia is used among newspapers, as it is likely that different decisions are made at daily and less-than-daily newspapers for reasons including differences in financial and human resources.

The one exception to this rule of only speaking with smaller, local newspapers was my interview with Thea Breite, Senior Video Editor for *The Boston Globe*. I chose her as a source because of her position at one of the nearest larger newspapers to the ones I am studying. Instead of including the information I gained with her in the same way that I included information regarding other newspapers, I instead used it in my background section examining multimedia work at larger newspapers.

The term “multimedia” must also be defined for the purpose of this paper. The types

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28 “Advertise in the Biddeford-Saco-Sanford Maine 'Journal Tribune' Daily Newspaper.” Nationwide Newspapers. <http://www.nationwideadvertising.com/bidmainjourn.html> (accessed April 20, 2013).

29 “US Newspaper Search Results.” Alliance for Audited Media, September 30, 2012. <http://abcas3.auditedmedia.com/ecirc/newstitlesearchus.asp> (accessed April 20, 2013).

of multimedia I studied included slideshows of photographs, audio files, video, and other interactive storytelling devices for the Web. Each are fundamentally different ways from telling stories from those that are possible in print publications.

Studying multimedia use at local newspapers and the reasons behind it is important for numerous reasons. First, studying this information could be useful to newspapers, as it may help them to analyze what other newspapers are doing and whether or not it could work for them. Secondly, this information could be useful for journalists entering the field or hoping to gain additional skills. It could help them determine whether in a certain position they will be expected or have the opportunity to produce multimedia content and how to best go about doing so.

### **Research Design and Methodology:**

In order to understand the reasons behind local newspapers' multimedia use, I first needed to understand how they use multimedia. I began by examining the website of each daily newspaper in New Hampshire and Maine. My findings were contained to what was visible outside the paywall and from a quick look at the site. Although I examined each site for multimedia, I may not have seen a piece that was placed within a specific article, as I did not search every article. The chart I produced therefore did not provide an exhaustive description of multimedia use at each newspaper but rather a brief overview of what sorts of multimedia local newspapers are using.

I chose to use interviews with staff members at local newspapers in order to determine why those newspapers use multimedia in the ways that they do. While I completed the interviews that I could in person, others, for newspapers farther away or staff members who

did not have time to meet in person, I conducted interviews over phone or email. I chose to complete interviews rather than other forms of research such as observation or surveys because I felt that it would give me the most thorough understanding of the forces behind decisions regarding multimedia use. The newspapers that I interviewed were limited in part by connections that I or my professors had at those newspapers, as well as which newspapers were willing to be interviewed; I contacted several more that did not respond to me. Although I asked similar questions to each source, I altered them somewhat depending on what I already knew about each newspaper's multimedia use.

### **Argument and Evidence:**

#### **How local newspapers use multimedia:**

Newspaper	Location	Weekday Circulation	Multimedia Use	Multimedia Placement on Home Page
<i>Journal Tribune</i>	Biddeford, ME	8,888 <sup>30</sup>	Website does not include videos but does include several photo galleries for subjects including a graduation, sports games and a roundup of the top photos of the year	Photo galleries located near bottom of home page, “below the fold” <sup>31</sup>
<i>Kennebec Journal</i>	Kennebec, ME	10,202 <sup>32</sup>	Several videos posted each week; many videos are one-shot, while others incorporate multiple	Video and photo galleries located on home page

30 “Advertise in the Biddeford-Saco-Sanford Maine 'Journal Tribune' Daily Newspaper.” Nationwide Newspapers. <http://www.nationwideadvertising.com/bidmainjourn.html> (accessed April 20, 2013).

31 “Biddeford Journal Tribune.” <http://www.journaltribune.com/> (accessed April 20, 2013).

32 “US Newspaper Search Results.” Alliance for Audited Media, September 30, 2012. <http://abcas3.auditedmedia.com/ecirc/newstitlesearchus.asp> (accessed April 20, 2013).

			shots and titles or as audio over photos; the most recent several videos describe a local hermit; website also includes interactive photo galleries on subjects including sports and the hermit; also some mp3 audio files	directly “below the fold” and about one third of the way down the page <sup>33</sup>
<i>Morning Sentinel</i>	Waterville, ME	13,335 <sup>34</sup>	Video posted several times each week, some of which is generated by <i>Morning Sentinel</i> staff and some of which is generated by <i>Kennebec Journal</i> staff including videos regarding the local hermit; website also includes the same interactive photo galleries posted by the <i>Kennebec Journal</i>	Video and photo galleries located on home page “below the fold,” about halfway down the page <sup>35</sup>
<i>Portland Daily Sun</i>	Portland, ME	13,100 <sup>36</sup>	Website includes sports video from an outside source but not video shot by the newspaper staff	Video and photo galleries located on home page “below the fold,” about halfway down the page <sup>37</sup>
<i>Portland Press Herald</i>	Portland, ME	46,371 <sup>38</sup>	Video posted several times each week generated by newspaper staff as well as some from the <i>Kennebec Journal</i> ; video topics	Video and photo galleries located on home page directly “below

33 “Kennebec Journal.” <http://www.kjonline.com> (accessed April 20, 2013).

