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CBS NEWS
CONGRATULATES

INGRID CIPRIAN-MATTHEWS
AND
BILL WHITAKER
NAMED TO
THE 2015 NEWSPRO
12 TO WATCH IN TV NEWS
As the year 2015 winds down, it gives us a chance both to look back on the past year in journalism and to look ahead to what the future holds. Our annual “12 to Watch in TV News” feature does a little of both, singling out 12 individuals who have been making an impact recently, and who can be counted on to be at the forefront in the months to come.

Our annual NewsPro-RTDNA Survey of the country’s top journalism schools similarly has both a “looking back” and a “looking ahead” element, examining how some of the oldest and most prestigious institutions in the field are preparing the journalists of the future to survive in a world of unprecedented change.

Elsewhere in the issue we hear from top industry professionals about a range of timely topics, including RTDNA Executive Director Mike Cavender’s take on journalism codes of ethics. With all the change in our industry, it may not come as a surprise that today’s code of ethics isn’t what it used to be. At the same time, Mike makes a compelling case that we may need ethical guidelines today more than ever.

In a traditional end-of-year NewsPro feature, we check in to find out what’s new with some of the major journalism awards — the Murrows, the News & Documentary Emmy Awards, the Scripps Howard Awards and the duPont-Columbia Awards.

Other stories in this issue uncover a surprising trend toward unionization in digital news operations and examine how well partnerships between news organizations and journalism schools are working out.

On a practical note, we have Jack Limpert, the longtime editor of The Washingtonian, offering insider tips on where to look for story ideas.

Capping things off is a marvelous piece in which veteran journalist and Professor Judy Muller grapples with the pace of change — and ultimately, learns to embrace disruption. It’s an entertaining lesson — and one that we can all use.

— Dennis R. Liff, Editor
As we head into the presidential election year of 2016, our annual listing is a potpourri of the up-and-coming and the well-respected names in television news, both in front of and behind the camera. We represent the major broadcast networks ABC, CBS and NBC, plus PBS, CNN, MSNBC, Al Jazeera America, Comedy Central and first-run syndication. And we include one comedian and one name, in particular, who is in search of a career comeback. In no particular order, here are the faces of television news to keep an eye on in the next year.
ALISYN CAMEROTA
CO-ANCHOR, CNN’S “NEW DAY”
In search of the proverbial “new opportunity,” Alisyn Camerota exited a 16-year run at Fox News in 2014 for CNN, where her duties now include a co-hosting stint opposite Chris Cuomo and Michaela Pereira on weekday morning show “New Day.” Never shy about confrontation, one of no-nonsense Camerota’s recent heated discussions — and there have been many — was with GOP presidential candidate Ben Carson on Nov. 6 over the lack of evidence to support his tale of being a violent, rage-filled child. Shortly after her addition to “New Day,” both liberal and conservative pundits began posting less-than-flattering stories regarding Camerota. But under the rule of thumb that any kind of feedback is positive, viewers have taken notice and ratings for “New Day” are up a reported 9 percent in total viewers since Camerota’s arrival. Sometimes it pays to be confrontational.

BILL WHITAKER
CORRESPONDENT, CBS’S “60 MINUTES”
After an estimated 2,000 stories in a 20-year period for CBS News (including regular reports on the “CBS Evening News”), veteran television journalist Bill Whitaker is now a familiar presence on institution “60 Minutes.” He joined CBS News as a reporter in November 1984 and became the CBS News Tokyo correspondent from 1989 to 1992. Whitaker moved to Los Angeles in November 1992, and he made the switch to “60 Minutes” in March 2014. Known for profiling a particularly wide range of individuals over the years (examples include Barbra Streisand, Norman Lear and the presidential campaigns of George W. Bush — in 2000 — and Mitt Romney), he made his official debut on “60 Minutes” with a report on the arrest of Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán, one of the most powerful drug traffickers in the world. A particularly heart-wrenching recent story followed Glenn Ford, who spent 30 years on Death Row for a crime he did not commit and died of lung cancer one year after being released. With “60 Minutes” comes the ultimate in job security; the newsmagazine will probably outlive us all. And the addition of Bill Whitaker is yet another reason why the clock will keep ticking.

BRIAN WILLIAMS
BREAKING NEWS ANCHOR, MSNBC
Qualifying for a “12 to Watch” list could ultimately be considered a stretch for Brian Williams. Williams is well-established, of course, and just one year ago he was the well-respected anchor of the “NBC Nightly News.” But the tide took a considerable shift after Williams misrepresented his experience in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, among other events, which led to a six-month suspension. Now back in a reduced role to anchor breaking news and special events for MSNBC, Williams made his official debut on the corporate cable cousin on Sept. 22 with coverage of the Pope’s visit to the United States. More recently, he covered the mass shooting in Oregon in early October. Overall, the response to Williams’ return has been notably mixed via social media, and it is the work itself that will make — or break — the comeback of disgraced Brian Williams. “I am fully aware of the second chance I have been given,” said Williams in an interview with “Today’s” Matt Lauer. “I don’t intend to squander it.”

