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THE RELEVANCY OF PRINT NEWSPAPERS IN THE CHANGING NEWS CYCLE  
AND HOW EDITORS MANAGE TO MOTIVATE

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the steps national news organizations with a print product are taking to remain relevant and up to speed in the increasing 24/7 news cycle. It offers an in-depth look at the editorial process behind multiple news organizations in the United States, as well as a comparison among the various outlets included in the study and the reasoning behind editorial decisions. There is also a closer look provided at the editors of each organization and what they are doing to help motivate their staffs during this turbulent time in journalism and the transition to a more “digital first” approach. In many cases, the newspapers show a unified approach in moving forward with the changing industry, though a few outliers provide a balanced and unique take on approaches moving forward. The thesis also provides a first-hand look from a college editor and the parallels between professional organizations and collegiate newspapers. The following thesis shows a changing industry attempting to discover the most cost-efficient business model to balance both the bottom line and top news coverage.



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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Look around in the world today and you'll find a society grounded in fast-breaking knowledge and an urge to share, with the models of social media and the Internet driving America and the world to higher speeds than ever before. Thus, it should come as no surprise that most media consumers want their news delivered in the same way: quickly and accurately.

Throughout the past 30 years, we've seen the news industry drastically change, moving from an era where news was broken through the print pages of a daily newspaper to the airwaves of TV to the social media pages of Twitter with the accompanying hashtag “#BREAKING” to signify the latest headlines. The pace, urgency and format in which we have become accustomed is no longer that of a traditional newspaper, nor does it fit the mold of daily deadlines long associated with the standards of journalism. Instead, we function in an industry driven by pageviews and unique visitors to websites alongside dipping print circulation numbers and a serious decrease in customers wanting a physical copy of the newspaper every day. Editors face looming overhead pressure to cut costs and become more efficient, all while operating with increasingly smaller staffs. And what was once seen as a finish line or final destination — the daily print edition -- is no longer. As Jason Fry wrote for Poynter:

“... The endpoint of the newsgathering and reporting is no longer a front-page package of stories explaining — the best one can — what happened, why it happened and what might be next. Now, there is no endpoint — events are reported in real time, with stories in constant motion, and the front page is a snapshot of an organization's reporting at the moment when the presses needed to roll.” (Fry)

What once felt like a battle between only print organizations and television networks broadcasting two to three times a day has shifted into non-stop coverage on TVs (i.e. CNN) and constant streams on news on the Internet. Now, some websites may not even put out a print

product (i.e. BuzzFeed and Gawker) but are able to break news and capture an audience's attention from their main assets. The competition is fierce and expectations are even higher.

Today, these are the battles that reporters and editors walk into, right alongside the ethical challenges that come with reporting a story quickly and accurately without sacrificing quality of content. These are the pressures that news organizations across the country and around the world struggle to balance while still reaching audiences and making money. These are the experiences of the modern journalist.

But armed and ready with a smartphone that often serves as a computer, still camera, video camera and social media connection all in one, journalists are adapting and changing to fit these current needs. Heading up these issues right alongside them are the editors leading these newsrooms and attempting to walk the fine line of revenue and content, while making sure their reporters are happy, healthy and doing what they love.

Cut journalism down to its core and the qualities should always be the same: honesty, integrity and accountability at their finest. That's the reason journalists go into the field after all, to hold those in society to the highest standards and to guarantee that the information presented for any and all topics is accurate and true. But ask that same society today how it accesses that news and how it wants to access it and the system stalls.

Today, it's important to understand what organizations are doing to take these steps into the future of journalism and more importantly, how editors are managing to foster environments reflective of these strong journalism qualities while expecting the best work possible. To do that, though, we must dive into the workings of a modern newsroom and into the minds of the people leading these top news organizations. More importantly, we must demand, much like the journalists themselves, honest answers as to how and why the industry is failing and what it must do to improve.

## Chapter 2

### Looking back to learn

Many years ago, media consumers woke up, went outside and bought or picked up their morning paper, where they would get the latest headlines and news — one singular source for all of their information. Today, we live in a world where phones rest inches away from our faces when we sleep, and we are often greeted with alerts, push notifications and emails bringing us the news that may have broken just seconds ago. It's a completely different world for the media, but one that has hugely changed in as little as 20 years.

Specifically, we've seen the biggest growth in media in the past two decades, as the Internet became a catch-all for information and sources, and digital became the beast many news organizations had to learn to conquer. Instead of news operating on a daily cycle, newspapers found themselves operating on minute-by-minute deadlines to push out news on their digital platforms and, now, even social media like Twitter and Facebook. At the time, many newspapers struggled with making the necessary adjustments to fit the changing news cycle and to produce quality, long form pieces without sacrificing the urgency of news. Suddenly, it wasn't about just being right — there also came the challenge of being first.