34 “US Newspaper Search Results.” Alliance for Audited Media, September 30, 2012. <http://abcas3.auditedmedia.com/ecirc/newstitlesearchus.asp> (accessed April 20, 2013).

35 “Waterville Morning Sentinel.” <http://www.onlinesentinel.com/> (accessed April 20, 2013).

36 “About Us.” Portland Daily Sun, April 10, 2012. <http://www.portlanddailysun.me/index.php/2011-08-07-02-51-05> (accessed April 20, 2013).

37 “Waterville Morning Sentinel.” <http://www.onlinesentinel.com/> (accessed April 20, 2013).

38 “US Newspaper Search Results.” Alliance for Audited Media, September 30, 2012. <http://abcas3.auditedmedia.com/ecirc/newstitlesearchus.asp> (accessed April 20, 2013).

			include Boston Marathon bombing and lockdown and the local hermit; also includes interactive photo galleries, the most recent of which is also regarding the Boston bombing and lockdown	the fold” <sup>39</sup>
<i>Sun Journal</i>	Lewiston, ME	33,900 <sup>40</sup>	Website includes a video section with several videos uploaded each week generated by newspaper staff, many of which include multiple shots and titles; recent topics include a town meeting, a flooding river and a local reggae festival; website also includes photo galleries, the most recent of which show sports games	Video located near top of home page, photo galleries located “below the fold” about one third of the way down the page <sup>41</sup>
<i>The Times Record</i>	Brunswick, ME	9,800 <sup>42</sup>	Only multimedia element visible on website is a video describing how to advertise on <i>The Times Record</i> website	Advertising video “below the fold” about one third of the way down the page <sup>43</sup>
<i>Bangor Daily News</i>	Bangor, ME	44,288 <sup>44</sup>	Videos posted approximately once per day; most videos include many shots; advertisements that cannot be	Latest video located at the fold of the home page; other videos and

39 “Portland Press Herald.” <http://www.pressherald.com/> (accessed April 20, 2013).

40 “Sun Journal of Lewiston, Maine Redesigns.” American Copy Editors Society, April 4, 2012. <http://apple.copydesk.org/2012/04/04/sun-journal-of-lewiston-maine-redesigns/> (accessed April 20, 2013).

41 “Sun Journal.” <http://www.sunjournal.com/> (accessed April 20, 2013).

42 “Advertise With Us.” The Times Record.

[http://www.timesrecord.com/common/Misc/Advertise\\_With\\_Us.html](http://www.timesrecord.com/common/Misc/Advertise_With_Us.html) (accessed April 20, 2013).

43 “The Times Record.” <http://www.timesrecord.com/> (accessed April 20, 2013).

44 “US Newspaper Search Results.” Alliance for Audited Media, September 30, 2012. <http://abcas3.auditedmedia.com/ecirc/newstitlesearchus.asp> (accessed April 20, 2013).

			skipped run before videos; recent video subjects include a canoe race, an explanation of a new natural gas plan, and a kitchen tour preview; photo galleries also posted several times each week on topics including sports, sculpting and a zombie walk	photo galleries “below the fold” about halfway down the page <sup>45</sup>
<i>The Berlin Daily Sun</i>	Berlin, NH	8,900 <sup>46</sup>	Website includes sports video from an outside source but not video shot by the newspaper staff	Video located “below the fold” and near bottom of home page <sup>47</sup>
<i>The Citizen</i>	Laconia, NH	8,803 <sup>48</sup>	No multimedia elements visible on website; however, paywall limits access to most of the website	n/a <sup>49</sup>
<i>Concord Monitor</i>	Concord, NH	20,107 <sup>50</sup>	Website includes a Pulitzer Prize-winning multimedia slideshow from 2008 on a woman undergoing cancer treatment; website also includes video from outside sources and short news roundup videos produced by the newspaper staff; photo galleries also posted daily; most recent are of sports games	News roundup located near top of home page; other multimedia accessed via tab at top of page <sup>51</sup>

45 “Bangor Daily News.” <http://bangordailynews.com/> (accessed April 20, 2013).

46 “About Us.” The Berlin Daily Sun, April 13, 2012. [http://www.berlindailysun.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=46](http://www.berlindailysun.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=46) (accessed April 20, 2013).