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ANDREW LACK
CHAIRMAN, NBC NEWS

Sometimes you can go home again. After an eight-year stint as NBC News President from 1993 to 2001, Andrew Lack returned last April to oversee NBC News and MSNBC. His immediate challenges included deciding what to do about Brian Williams, who at the time was two months into his six-month suspension; dealing with the flagship morning program “Today,” which had slipped to No. 2 behind ABC’s “Good Morning America” and appeared to still be trying to rebound from Ann Curry’s departure in 2012; and reshaping ratings-plagued MSNBC. Williams is now one of the ingredients in the strategy to revive MSNBC, and the cable news net is on the slow rebound. “Today,” meanwhile, has narrowed the gap opposite “Good Morning America.” “Nightly News” minus Brian Williams (and with Lester Holt) remains the top-rated player in the network news daypart, and Sunday morning public affairs staple “Meet the Press” has gained momentum. While not everything is sunshine and roses (the Republican National Committee recently dumped NBC News from sponsoring the scheduled Feb. 26 debate of presidential candidates following criticism of CNBC’s handling of a debate in October), Lack has made great strides in less than one year.

LESTER HOLT
ANCHOR, “NBC NIGHTLY NEWS”

Finding a replacement for Brian Williams was no easy task given how “NBC Nightly News” dominates the daypart. What started as a temporary maneuver on Feb. 7 of this year turned into a permanent — and flawless — fit for 56-year-old Lester Holt, who became the first African-American individual to solo anchor a national nightly newscast in a full-time capacity. Since inheriting the “Nightly News” anchor seat, Holt has been in the field reporting at breaking news scenes like the Umpqua Community College shooting in Roseburg, Ore., and the immigration crisis in Hungary. And he recently joined President Barack Obama at a residential treatment center in Newark, N.J., where President Obama discussed his upcoming final year in office (among other things). A trusted name in the news arena, “The Nightly News with Lester Holt” is poised for continued leadership in 2016.

SHARYL ATTKISSON
HOST, “FULL MEASURE WITH SHARYL ATTKISSON”

Described as a sometimes controversial figure in the field of TV news, investigative correspondent, author and former CBS News correspondent Sharyl Attkisson has a new gig: host of the weekly first-run syndicated public affairs program “Full Measure,” which debuted Oct. 4 and airs on most of the Sinclair Broadcast Group stations. Determined to “bring to light stories and angles that other people are trying to cover up or censor or not have you see,” Attkisson is no stranger to blowing the whistle on subjects like the negative impacts of immigration, and government waste, fraud and abuse. Her book “Stonewalled: One Reporter’s Fight for Truth Against the Forces of Obstruction, Intimidation, and Harassment in Obama’s Washington,” in fact, accused CBS of protecting the Obama administration by not giving enough coverage on “The CBS Evening News” to stories like the slow pace of early enrollment under Obamacare and the 2012 Benghazi attack. With Attkisson having full editorial control of “Full Measure,” fasten your seatbelts for what will certainly be an eye-opening ride.

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Filling the shoes of Jon Stewart after his 16 years as host of Comedy Central’s “The Daily Show” was certainly a challenge. But since looking for the “next” Jon Stewart was not an option, finding someone unique to fit a new role was the right move by Comedy Central. No stranger to American audiences, 31-year-old Trevor Noah is actually the first South African comedian to appear on Jay Leno’s and David Letterman’s former late-night talk shows. Noah became a recurring contributor on “The Daily Show” in 2014. He is not necessarily as politically obsessive as Jon Stewart is. And his outspoken style has already landed him in hot water over tweets he made that were considered insensitive to both women and Jews. Since controversy often breeds viewership, Comedy Central is by no means disappointed with the early performance of Trevor Noah, who debuted Sept. 28 and is on par in the Nielsen ratings with Stewart. One big question is whether Emmy voters will shower Trevor Noah with accolades as they did his predecessor. Stay tuned.

A veteran of NBC News, Heather Allan made the switch to Al Jazeera English in 2009, where she managed all global news coverage for the network’s 34 bureaus across the world in her role as Head of Global News Gathering. Credited with helping to launch Al Jazeera America (AJAM) in 2013 by setting up all of the channel’s domestic bureaus and recruiting new hires, Allan was recently appointed Senior Vice President of News Gathering, where she will oversee all of the cable news network’s news coverage. Given the severity of the competition, no one ever said the arrival of AJAM would be an immediate success. From a ratings standpoint it still is lacking. But AJAM is committed to making its mark in the cluttered news environment, and will use the skills of Allan and Amir Ahmed, who was recently named Senior Vice President of News Planning, to help give this news gathering outlet its own unique voice. Sometimes patience can be a virtue.

Given the turbulent nature of co-hosting ABC’s “The View,” you have to give credit to anyone brave enough to sit in one of those chairs. But Paula Faris, who began at ABC News on camera on overnight news programs “World News Now” and “America This Morning” on Jan. 12, 2012, is one of the key ingredients in the retooled daytime chatfest’s current 19th season (opposite Whoopi Goldberg, Raven-Symone, Michelle Collins, newbie Candace Cameron-Bure and returning Joy Behar). As an initial substitute presence on “Good Morning America,” Faris was upped to a New York-based correspondent for all ABC News programs and, ultimately, to weekend co-anchor of “Good Morning America” in 2014. The jury is still out on this season of “The View,” with veteran host Whoopi Goldberg the next personality rumored to be departing. But when the producers went in search of someone similar to original co-host Meredith Vieira, the well-respected and relatable Faris — a rare combination — was the perfect fit.