Many news organizations today cite Sept. 11, 2001 as one of the turning points in mainstream journalism. When the news broke that two Boeing 767's had crashed into the World Trade Centers at 8:48 a.m., most people were just arriving at work (Schmemmann). The majority of daily newspapers were already on stands for the day. And instead, all coverage shifted to broadcast information displayed on TVs across America. For newspapers to even begin to compete, the focus had to be on what they could offer online that broadcast journalists and their news organizations couldn't. Curt Chandler, the web editor at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette during this time period, recalls the day as the shift in digital coverage for the newspaper. Every post pushed out online throughout the day gained the Post-Gazette's website more followers and

thousands of pageviews. Though at times the newspaper may have been offering wire content like articles and photos from the Associated Press, it was content that the Post-Gazette could offer during this time to its regular readers. It also forced organizations like The New York Times, which was in the midst of the terrorist attack, to get as much online as quickly as possible. No longer was the focus on holding coverage for print the next day — by 9 a.m. the following day, everyone knew the story.

Interestingly enough, studies by Poynter, a leading journalism news site, show that many Americans tend to remember 9/11 through newspaper coverage, chronicling the events of that day through the newsfronts from across the country (Myers). Poynter's introduction to "September, 11, 2001," a book featuring the newsfronts of various newspapers, describes the media through Max Frankel's view:

"Only honest and reliable news media could instruct the world in its vulnerability, summon Americans to heroic acts of rescue, and ignite the global search for meaning and response. Only trusted news teams could discern the nation's anxiety, spread words of hope and therapy, and help to move us from numbing fear toward recovery." (Myers)

At the time, broadcast journalism could provide consumers with the here and now, the information that they needed to fully understand what was happening and move forward immediately. But the newspapers chronicled something more. As Myers writes for Poynter, "On 9/11, I printed a copy of CNN.com's home page... My black-and-white printout isn't much of a souvenir; I keep it somewhere in a file cabinet." However, he also still has the New York Times' print edition from the following day, which he keeps "in a thick black plastic bag designed to block any light that will fade the pages." More than that, these front pages chronicle a moving time in America's history that changed the way many people not only viewed the safety of our country but the way they would later grasp and interpret news.

"Those historic front pages show a newspaper's experience presenting a monumental story. They do more than distribute facts; they convey the meaning of an event through their headlines, font sizes and the selection of images. In the days after 9/11, newspapers printed iconic images of the burning towers and of firefighters raising the American flag.

Although 9/11 motivated our hunt for bin Laden, 10 years later few papers used those 2001 photos to mark his death. They didn't have to; the images are never far from our minds." (Myers)

More and more, the print editions of newspapers were and still are viewed as novelty items to remember and cherish moments years later. Parents still clip out articles about their children in high school, as do a variety of readers on a variety of subjects. The art of holding something tangible in your hands to commemorate an event or award can't be replaced with a TV clip or an Internet screenshot.

However, in the switch to digital, Osama bin Laden's death 10 years later again reminded Americans and those in the news industry that news consumption was changing. As printers prepared for another heavy night at the presses, the product result wasn't the same as the days following Sept. 11 (Myers). People learned the information of bin Laden's death through Twitter and online sources, with some papers having already prepared for the final print product the following day. Granted, many papers were willing to sacrifice an early deadline for getting the news out there, but even so, the images didn't depict strong, dominant-worthy shots (Myers). As Myers pointed out, many ended up going with a portrait shot of bin Laden's face, a resonating image that stuck with consumers but nothing that Americans wanted to cherish and remember. Again, the need for a product that would be memorable and last distinguished itself.

Adding to the editor headaches was the newer use of social media to access larger crowds. Today, we utilize social media as a way to share a story that is circulating and then provide feedback and opinion on it, as well (Myers). Through these sites, all users are given a voice and a platform on which to share it, adding to the belief that citizen journalism may one day overtake the need for trained, professional journalists. These tools, however, have helped to shape journalism coverage and breaking news, transforming Twitter into a hub for information, reactions and announcements.

News organizations now often break news through Twitter, letting the tweet be the first indication to signal the news, followed by additional information through tweets and soon after, a

link to the story on the website. This story is then often updated throughout the day, with a new story in the following day's paper pushing the story forwarding and providing context for the storyline on a larger scale. Take the Jerry Sandusky child sex abuse case, which turned the reporting world on its axis as reports and false allegations swept the social waves. Due to the nature of the case and the initial trends set by reporters early on, court decorums suspending the use of Twitter in the courtroom caused panic to break out among the media world (Beaujon). More specifically, early rules from Judge John Cleland stated that these devices could not "record or broadcast any verbatim account of the proceedings while court was in session" come trial time but paraphrasing would be accepted (Beaujon). Many members of the media feared that paraphrasing would hurt the accuracy of reporting and ultimately, make it harder to push information out quickly, but Cleland stuck by his words (Beaujon). At times, reporters were even not allowed to broadcast from the courtroom in an effort to decrease distractions and keep the focus on the actual proceedings.

Rewind 30 years and the process was not at all the same. Editors got a breaking story and reporters had hours to make the final product perfect for the print edition. In the Sandusky case, editors would be left waiting for journalists to report back to the newsroom to write or utilizing desk space at the court house to file a story. Yet today, we want information and we want it immediately, competing not only with other news organizations to break the story but with ourselves to get as much information into a web story in as little time as possible. Granted, this cycle has raised many questions along the ethical guidelines of breaking news reporting, especially when it comes to accuracy. However, most news organizations see the need for information and the platforms available as the key way to reach an audience that is more digitally connected than ever before. But we have one person to thank for that.