47 “The Berlin Daily Sun.” <http://www.berlindailysun.com/> (accessed April 20, 2013).

48 “Advertise in the Laconia New Hampshire 'The Citizen' Newspaper.” Nationwide Newspapers. <http://www.nationwideadvertising.com/lacnewhamthe.html> (accessed April 20, 2013).

49 “The Citizen of Laconia.” <http://www.citizen.com/> (accessed April 20, 2013).

50 “Advertise in Concord New Hampshire 'Concord Monitor' Daily Newspaper.” Nationwide Newspapers. <http://www.nationwideadvertising.com/adinconnnewha.html> (accessed April 20, 2013).

51 “Concord Monitor.” <http://www.concordmonitor.com/> (accessed April 20, 2013).

<i>The Conway Daily Sun</i>	Conway, NH	17,100 <sup>52</sup>	Mostly one-shot videos with a reporter or editor talking to the camera on topics including movie reviews, ski conditions, weather forecasts, and news roundups posted several times each week; also includes video from outside sources	Video feed produced by newspaper staff located near top of home page, other video located near the bottom of the home page <sup>53</sup>
<i>Eagle Times</i>	Claremont, NH	8,608 <sup>54</sup>	No multimedia elements visible on website; however, paywall limits access to most of the website	n/a <sup>55</sup>
<i>Foster's Daily Democrat</i>	Dover, NH	15,374 <sup>56</sup>	Daily video cooking demos posted on the cooking page; website also includes videos from <i>The Associated Press</i> and other outside sources; photo galleries of sports games posted at least once each week	Videos located near bottom of home page; photo galleries “below the fold” and about two-thirds of the way down the page <sup>57</sup>
<i>Keene Sentinel</i>	Keene, NH	9,229 <sup>58</sup>	Website includes reader-submitted videos on topics including pets and weather, as well as videos from outside	Video feed located “below the fold” about one third of the

52 “The Laconia Daily Sun Ratecard.” <http://issuu.com/dailysun/docs/laconiaratecard2011> (accessed April 20, 2013).

53 “The Conway Daily Sun.” <http://www.conwaydailysun.com/> (accessed April 20, 2013).

54 “New Hampshire Daily Newspapers.” Nevada Alliance for Retired Americans. <http://www.nevadaretiredamericans.org/newsroom/letters-to-the-editor/NH> (accessed April 20, 2013).

55 “Eagle Times.” [www.eagletimes.com](http://www.eagletimes.com) (accessed April 20, 2013).

56 “Retail Advertising Rates Effective June 1, 2012.” Fosters.com. [https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:9uwUs9rGRz4J:www.fosters.com/advertising/FDD\\_RATECARD\\_2012.pdf+&hl=en&gl=us&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESH1W7E2Vljte5mSeLnAeNIr2leaWxI1Gjbb-fejk8Z\\_n\\_pGeGvD7x711w2zgGMsO6t7UvGmRHMumPKWsR\\_dVffaKeYU8U0QKEDKSzjDckgYtjyByiMwP7irBX5ixSIXDhAaLLil&sig=AHIEtbQ2vm\\_gLmg8QPOcoP35vODmIAIqW](https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:9uwUs9rGRz4J:www.fosters.com/advertising/FDD_RATECARD_2012.pdf+&hl=en&gl=us&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESH1W7E2Vljte5mSeLnAeNIr2leaWxI1Gjbb-fejk8Z_n_pGeGvD7x711w2zgGMsO6t7UvGmRHMumPKWsR_dVffaKeYU8U0QKEDKSzjDckgYtjyByiMwP7irBX5ixSIXDhAaLLil&sig=AHIEtbQ2vm_gLmg8QPOcoP35vODmIAIqW) (accessed April 20, 2013).

57 “Fosters.com.” <http://www.fosters.com/> (accessed April 20, 2013).

58 “US Newspaper Search Results.” Alliance for Audited Media, September 30, 2012. <http://abcas3.auditedmedia.com/ecirc/newstitlesearchus.asp> (accessed April 20, 2013).

			sources on topics including music videos and the Boston Marathon bombings and lockdown; the most recent videos shot by newspaper staff are interviews with Republican presidential primary candidates from late 2011	way down the home page <sup>59</sup>
<i>The Laconia Daily Sun</i>	Laconia, NH	18,000 <sup>60</sup>	Website includes sports video from an outside source but not video shot by the newspaper staff	Video located “below the fold” about one third of the way down the page <sup>61</sup>
<i>The Nashua Telegraph</i>	Nashua, NH	16,435 <sup>62</sup>	Videos generated by newspaper staff are posted several times each week, often incorporating multiple shots; recent topics include locals' takes on the Boston Marathon lockdown and a baseball game; photo galleries also posted approximately weekly on topics including rescuing a kayaker and a store opening	Video located “below the fold” about one third of the way down the page; photo galleries located on separate pages <sup>63</sup>
<i>The New Hampshire Union</i>	Manchester, NH	43,397 <sup>64</sup>	Photo galleries posted about once each day; most recent galleries are of sports games	Photo galleries not located on home page <sup>65</sup>

59 “SentinelSource.com” [www.sentinelsource.com](http://www.sentinelsource.com) (accessed April 20, 2013).