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INGRID CIPRIAN-MATTHEWS  
SVP, NEWS ADMINISTRATION, CBS NEWS

Coming off her first year as Senior Vice President, News Administration, at CBS News, the rapid rise of Emmy Award-winning journalist Ingrid Ciprian-Matthews makes her a true pioneer in the field of network news. Ciprian-Matthews, the No. 2 force behind CBS News President David Rhodes, joined CBS in October 1993 as the senior producer for live segments on “CBS This Morning.” After a string of promotions, including the positions of deputy bureau chief for CBS News London from 1998-2000 and senior broadcast producer for the “CBS Evening News” from 2004-06, Ciprian-Matthews’ official job description is to coordinate all of the network’s daily news coverage — both foreign and domestic. But she ultimately manages all the correspondents and producers within the vast CBS News division, which includes the “CBS Evening News,” “CBS This Morning,” “60 Minutes,” “Sunday Morning” and “Face the Nation.” Under her tutelage, ratings remain consistent within the various programs, which is a rarity in this rapidly fragmenting marketplace.

LISA LING  
HOST, CNN’S “THIS IS LIFE WITH LISA LING”

Both a journalist and an author, Lisa Ling had the good fortune to be one of the co-hosts on “The View” at a time when the ABC daytime talker was in its heyday. That was from 1999-2002. She began her career at the age of 16 as co-host of a syndicated newsmagazine called “Scratch” in 1989, and by 18 was one of the youngest reporters for Channel One News. Ling could have certainly remained on “The View” for years longer, but the goal of the journalist inside her was “to say one thing each day that would make people think, whether it made them cheer or made them throw things at their TV.” So the ever-evolving Ling, who never seems to stay at any one place for very long, went on to host “National Geographic Ultimate Explorer” (which eventually reverted to original title “National Geographic Explorer”), followed by a role as special correspondent on Oprah Winfrey’s syndicated daytime talker and host of “Our America with Lisa Ling” on OWN. Ling joined CNN as host of documentary series “This Is Life with Lisa Ling” on Sept. 28, 2014, and her tradition of examining different aspects of our culture across the country is now part of the CNN landscape. Where she ends up next is anyone’s guess.

MIKE MELIA  
SENIOR BROADCAST PRODUCER, PBS’S “NEWSHOUR”

Rising through the ranks at daily PBS staple “NewsHour,” Mike Melia, a former White House intern, segued from a desk assistant in 2003 to his current role as Senior Broadcast Producer. Heading into lucky year 13 at “NewsHour,” now hosted by Gwen Ifill and Judy Woodruff, Melia has gained valuable experience as a reporter (covering politics, economics and the arts); a writer and producer; and deputy editor. He helped launch “NewsHour’s” regular series on poetry and the Art Beat website, producing a number of profiles of the country’s leading writers. And, in what may be a first for public television, Melia traded his typical work garb last summer and dressed as a zombie for a report on two teenage filmmakers who raised more than $68,000 on Kickstarter to make a horror movie. Could a guest spot on “The Walking Dead” be next? ■
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Finding Our Way in a Multiplatform Media Environment

Why the Code of Ethics Has Become More Important to Journalists Than Ever Before

By Mike Cavender

In the past year, three of the top professional journalism organizations have revised (or in one case, created) documents that are at the very core of what they stand for — their codes of ethics. The Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) and the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) both reworked their existing codes to make them more meaningful in the digital age. The Online News Association (ONA) took a unique approach in creating its first code — that of providing its members with a “toolbox” from which each could build one based on their own specific needs.

In this era of around-the-clock, social media-enhanced, instantaneous delivery of information, codes provide ethical guideposts to enable journalists to make better news decisions. And that makes for a better news product for our viewers, listeners and readers.

Codes have never been more important because the pressure on those who gather and produce the news has never been greater. No matter the medium, journalists are expected to work harder and faster than ever before to meet the multiplatform demands of today’s media environment. And that can too often lead to hasty decisions made in the heat of the moment — decisions that can run contrary to the principles of journalistic ethics.

So let’s dig a little deeper into the new and improved codes to see how they’re designed to help. In the case of RTDNA (http://rtdna.org/content/rtdna_code_of_ethics), which has had a Code of Ethics in place for many years, the goal for the revision was never to prescribe exactly what every journalist should do in every situation. Frankly, no code could ever anticipate everything.

RTDNA Ethics Chair Scott Libin put it this way: “We set out to provide some guiding principles that would help journalists make better decisions … in a manner consistent with the fundamental values that underlie our Association: Truth and Accuracy, Independence and Transparency and Accountability (for those decisions).”

Since RTDNA’s code was last updated in 2000, the digital explosion has had a monumental effect on how we do our jobs. How did social media and similar platforms influence our latest effort? The sometimes stark reality that information — and its ugly sister, misinformation — can live on forever on the Internet meant the issue of “search” needed to be addressed. So the RTDNA revised code contains this section: “Facts change over time. Responsible
Whether right or wrong (and I think the latter), we live and work in a time when our journalistic credibility is constantly being challenged.

reporting includes updating stories and amending archival versions to make them more accurate and to avoid misinforming those who, through search, stumble upon outdated material.”

Over at SPJ, its code (https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp) supports four basic journalistic principles; Seek Truth, Minimize Harm, Act Independently and Be Accountable. It sets out a series of specific steps journalists can take to ensure the work they do adheres to these precepts.

On its website, SPJ says its Code of Ethics is “not a set of rules, rather a guide that encourages all who engage in journalism to take responsibility for the information they provide, regardless of medium.”

In that sense, the RTDNA and SPJ codes are similar. Neither organization believes in setting hard and fast rules of behavior. Rather, the groups provide some overarching principles and help their users find ways to implement them. In the end, both codes can be considered somewhat traditional in their approach.

However, the Online News Association, which represents digital journalists, has taken a non-traditional and, some would say, unique approach to creating its first Code of Ethics. The “Build Your Own” ethics code platform (http://ethics.journalists.org/) allows journalists to review examples of various ethical issues, with the goal of allowing them to ultimately tailor a code that works uniquely for them and their news organizations.

On its website, ONA says the DIY concept was two years in the making. “Our strong belief is that, whether or not a journalist or news organization chooses to build a code, using the tool will spark crucial, necessary discussions of the most important issues facing digital journalists,” according to ONA Executive Director Jane McDonnell.

So why should codes of ethics matter to journalists and to those we serve?

Whether right or wrong (and I think the latter), we live and work in a time when our journalistic credibility is constantly being challenged. At times, Americans rank journalists right down there with politicians when it comes to honesty and trustworthiness. Yet the demand for news and information continues to grow.

As a result, we must do everything we can to bolster trust in our work. That means constantly guarding against news gathering and reporting that shows bias, inaccuracy or favoritism. Ethics codes and the principles they espouse can help each of us guard against those failures. But only if we use them. •

Mike Cavender is Executive Director of the Radio Television Digital News Association.
Honoring Journalism in the Digital World

Major Awards Find New Terms, New Categories and New Ways of Looking at the Rapidly Evolving Journalism Landscape

By Debra Kaufman

As journalism evolves, so do the awards that honor the field’s best work. Nearly all of the major awards have made changes in the past year, reflecting trends in the industry including the increasing influence of digital platforms. NewsPro examined some of the biggest awards in the industry to find what’s new and important.

RTDNA and the Edward R. Murrow Awards

RTDNA Executive Director Mike Cavender notes that 2015 was another year of growth, with more than 4,200 entries for this year’s awards. “It’s been growing 5 to 8 percent for the last few years,” he says. “Five years ago, we had 3,000 entries.”

He attributes growth not just to the Murrow Awards’ higher profile, but also to growth in the number of news organizations producing content that qualifies for a Murrow Award. “We’re seeing more entries every year from Web-based services as well as traditional newspapers with a digital presence,” he says, noting significant digital offerings from such outlets as The New York Times, The Washington Post and others. “Clearly, as they have moved into the digital realm, they have been producing content they’d like to see recognized.”

In 2015, for the first time, RTDNA created a student competition for Murrow Awards. “Educators and students across the country have asked us for several years to consider creating a competition designed for work being done by students through schools or training organizations,” Cavender says.

Three awards honor work in audio, video and Web/digital. “It’s a good opportunity to demonstrate to potential employees that a student does work at the level of a Murrow Award,” says Cavender.

NATAS and the News & Documentary Emmy Awards

David Winn, senior vice president of the News & Documentary Emmy Awards, notes that about six years ago, the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (NATAS) began to take the position that there are two types of digital programming: linear and transmedia or interactive content. “A documentary on Netflix or a video report on Vice Media could easily be on broadcast TV, but it’s delivered online,” says Winn. “Those things should be competing together. Other content, such as virtual reality documentaries like what The New York Times is producing, is a different animal and needs its own category.”

Winn notes that the relationship between old and new media has changed. “New media is sometimes seen as the implacable foe of old media,” he says. “But old media is rapidly making use of new media, and upstarts like Vice are producing really excellent traditional media.”

The new term replacing new media is “immersive media.” “It can mean a lot of things, but we use it to designate virtual reality and videogame-like products,” says Winn, noting how The New York Times’ giveaway of more than 1 million Google Cardboard VR...
viewers was a game changer. While Winn says the trend is a positive one, he also asks: “But to what extent does it add to journalism?”

Scripps Howard Foundation and the Scripps Awards
Valerie Miller, Scripps Howard Foundation manager of external communications, notes that the Foundation’s awards committee is “always looking for ways to make sure the awards are relevant.” In the past year, the committee decided to create an award that did just that. “We started a category that, rather than being evergreen, would change on an annual basis to reflect a major issue in the country.” This year, the award will look at journalism focused on Police/Community Relations. “This topic was an early contender,” says Miller. “After the committee discussed various options, it was the unanimous choice.”

The award — the first new one in a while — just opened for entries, says Miller, so it’s too early to know what the reception will be. But she notes that previous additions to the awards lineup, including environmental stories and digital innovation, have taken off. The new award is open to work created on every platform, she notes.

“I think it’s a good time for awards,” Miller adds. “It’s certainly an important part of the Foundation and what it does in supporting journalism and recognizing great journalistic work.”

Columbia University School of Journalism and the duPont-Columbia Awards
Columbia University Adjunct Professor Lisa R. Cohen, director of the prizes department, reports a record number of entries this year: more than 600.

“It’s coming from all directions,” she says. “We were a broadcast award, then broadcast and cable, then broadcast, cable and digital. We have to redefine ourselves almost every year because everything is digital.”

The biggest surge in this year’s entries, she notes, has been in audio, not just because of podcasts but because podcasts have brought more attention to radio. Every year also sees certain topics that rise to the top. This year, says Cohen, saw a lot of reporting on civil rights and race issues as well as many stories on transgender issues.

The duPont Awards also have a long tradition of honoring local investigative reporting, and there were many good entries this year.

“There have been some very ambitious projects at local stations,” says Cohen. “People aren’t just reporting on local stories but looking at bigger national issues that have an impact on their home town.”

Another trend is continued higher production values in local video entries. “The technology is there at a lower price point,” says Cohen. “People are outfitting themselves with better lenses and learning to use the gear. It’s not as hard to shoot video and make pretty pictures.”