60 “The Laconia Daily Sun Ratecard.” <http://issuu.com/dailysun/docs/laconiaratecard2011> (accessed April 20, 2013).

61 “The Laconia Daily Sun.” <http://www.laconiadailysun.com/> (accessed April 20, 2013).

62 “US Newspaper Search Results.” Alliance for Audited Media, September 30, 2012. <http://abcas3.auditedmedia.com/ecirc/newstitlesearchus.asp> (accessed April 20, 2013).

63 “The Telegraph.” <http://www.nashuatelegraph.com/> (accessed April 20, 2013).

64 “US Newspaper Search Results.” Alliance for Audited Media, September 30, 2012. <http://abcas3.auditedmedia.com/ecirc/newstitlesearchus.asp> (accessed April 20, 2013).

<i>Leader</i>				
<i>The Portsmouth Herald</i>	Portsmouth, NH	9,807 <sup>66</sup>	Videos generated by the newspaper staff are posted on average about once weekly and cover topics including a rally and a ship hitting a bridge; photo galleries are posted several times each week and cover topics including an awards ceremony and a Little League opening day game	Multimedia not located on home page, but can be accessed via a link near the bottom of the page or via individual articles <sup>67</sup>
<i>The Valley News</i>	Lebanon, NH	17,091 <sup>68</sup>	Photo galleries occasionally accompany stories on topics including sports games and a vigil for the Boston Marathon bombing	Photos located near bottom of home page <sup>69</sup>

Taken together, the data presented in this chart gives a useful overview of the state of multimedia among small and mid-sized northern New England newspapers. First, it suggests that there is no single prevailing strategy regarding multimedia for these newspapers. Each newspaper adopts a different strategy, and they are fairly divided among strategies including frequent or infrequent postings of videos generated by the newspaper staff, frequent or infrequent postings of videos generated by other sources, frequent or infrequent postings of photo galleries, and little multimedia whatsoever. The place in which the multimedia is posted also varies significantly, with many newspapers placing it in areas that are not visible

65 "New Hampshire Union Leader." <http://www.unionleader.com/> (accessed April 20, 2013).

66 "US Newspaper Search Results." Alliance for Audited Media, September 30, 2012.

<http://abcas3.auditedmedia.com/ecirc/newstitlesearchus.asp> (accessed April 20, 2013).

67 "Seacoast Online." [www.seacoastonline.com](http://www.seacoastonline.com) (accessed April 20, 2013).

68 "Advertise in the Lebanon-Hanover New Hampshire 'Valley News' Daily Newspaper." Nationwide Newspapers. <http://www.nationwideadvertising.com/lebnewhamval.html> (accessed April 20, 2013).

69 "Valley News." [www.vnews.com](http://www.vnews.com) (accessed April 20, 2013).

upon a first glance of the website and others positioning it prominently. This suggests that the newspaper industry has not yet found a single best practice regarding multimedia use.

Another important element to consider in analyzing this information is what is missing from these websites that may be possible or that is found on the sites of much larger news organizations. One multimedia element that I read about throughout the literature that is, at least from my search, entirely missing from each of these news websites is the interactive graphic. Another is a story which incorporates interactive elements alongside the text where that element is most relevant, or a story that presents news in other formats such as a video game. Finally, all but one site do not utilize advertisements before its videos.

Now that I have addressed my secondary research question, I will move to my primary one: the reasons behind this multimedia use.

### **Storytelling:**

Each newspaper staff member I interviewed agreed that at least in some cases multimedia can be the best way of telling a story. Although this seemed to be the source of the most agreement among these newspapers, there was still some disagreement on how often multimedia would be the most useful storytelling device.

*Bangor Daily News* Web Editor William Davis said that the offer of “more complete and compelling storytelling” was the single biggest factor pushing the newspaper into multimedia use. According to Davis, the staff's decisions on when to use videos comes through asking what is the best way to tell each story. He provided several examples of multimedia pieces the newspaper had produced that he believed were most effective. The videos he listed included a video documenting the process of a warden tagging bears to track,

a video of a man telling the story of how he flipped on a snowmobile and survived pinned under it for many hours. He also cited videos of local TV anchors resigning on air and the winning, difficult-to-land shot in a high school basketball tournament, neither of which were shot by newspaper staff themselves, but instead submitted by readers with cellphones. Finally, he discussed the use of interactive graphics to convey a large amount of information, such as data sets about the many towns within the newspaper's coverage area. One example of this he believed was effective was an interactive graphic showing tax reimbursement data in a way that would be difficult to explain in an article.