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NEWSPRO-RTDNA SURVEY 2015
J-SCHOOL RANKINGS

1. UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
   Missouri School of Journalism

2. NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
   Medill School of Journalism

3. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
   Graduate School of Journalism

4. SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
   S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications

5. ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
   Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication

6. WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
   Edward R. Murrow College of Communication

7. UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
   Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication

8. UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
   School of Journalism

9. UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
   Philip Merrill College of Journalism

10. (TIE) UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
    College of Journalism and Communications

10. (TIE) UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
    Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism

12 TO 30 IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER
American University School of Communication
Auburn University School of Communication & Journalism
Boston University College of Communication
Indiana University The Media School
Ithaca College Roy H. Park School of Communications
Kent State University School of Journalism & Mass Communication
Lyndon State College Electronic Journalism Arts Department
Middle Tennessee State University School of Journalism
New York University Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute
Ohio University E.W. Scripps School of Journalism
Penn State College of Communications
Stanford University Department of Communications
Temple University School of Media and Communication
University of California at Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Media and Journalism
University of Oklahoma Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of South Carolina School of Journalism and Mass Communications
University of Texas at Austin School of Journalism
University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Journalism and Mass Communication
The No. 1 theme cited by voters in the 2015 NewsPro-RTDNA survey of the country’s top journalism schools is real-world experience, and by that measure and others, the University of Missouri School of Journalism continues to lead the way.

Missouri found itself in a familiar position in the survey, once again ranked No. 1 by survey participants — repeating its win from a year ago. The nation’s oldest journalism school remains on the cutting edge, according to respondents, and continues to get high marks for the “Missouri Method,” which uses a curriculum combining classroom teaching, multimedia laboratory experience and hands-on work experience.

The school’s real-world outlets, including the Columbia Missourian newspaper and website and the TV station KOMU, an NBC affiliate, give the Missouri School of Journalism a big advantage when it comes to providing practical experience. The result of the program’s combined approach, according to survey voters, is students who are ready to do the job and able to adapt to a rapidly changing industry.

“The Missouri Method gives students hands-on experience in a digital newsroom, at a commercial network television affiliate and in an NPR member station newsroom,” wrote one voter. “This prepares students for their first jobs with practical experience and the digital skills needed by journalists today.”

Another respondent put it this way: “If you really want to know what your field is like, go to Mizzou. They throw you in head first and you learn quickly whether you can swim. No sugar-coating, no sick days, no excuses. In many ways, it’s actually much tougher than being in the real world.”

Other voters cited Missouri’s “exceptionally well-connected alumni network” and the school’s “long history of producing quality journalists.” Still another respondent noted, “University of Missouri continues to lead in emerging media.”

Another perennially strong performer in the survey is Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, which came in second this year — up from No. 3 a year ago. Medill School earned praise as a program where “language and words still matter,” with a number of voters citing the high quality of the school’s graduates.

Several respondents mentioned the focus on adaptability at Medill. “This school’s ability to adapt to the changing face of news is unparalleled,” wrote one voter. Another cited Medill’s “commitment to excellence” and its mentoring/internship program, along with its “commitment to stay relevant with a changing news industry.”

Many of those commenting for the survey used superlatives to describe Medill’s graduates. One voter noted the school’s “well-known, nationally renowned, prestigious alumni,” while another said simply that the Northwestern program “has produced the best journalists.”

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Another survey participant added: “Medill continues to be on the forefront of journalism education and also is now developing entrepreneurial skills so journalists can develop their own businesses in this digital era.”

Coming in at No. 3 in this year’s survey was another perennial top finisher, the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. Respondents consistently mentioned Columbia’s tradition and reputation, with the consensus being that the school lives up to that reputation.

One voter noted that Columbia “attracts great students” and offers the “best combination of prestige and innovation.” Another lauded the “access to media jobs for graduates.”

Those graduates have done well in their careers. “Columbia consistently produces thoughtful journalists who go on to dominate the field,” wrote one voter, while others cited the school’s “productive alums working and teaching in the field” and the “number of grads in the industry with awards.”

Voters noted Columbia’s combination of tradition and innovation, its New York location, its Ivy League status, its “cutting-edge teaching” and its ability to “attract great adjuncts,” with one respondent summing up the school’s position as the “East Coast standard bearer.”

Another East Coast school — and another perennial strong performer in our survey — came in just behind Columbia in fourth place. Syracuse University’s S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications was praised for, as one voter put it, “excellent, comprehensive programs focused on integrity, ethics, legacy and cutting-edge learning preparing well-rounded professionals for today’s media landscape.”

Like many of the top J-schools in our survey, Newhouse received high marks for its emphasis on preparation for the real world. “Newhouse teaches students with a practical approach rather than an academic one,” wrote one voter. “Grads leave ready to work in the real world on day one, with an understanding of how the business
DOES work in addition to how the business theoretically SHOULD work. Students learn these things from professionals who were at the top of their fields, not from those who merely studied the field.”

Another respondent noted: “Each program is very individualized and fully immerses the student in the curriculum.”

Several survey participants noted the strength of the Newhouse alumni, with one commenting, “The alumni network Syracuse boasts is second to none,” and another writing, “The skill set of both radio and television students at Syracuse is unmatched.”

The No. 5 spot on the survey goes to the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University, with almost all of the commenters mentioning the strength of the program’s faculty.

One survey respondent wrote that the Cronkite School is “currently doing the best job of preparing students for the real world of journalism — combining ‘old school’ with ‘new school’ journalism.”

The school also gets high marks for its facilities, and like many of the top schools, receives praise for providing real-life experience. One commenter noted that the Cronkite School produces “sharp, well-trained, contemporary graduates with strong faculty support.”

In sixth place is the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication at Washington State University. With the Murrow School, once again, the themes of cutting-edge teaching, preparation for change and real-world experience were prevalent.

“The Edward R. Murrow College of Communication offers top-quality education and hands-on learning opportunities with its student-run TV station and newspaper,” one voter wrote.

Another commented: “The Murrow College of Communication has a long and storied past, producing thousands of strong, professional journalists, across all mediums, over the past 30+ years.”

Wrote still another survey participant: “Washington State has a very focused program with incredible hands-on opportunities for students. Their student-run TV station consistently puts out good product, including a nightly newscast that looks very professional. The legacy of Edward R. Murrow is infused in everything they do.”

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Top J-Schools continued from page 16
Coming in at No. 7, The Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia is another school getting high praise for its practical approach. “UGA’s program gives students hands-on experience,” writes one survey voter. “They can work as a production assistant to director to reporter to anchor on a working TV set.”

Another respondent cites the school’s “updated newsroom, great forward-thinking professors, amazing and very involved dean.”

Still another voter writes of the Grady College program: “The professors are very knowledgeable and work hard to realistically prepare students for the ever-changing world of journalism. The school has also increased efforts to focus on diversity and after-school connections.”

The No. 8 school on our list, the University of Montana School of Journalism, received comments both on the quality of the school and on the beauty of its setting. One voter called it “the best under-the-radar school in the entire country,” and noted that the school “has this amazing mix of being a small school with national faculty and being in an incredible location.”

Another respondent noted: “Being in Missoula, Montana, provides something no one else can. It’s a mix of people, cultures, the great West, history and beautiful scenery.”

The Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland placed ninth in this year’s survey, and here, too, location was a factor.

One voter wrote of the Merrill College: “With such close proximity to D.C., the news capital of the world, it offers unprecedented opportunities for its students through internships at places such as the Washington Post and NBC, Pulitzer-winning professors, and investigative reporting classes.”

Two schools — the College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida and the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California — tied for the No. 10 spot on the survey.

The Florida program was praised for its professors and its radio facilities, which give students on-air experience. “The University of Florida allows its students many opportunities to participate and learn in real-world environments,” wrote one commenter, adding: “I believe this is the best way to get experience and knowledge to best prepare students for their next step.”

Both Florida and USC were praised for the quality of their graduates. A voter wrote of the Annenberg grads, “They are mature and ready when they come out.”
Collaboration: A ‘Leap of Faith’ Worth Taking

Why Partnerships Between Journalism Schools and Professional News Operations Are Flourishing

By Debra Kaufman

R elationships between news outlets and journalism schools aren’t a new idea. University of Maryland’s Philip Merrill College of Journalism just celebrated the 25th anniversary of its Capital News Service, a professional training ground for students to cover the government. Pew Research Center director of journalism research Amy Mitchell says a 2014 report she conducted found that students accounted for 14 percent of all statehouse reporters.

Nonprofit news organization Oklahoma Watch leases space on the campus of the University of Oklahoma, and works closely with students in the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication. “In the interest of helping to train future journalists, we’re on campus and find ways of collaborating with the college,” explains Oklahoma Watch editor David Fritze, who says the organization has media partnerships with about 100 print and broadcast entities statewide.

“There are many cases where journalism schools have incorporated statehouse reporting assignments into their curriculum,” Mitchell notes. Covering state legislatures is only one way that university journalism schools are collaborating with established news organizations. From the point of view of the news outlet, “You can’t just look at this as cheap content,” says Kelly McBride, Poynter Institute for Media Studies vice president, academic programs. “You have to make sure it’s a fit with the audience. And there’s a trade-off for the energy you have to spend to make sure it works.”

But just a couple of collaborative examples show how, when it works well, it’s a win-win. Oklahoma Watch reporter Nate Robson used University of Oklahoma journalism students to create a project, TalkToUs.net, documenting the voices of residents in low-income neighborhoods in Oklahoma City with iPad minis. Robson and his colleague explained best practices in reporting and let the media-savvy students go. “It was really interesting to see students grow and develop multimedia, video and writing skills,” he says. “I found it to be pretty satisfying.”

At the University of Montana’s 100-year-old School of Journalism, Associate Professor Nadia White has worked with freshman classes to create content for the city’s Make It Missoula website. “It’s a leap of faith to enter into a relationship with young reporters,” says White. “But it can work if I am diligent.”

In fact, the University of Montana School of Journalism’s emphasis on practical learning and the state’s makeup of many small, isolated towns has led to a fruitful collaboration for numerous outlets. Professor Dennis Swibold, who wryly notes that professors there are practitioners, not Ph.D.s, explains, “Working with the professional press in our community is in our DNA.”

Outlets include the Montana Newspaper Association, made up of 80 mostly small daily and weekly newspapers, and the Greater Montana Foundation, funded in 1958 by broadcaster Ed Craney, which provides ties to PBS and Montana Public Radio and supports a variety of student projects, including documentaries that are aired statewide.

University of Montana journalism students also cover the Montana state Legislature, with print packages, expanded by blogs and tweets, sent to about 40 weekly small and daily newspapers. The Legislative News Service, which serves commercial radio stations in the state that don’t have news services, also makes use of the student reporting.

Reporting on state government isn’t the only specialized kind of reporting that university journalism students can pursue. At the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, Associate Professor Adam Glenn, who also does environmental journalism

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Do the Best Story Ideas Come at Lunch — or Dinner?