According to Meg Heckman, who served as web editor for the *Concord Monitor* from 2009 until August 2012 and is currently working towards her Master's degree in journalism at Northeastern University, “multimedia is another way of telling a story, and I think that’s really important that we find ways to tell the best story that we possibly can on the platforms that our readers are using.” She said that many of the most effective multimedia pieces the *Concord Monitor* has produced tell a “small corner” of the story well rather than the whole thing, acting like a sidebar does in print media. Effective multimedia pieces she listed included the same sort of interactive graphics that Davis described, which display a large amount of data in an easily understandable way that can help explain complex topics in a way an article cannot. According to Heckman, research has shown that interactive learning, such as through this type of graphic, can lead to a better understanding of a subject. Notable pieces she described included a timeline showing the use of deadly force by police officers in New Hampshire dating back to the 1980s, a chart showing the (low) amount of women serving in county positions in New Hampshire, and an interactive timeline commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Challenger disaster. She said she has also produced effective multimedia projects involving a live chat feature. Heckman also cited simpler multimedia

pieces that have told a story well, including a short video shot using an iPhone by a reporter on the scene of a large downtown apartment fire. According to Heckman, the video was especially telling about the damage that the fire caused.

Deb Cram, photographer and multimedia director for the Seacoast Media Group, said that her drive to use more multimedia has been pushed by its storytelling value before anything else, including profit. Videos she said have told stories effectively have ranged from a video showing snow accumulation in different locations on the Seacoast to videos highlighting local pubs and showing the atmosphere inside them. She said that videos can also be useful for pieces that promote good causes, as they can often convey emotion better than words.

Scott Wasser, Director of Digital for *Foster's Daily Democrat*, has had years of experience as an online director in journalism for several publications and has watched the conversation change from more basic questions such as what to put online to more current questions such as when to use multimedia. He differentiated between “good and bad” multimedia, saying it is important to know the difference. Although he expressed skepticism about the overall value of multimedia for newspapers, he said that it can be an effective way to tell a story in cases in which it is entertaining and informative and that in some cases multimedia can be effective either as a stand-alone piece or to enhance a story in a way that words can't. “If pictures are worth 1,000 words, how much is a three-minute video worth?” he asked. He cited examples of effective multimedia he has produced including a video of an Irish dance demonstration on St. Patrick's Day. He also described pieces he has produced using software that can be used to generate and post immersive, interactive 360 degree photos. He said he has used this to show the hardest holes at a golf course, a piece he said was well-received, as well as to show distinguishing features of a town, such as an

intersection or monument, and to show the work that was being done at a major construction site. According to Wasser, the multimedia element in each of these pieces added real value for the viewer.

### **Time Constraints:**

For local newspapers, the time constraints caused by multimedia are twofold. A striking aspect of multimedia production at each of the newspapers highlighted is that positions specifically for videographers or other multimedia producers have not been created, even if the newspaper frequently utilizes multimedia. Instead, photographers and sometimes reporters generate most videos, with web editors generating some content as well and often editing and posting it. Each of these staff members already has a large amount of work to do outside of multimedia generation, and they generally now must continue to produce the same amount of content to fill the newspaper and website except now with multimedia in addition to their usual work. As positions are being cut from some newspapers, this time crunch can grow into a major obstacle for newspapers. This is a major difference between multimedia production at small newspapers and at large newspapers, as large newspapers tend to create new, specialized positions for this work. Secondly, because many of those generating multimedia content at smaller newspapers were not previously trained in doing so, they must first dedicate time to training, whether formal or informal, or, in many cases, a combination of the two.

When asked about the biggest obstacle to multimedia use at *The Bangor Daily News*, Davis answered “time.” Because most of the photographers who shoot video for the newspaper were originally only trained as still photographers, with the exception of recent

hires who do have more experience in videography, learning their way around new technologies has taken time. For people used to telling stories through other media, either writing or still photography, even just learning how and when to use multimedia as a storytelling device took time.

Scott Monroe, city editor for the *Kennebec Journal*, said that two staff photographers produce all of the multimedia for the newspaper. A video or slideshow usually takes an hour or two to produce, and larger events or pieces can necessitate “many hours of overtime,” he said.