For a Veteran Newsman, Scouring Other Newspapers and Magazines Was Just the Start of a Full Day of Finding Inspiration

By Jack Limpert

While at the Washingtonian, a monthly magazine, I subscribed to lots of other magazines, looking for ideas to adapt. I also looked through four newspapers every morning — The Washington Post, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and USA Today. As digital journalism got more interesting, some of that reading went online.

I also subscribed to Publishers Weekly, which covers the book business. It listed book deals that publishers had made with authors — sometimes a good book idea can become a good story idea. That service is now online.

At a meeting of the American Society of Magazine Editors, one of Hearst’s top editors, John Mack Carter, was asked for his best advice. He said, “Go out to lunch.” Some of us were mystified by that — Go out to lunch? — but what he was saying was get out of the office cocoon and talk to lots of different kinds of people.

Clay Felker, the legendary editor of New York magazine, also went out to dinner. One of his editors told me that Felker wanted to know what people were talking about at Manhattan dinner parties, thinking that anything that made good conversation also might make a good magazine piece. The editor said Felker was so convinced that the best ideas came from out of the office that some editors would find out where Felker was going to dinner and try to get someone there to bring up a story idea.

At the Washingtonian, we tried to have at least one sandwich lunch a month where we invited a guest who was plugged into some part of the city. Five or six editors and writers would sit in — we rotated the invitation list so that everyone on the editorial staff was involved. The lunches were off the record; we wanted the guest to be able to speak freely without fear of being quoted. If a story idea came out of the lunch, we’d later ask the guest if it was okay to use it.

I went out to a lot of Washington receptions, looking for interesting conversation, but a reception is mostly useful for meeting people and then following up in a more relaxed setting.

In the office, I was a believer in small meetings — preferably three, four, or five people. We often did these small meetings over a morning cup of coffee, a midday sandwich, or a late afternoon drink. I always felt that the bigger the meeting the less likely the smartest people in the room would talk.

The M.O. of these small meetings was there are no bad ideas. We wanted writers and editors to feel free to toss out an idea no matter how wacky it might seem. You never know where the next great story idea will come from.

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Jack Limpert was editor of The Washingtonian for more than 40 years and writes a blog about how editors and writers work, at jacklimpert.com.
Unionization in New Media: Part of a Larger Trend?

Digital News Outlets, Staffed Largely by Millennials, Are Leading the Way in a New Labor Movement

By Debra Kaufman

Unions have a fraction of the power and influence they had in their 1950s heyday, when more than 35 percent of Americans belonged to one. For most baby boomers, union conjures up visions of Reagan’s mass firing of air traffic controllers, Jimmy Hoffa, and, of course, Norma Rae. None of those images are cultural touchstones for the millennial journalists working for digital news and information publications. Yet, starting in June with Gawker Media, numerous digital outlets have decided to go union. And management has been largely accepting the change — even encouraging employees to join up.

What to make of the urge to organize, especially at a time when union membership nationwide is at a low point? Gawker Media senior writer Hamilton Nolan recalls speaking to an organizer from the Writers Guild of America, East (WGAE), who was interested in organizing Vice Media. “After a while, I said, why don’t you try to organize us,” he recalls. “Gawker was a pretty good place to work, but people wanted improvements in the workplace: a fair system for raises and severance pay and a way to standardize things that were being done in an ad hoc way.”

Lowell Peterson, executive director of the WGAE, recalls that initial meeting. “Usually at a first organizing meeting there are three people,” he says. “At this one, there were 30. A fair amount of self-organizing had been going on.”

It didn’t hurt that Gawker executive editor Tommy Cragg came out in favor of a union and founder Nick Denton called himself “intensely relaxed” about the prospect. Peterson says that, in a conversation, Denton was neutral. “He’s certainly progressive,” Peterson adds. “He didn’t actively encourage them, but he stepped back and respected their decision on collective bargaining.”

Since Gawker went union in June of this year, several other digital-native outlets have unionized, organized by two labor unions. WGAE, which traces its beginnings to 1912 and is now an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, organized Gawker, Salon, Vice Media and The Huffington Post. The Newspaper Guild (or NewsGuild), founded in 1933 and now a sector of the Communication Workers of America (CWA), organized Al Jazeera America and The Guardian US, through its New York local, NewsGuild of New York.

Peterson and Newspaper Guild President Bernard Lunzer offer some insight into why journalists at the digital-native outlets have been interested in unionizing, as well as what it’s like to organize this new generation of union members. “People want to know they’re being treated fairly,” says Lunzer. “They want to have a voice and they want to know they’re going to be able to be heard. And I think it’s a healthy thing.”

He notes that younger journalists are of a generation that no longer associates union with the factory jobs of yore. Nolan agrees. “Although old media was widely unionized, we work in an industry

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that isn’t,” he says. “This is part of the new media industry growing up. The fact that it has spread to so many places since we did it speaks for itself. Union is an idea that sells itself.”

Nolan surmises that the rise of unions among digital information workers is “part of a larger movement.” “Inequality has been growing since the Reagan administration,” he says. “For a long time, no one took online media seriously as a business. It was a fly-by-night operation. But it’s become clear over the last few years, when companies are getting multibillion-dollar valuations, writers can see it’s a real business and people are getting rich.”

Organizing of smaller online publications actually began before the high-profile Gawker case, says Lunzer. His union organized Truthout, a nonprofit online daily news organization, 10 years ago and also represents independent online magazine In These Times, as well as The Daily Beast, which came in as part of the Newsweek merger.