An annual summary sent to me by Vice President of Digital Media Shana Hoch of *The Nashua Telegraph* stated that it is now part of the job description for both reporters and photographers to either already be able to frequently shoot and edit news videos or be willing to learn how to do so. Sending just one person who can produce a print story, photos and video frees another person to go to another assignment, which is especially necessary in the face of newsroom cuts. One way to minimize time constraints is to emphasize producing short videos of live news events, which require minimal editing, rather than the several-minutes-long features that the newspaper used to post most often. These shorter videos are also effective in generating clicks, which will be explained in more detail later.

According to Heckman, while it is she who produced many of the interactive graphics at the *Concord Monitor*, photographers and reporters collect much of the video, photos and audio. She said that it has been a struggle to have staff members each have multiple jobs now, as she has had to remind herself to have others focus on their original jobs at times rather than recruiting them to focus too much on new technologies.

Cram said that time is often the deciding factor regarding when she and other staff members at the Seacoast Media Group generate videos. When she has a full schedule of

other photography assignments during the day, those assignments take precedence over producing supplementary, web-only content. She said that the way in which reporters and photographers at the Seacoast Media Group use multimedia is generally self-motivated, and each staff member tends to decide their own methods. For example, she said, one staff writer, Chuck McMahon, often stands in front of the camera to describe events like a television news anchor, while others do not.

When speaking about the time constraints involved in generating multimedia content, Wasser noted that multimedia can take much more time to produce than other kinds of assignments. When a photographer goes to shoot a picture, they normally do not need to stay for the whole event or interview, but when producing a video they often do. Editing a single slideshow that incorporates audio or video can also consume a large percentage of a work day. In many cases, he said, undergoing this long process is not worthwhile.

### **Expenditures:**

Along with time, money can be a major obstacle to multimedia production. As suggested in the above section on time constraints, it can do so by necessitating overtime hours from staff members with already-full schedules to produce these pieces. Additionally, equipment can be expensive, particularly because it is constantly changing. Some newspapers have found ways to get around these costs, such as using primarily still cameras or iPhones that reporters already own to shoot videos.

According to Davis, the *Bangor Daily News* avoids major expenditures in video production because photographers use the DSLR cameras that they already have to shoot both photos and videos. The tools that reporters use to shoot video vary depending on the

individual, Davis said.

Similarly, according to Monroe, the staff of the *Kennebec Journal* use the photographers' still cameras to shoot video, as well as add-ons such as shotgun microphones, and they edit the videos using Final Cut Pro software.

Heckman said that with the constant influx of new equipment and norms of multimedia procuring the right equipment has often been a struggle. In order to produce multimedia that would appear current, the newspaper has needed to use the right computer with the right operating system for certain programs, the right microphone, and the right camera. For example, about five years ago flip cameras were a fad for easy filming, but then the manufacturer stopped producing them, requiring the newspaper to find an alternative. However, said Heckman, finding affordable and good-quality equipment has become easier with time, as the prices of certain cameras and other accessories often decline rapidly as they become replaced by the next big thing, and it can be easy to gain a castoff from somebody who has moved on to the next fad. Often, that castoff can work just or nearly as well. Today, many people also carry phones that take relatively high-quality images and videos, which also diminishes the cost of filming and photography tools.

Wasser also noted the problem of the price of technology, saying that there is little room in the *Foster's Daily Democrat* budget for expensive programs like Final Cut and equipment.

Cram discussed the problem of dedicating a large amount of time and resources to multimedia when the newspaper has not yet found a way to make significant revenue from it to offset such costs. She said that while reporters often already have iPhones they do not generate as high-quality images and videos as other cameras, and while the newsroom already has some video cameras they produce large files that can be time-consuming and

cumbersome to work with. She hopes to purchase wi-fi cameras that can lead to an instantaneous transmission of files, she said. There has also been the problem of software, as the version of Final Cut the newsroom has is several versions behind the most current one, she said, and the computers that they use it on are also old. This is a problem in part because old equipment and software can lead to more rendering time.

### **Revenue Generation:**

While some newspapers have found a way to generate revenue through multimedia production, others have not or have not been able to generate enough to make it profitable. Revenue can come in direct ways, such as sponsorship of videos or running an advertisement prior to a video. It can also come in indirect ways, such as appealing to potential online advertisers with statistics regarding clicks or time spent on the website, both of which can be improved through the use of multimedia, and both of which improve the chances of the advertisement being seen and noticed.

Davis said that videos have been effective in bringing revenue to the *Bangor Daily News*. Among the sample of newspapers for which I conducted interviews, this was the only one that ran advertisements prior to videos. He said that this has been a good revenue source for the newspaper and a good means of exposure for advertisers. Additionally, tools that show how long people stay on a story have shown that certain multimedia pieces, particularly interactive graphics such as the one showing tax reimbursements to businesses, have caused people to spend a large amount of time on the site.