The work of organizing a digital outlet to go union isn’t always a slam-dunk as it was with Gawker. Marjorie Waggoner, president of News Media Guild, the NewsGuild’s New York local, recounts that the Al Jazeera organizing “was the more typical effort.” “Management didn’t agree to it voluntarily,” she says. “So it went to the American Arbitration Association. It came to a vote, and the union won, in a vote of 32 to 5.”

Bringing The Guardian USA into the fold was more straightforward, since, says Waggoner, “It’s part of The Guardian culture.” She notes that journalists at The Guardian in the U.K. have long been represented by that country’s National Union of Journalists. “The U.S. staff decided they wanted to organize as well,” she says. “They truly wanted a voice in the newsroom.”

Organizing continues, say both Lowell and Lunzer, but they can’t say a word until negotiations move to a certain point. In other words, we haven’t seen the last digital-native publication organize.

“**You can’t just look at this as cheap content. You have to make sure it’s a fit with the audience. And there’s a trade-off for the energy you have to spend to make sure it works.”**

— Kelly McBride
How I Learned to Embrace Disruption

By Judy Muller

As I write this, my new Google Cardboard VR glasses are sitting on my desk, inviting me to take a break, to drop my iPhone into this simple corrugated cardboard device, click The New York Times VR app, and immerse myself in a new story, a new world, a new way of seeing journalism. More than just the latest “platform” from the front lines of the media revolution, the VR glasses have the potential for bringing the older and younger generations into a common space, and the potential for journalists to stretch narrative skills in ways we can now only imagine.

It may look like a toy, but as Wired editor Josh Valcarcel put it, “As a medium for non-fiction, I believe the hype that VR can act as a powerful empathy engine, a uniquely direct way to put us in someone else’s world.” I believe it, too. The VR glasses are so cheap to produce that The New York Times could afford to hand them out for free to subscribers of the Sunday newspaper. The result: A generation raised on print exploded with glee on Facebook. “Take the ride if you get a chance!” wrote one of my FB pals. “It can only get better and the story will definitely remain with you.” The younger generation, of course, has known about VR for some time (a colleague tells me her son made a pair of VR glasses in summer camp).

Virtual reality is part of our new reality, the latest in a long line of tremors in the fault lines of the media revolution. The changes have been so enormous, so cataclysmic, that it’s hard to keep up. But those of us in the business of educating the next generation of journalists must do more than “keep up.” One of my colleagues at USC’s Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, Robert Hernandez, puts it this way: “We don’t need to prepare for the next disruption, we need to lead the next disruption.” That means throwing together journalism students with students from engineering, cinematic arts, video gaming, business, and others to collaborate on new ways of collecting, collating and delivering news and information. Most important, it means taking risks, trying out new ways of getting our stories heard and seen and read. As long as we are teaching the fundamentals of journalism — accuracy, fairness, solid evidence, narrative that includes compelling text, video and audio — the tools and platforms we employ may be experimental, even temporary, mediums for storytelling.

And storytelling is thriving. For those who fear that long-form, in-depth journalism is dead, there is ample evidence to the contrary. Just look at the success of the Podcast Serial on Public Radio or the TV news series Vice on HBO. And stalwarts such as PBS’ “Frontline” continue to maintain high standards and a respectable audience. People will always “stay tuned” for a well-told story that engages them, and perhaps even asks them to participate.

Participation is increasingly important. The Age of Disruption has impacted not only journalists; it has changed the way the consumer relates to information. The group “formerly known as the audience” is part of the equation, producing and creating content. This may be the most important shift in the media revolution and we ignore it at our peril. We can teach future journalists all the latest advances, from virtual reality reporting to coding to data journalism to entrepreneurial business models, but it won’t mean a thing if the audience is “illiterate” when it comes to developing the critical thinking skills needed to differentiate between fact and fiction.

The movement to teach “news literacy” (or, more broadly, “media literacy”) is growing every day, from elementary schools to universities. At USC, I co-teach a class with Communications Professor Alison Trope entitled “Discover, Deconstruct, Design: Navigating Media and News in the Digital Age.” Not exactly the sexiest title, perhaps. “Detecting Crap and Creating Credible Content” might be more of a draw, were it academically feasible. Among other skills, students learn how to apply the SMELL test (courtesy of John McManus, author of “Don’t Be Fooled: A Citizen’s Guide to News and Information in the Digital Age”), an acronym that asks: what is the Source of the information, what is the Motive, what is the Evidence, is it Logical, and what’s Left Out. But just as important as learning how to be intelligent critics who can evaluate an increasing barrage of information, students learn how to actively and ethically engage in the digital culture.

“In a participatory culture,” writes Dan Gillmor, “none of us is fully literate unless we are creating, not just consuming.”

Sometimes the pace of change can feel overwhelming. As a radio correspondent for CBS News in the 1980s, I would feed audio to the newsroom from the field by first finding a telephone, unscrewing the mouthpiece, then attaching “alligator clips” from my tape recorder. That might sound prehistoric, but consider this: We have only had Google since 1998, YouTube since 2005 and the iPhone since 2007. Every new technology “disrupts” the old. Keeping up with it, keeping ahead of it, can seem exhausting. But it’s also incredibly exciting. Just ask all those folks now peering through VR glasses, immersing themselves in the storytelling medium of the future. Or at least until the next thing comes along.

Judy Muller is a Professor of Broadcast Journalism at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, and a former ABC News and CBS News correspondent.
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