Monroe said that although due to his specific position at the *Kennebec Journal* he does not know exactly how much revenue multimedia generates for the newspaper, he knows that it generates some. However, he added, "I think all news organizations are still figuring

out the best way to generate revenue not just from multimedia but from all digital platforms, and there is tremendous potential for that to grow.”

Similarly, although Heckman said that multimedia does not directly generate revenue for the *Concord Monitor*, she added that many discussions were held there about growing revenue online.

Cram said that photo galleries and slideshows can generate some revenue because prints of the photographs can be sold to readers. However, she said, other multimedia forms do not directly make money. She said that due to this the Seacoast Media Group sometimes drops multimedia projects that she believes are worthwhile before giving adequate time to test their effectiveness, which can leave her frustrated.

According to Wasser, multimedia can generate revenue through promoting “stickiness,” or spending more time on the website. However, he said, this can be a cheap way of appealing to advertisers. He cited examples such as slideshows that take a long time to flip through and that can incorporate advertisements, such as a slideshow showing the top ten cities to live in, that could easily be put into article form instead and whose multimedia element does not add much value to the story. In this case, he said, people are spending more time on the site, but they aren't getting any more out of it. “There's a difference between a journalist doing something online and a commercial business doing something online, but the line is blurred sometimes,” Wasser said. While increasing stickiness is a plus, he said, it is important that it develops as a byproduct of good journalism and not an end in itself.

### **Clicks and Interest:**

One method of assessing the success of multimedia is through analyzing the amount of people who click on a piece or comment on or share that piece. While some newspaper

staff members agree that multimedia has been successful according to this measurement, others disagree. Additionally, some warn against using this as the sole manner of determining the success of a piece.

According to Davis, multimedia has generated clicks and interest at the *Bangor Daily News* when a compelling story is being told. He said that while whether they want to watch a video or read the story depends on the reader, but in general increased multimedia use has widened the newspaper's audience.

Monroe said that multimedia accumulates a large amount of clicks and interest from viewers when it is picked up by national and international outlets or goes viral. His example of a recent group of stories produced by the *Kennebec Journal* that has gained that sort of widespread attention is that of the "North Pond Hermit." The newspaper produced eight videos, a slideshow, mp3 audio files and case documentation surrounding this story as of the writing of this paper. No other media outlet was able to get the content they did, including exclusive photos and videos of the man's encampment, he said, so with a large amount of promotion and a central presentation on the site the multimedia presentation has gained a large amount of attention.

The *Nashua Telegraph* report stated that from January 1 to July 31 of 2012 the newspaper posted nearly 1,000 videos and together these generated nearly 100,000 plays. The videos that have gained the most plays tend to be shorter videos, normally about a minute in length, of breaking news events. The top two videos in terms of clicks during that time were both of motor vehicle accidents. Other popular subjects included fires, a flash mob, and a commercial filming at a local airport involving "pretty girls and fast cars." Additionally, the newspaper's website includes a crime page with an interactive crime map linked to the Nashua Police Department. Crimes appear on the map as soon as the

department enters them into its computer system, and, among other features, the page also includes a gallery of mug shots. This page is viewed nearly 20,000 times each month.

According to the report, these multimedia packages were in part responsible for a rise in visits to the site that occurred even when the newspaper tightened its paywall by reducing the number of free page views allowed. From January to July of 2011, 4.3 million visits were made to the site, of which 2.2 million were unique visitors, and there were 9.5 million page views in all. From January to July of 2012, 6.2 million visits were made to the site, of which 3.8 million were unique visitors, and there were a total of 12.3 million page views.

Heckman, however, cautioned against using clicks as the best measure of effective multimedia use. According to Heckman, while it is good to have many different people click on a web page, it is also important to serve the core audience of the website and provide the best stories and information to them. She said that multimedia on the *Concord Monitor* website has gained a large amount of positive feedback and that with the right topic, format and timing it can generate many clicks as well.

According to Glen Sabalewski, digital news editor for the Seacoast Media Group, articles tend to accumulate about ten times as many clicks as articles. However, he attributed this in part to the layout of the newspaper's website, which places multimedia down the page and to the side of the article. Cram said that the multimedia pieces that generate the most clicks include photo slideshows and pieces related to sports. One video that generated a significant amount of clicks and feedback was filmed inside a car as a staff photographer drove around a new traffic circle that had caused some confusion among readers regarding how it worked. Another video that generated many clicks showed the effects of a storm around the Seacoast area. In many cases, Cram said, multimedia pieces that get people talking or raise awareness can be more important than those that make money directly.

**The Future of Journalism:**

This factor that can potentially pull newspapers into or out of multimedia use is less concrete than others, but it is important to note. For those who believe that multimedia will be a vital part of journalism of the future, it seems important to invest in it; for those who do not, it seems more sensible to focus on producing quality articles. As technology changes, each newspaper looks towards the future and considers how to best adapt to the changing habits of consumers.

“Any newspaper that does not take seriously the need to incorporate multimedia into its regular production of journalism is not going to last very long,” said Monroe. He said that while four or five years ago many newspapers saw multimedia as an extra that could be generated infrequently, today it's critical. In order to continue to be successful it is vital for the news to stay relevant and accessible, including adapting to the new platforms on which people consume news.

*The Nashua Telegraph* report similarly stated that it is becoming more and more important to provide content to readers “when they want it, where they want it and how they want it” and that in the future the newspaper plans on putting even much more focus on its digital strategy. Multimedia, by nature digital content, is one way to provide more instantaneous news rather than relying on the antiquated 24-hour news cycle.

Davis said that multimedia use is part of a bigger psychological change among newspapers that are realizing not all content needs to go into the print newspaper. The staff is becoming more and more cognizant of online readers and the tools they can use to bring news to them, and in many cases videos are becoming stand-alone pieces for which people do not

also need to read a story.

Heckman also spoke about the importance of providing stories on new platforms that viewers are increasingly using, including computers and mobile phones.

Cram spoke about multimedia as something that will become increasingly vital in the future, a future for which newspapers need to prepare now. Photographers now need multimedia experience to be hired at newspapers, so this is in part a preparation for the future on an individual level. Additionally, "In newspapers, you have to be ready to embrace new ways of business . . . If you don't want to change, you're left behind," she said. Over the past five to ten years, she said, multimedia in journalism has already changed beyond recognition. When she first began producing videos in 2004, few people could even access them, and she believes multimedia is likely to change as much again in the coming years. Sabalewski disagreed to an extent, however, saying online multimedia may never catch on for other reasons, such as that people often can't watch a video with sound at work, while they can read an article.

Wasser also expressed skepticism that multimedia would become a very major part of journalism in the future. People don't often click on videos, he said, because digesting words is faster and easier. With words, people can take their time and click on links. According to Wasser, video is popular for entertainment, but it hasn't proven its worth as part of a newspaper website.

### **Implications:**

The research I have conducted shows that there is no single factor dictating multimedia use at local newspapers but instead a series of push and pull factors. While the

pursuit of effective storytelling pushes newspapers to use multimedia, time and budget constraints make it less feasible. While some newspapers have found ways to use multimedia to make money and attract viewers, others have not. Some see multimedia as vital to the future of journalism, while others are more skeptical of this claim. With these conflicting motives, it is understandable that each newspaper has found a different multimedia strategy, many of which do not match up with the theoretical ideal that some scholars and larger newspapers have established.

Still, after conducting this research, I believe that regular multimedia generation is possible even at small news organizations. Many of the most effective videos in terms of storytelling, clicks and attention that newspapers listed did not require a large amount of effort to produce. Many could include just one shot spanning less than a minute and be uploaded directly. Others could be submitted by readers who witness something the newspaper staff did not. There is no reason why even a news organization with the most limited resources could not post these videos online as a supplement to print stories. Other multimedia projects, such as interactive graphics and some longer videos, do take more time. However, throughout my research I heard compelling arguments as to why these pieces are worth the while, including their storytelling value, the possibility of generating advertising revenue, increasing the time people spend on the site, increasing page views and attention to the newspaper, and generally improving the quality of the time spent on the site. Even among small newspapers, there seem to be some that have figured out how to make multimedia work as a part of their mission.

In my observation of newspapers' websites, I found that some were very busy and difficult to navigate, and multimedia is sometimes relegated either to a space near the bottom of the home page or to a special multimedia section, which one source I read as part of the

literature review dubbed the “multimedia ghetto.” Making multimedia easier to find, giving it a more prominent place on the site and in some cases promoting it more over social media would likely attract more attention to it. This is a point that Deb Cram of the Seacoast Media Group noted in my interview with her.

This research may be useful to smaller newspapers in choosing a multimedia strategy, as it shows in detail the struggles and successes that other newspapers have experienced and the best practices that each has decided upon or, in some cases, is still debating. For journalism students, studying this issue is important because it gives a realistic view of current developments in the newspaper industry. Although I had long heard of the value of multimedia in storytelling and reaching a modern audience, before completing this research I did not realize many of the nuances behind the decisions that newspaper staff make. For me and for other students, I hope that this research adds to a growing pool of knowledge that will help us to enter the journalism industry informed and perhaps help develop multimedia strategies at these small newspapers we may be entering in the coming years that are more cohesive and effective than those they currently have.

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