As Poynter has long ago pointed out, journalists owe a bittersweet thank you to Steve Jobs, as his smartphones play a leading role in the way consumers access and obtain media. Though the iPhone was not the first smartphone on the market, it utilized a "full-face

touchscreen” and allowed other apps to dominate the market (Sonderman). But the introduction of the iPad allowed at-home readers a new device to read news and information, forcing news organizations to make their sites and stories mobile and tablet-friendly. Jobs didn’t leave media outlets stranded though, telling an audience at a 2010 conference, “Anything that we can do to help The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal find new ways of expression so they can afford to get paid, so they can afford to keep their editorial operations intact, I’m all for it” (Sonderman). Today, many media organizations are still struggling to make their websites available and user-friendly on all platforms without forking over thousands of dollars in the process. Of course, selling the business side on app downloads and online impressions opens all new doors, as many advertisers aren’t willing to pay top-notch prices for online content. Many believe the money still lies in print advertisements, but revenue streams for all organizations are increasingly down. Jobs however created a line of products based on innovation and creativity, and as he dually noted, the people working and using his products must be willing to be creative and innovative as well (Sonderman).

Today, however, we live in a world where news is defined by what the consumers deem newsworthy. Organizations like The New York Times are stacked against sites like BuzzFeed and Huffington Post in the battle for breaking news and amusing ways to get readers to stay on their sites (Myers). More and more, there is a fear that one day, journalism will become nothing but lists of things to do and slideshows of cute animals, and that the thirst for strong, long-form journalism will be gone along with the need for a print product. Editors fear the day that citizen journalists will run Twitter and reports will be based on John Doe from Pleasantville, Idaho, with no one really knowing the credibility or identity of the person behind the Twitter avatar. But as Steve Myers poignantly pointed out, “[News is] becoming a real-time experience in which we pass information along and share our reactions. Whatever form media takes in this future, we’ll still want to save something that captures its meaning, something like those front pages” (Myers).



The correct model for these media outlets changes every day, and as much as editors can, they are running alongside the already moving train hoping to jump on at the right time. Though the job is not easy, they are dedicated to getting the work done in the most honest and accurate way possible, all while preserving the journalism ideals of days long past. As has become clear, this may prove harder than expected, especially in the upcoming years, but that doesn't mean editors are anywhere close to giving up. In fact, many are pushing even harder to make sure journalism will never become a thing of the past.

## Chapter 3

### Breaking it down paper by paper

Talk to five different editors and you'll get five different answers — at this point in the news industry, there is no perfect answer on how to run your organization. Critics may say it has something to do with politics or viewpoints, but the reality is that no one has it figured out completely. However, newspaper companies aren't folding left and right. They're changing and adapting to fit the needs of media consumers on all platforms. Newspapers are no longer responsible for delivering a quality newspaper every day, but a website that updates instantaneously and social media platforms that often provide more information that necessary. What used to be an acknowledgement about the weather made to a coworker is now a tweet sent to 30,000-plus followers eager to hear the latest happenings. We're reaching audiences never imagined before.

But the question of how to handle it is still worth millions, as large newspapers with seemingly endless cash flows have the luxury of taking their time to figure it out, while smaller, more local papers are left to hurriedly piece together what's left. In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, with multiple major cities and many institutions of higher education, there is no shortage of news and organizations providing it. However, looking outside of the state also provides some context to what struggles Pennsylvania may find unique to the keystone state, while providing models to move toward.

#### THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

The Philadelphia Inquirer continues to be a pillar in nationally renowned journalism, pulling in Pulitzer nominations year after year. Today, much like the rest of the industry, it faces a shrinking paper and a more difficult battle in trying to reach readers. Stan Wischnowski, the executive editor of the Inquirer, is optimistic about the future of his organization, though. After 14

years at the paper, he said that the organization will never completely go away as long as it stays true to its core mission.

Since Wischnowski first joined the organization, he said there has been a “rapid transition” to the digital era which has played out in a “big way” in the city of Philadelphia. Citing the city’s position bordering both Delaware and New Jersey, Wischnowski noted the pressure to cover major news in three states while maintaining the overall coverage and watchdog reporting the Inquirer is known for, especially in terms of long-form reporting. “It’s a very journalistically rich environment, so you combine that with the fact that we’ve had almost a half dozen owners during [my] 14 years... it’s been a rapid change of visions and change of mission,” Wischnowski said. But the core of the Inquirer’s mission remains the same: a model for outstanding journalism and “investigative reporting at its best.”

That doesn’t mean the newspaper has it any easier, though. Wischnowski started out as a news editor highly involved with the front page in 2000, which provided him with a great vantage point to see what reporters and editors were working on day-to-day. Today, his larger role forces him to be heavily involved with the practice of journalism, while also paying close attention to the business side of the industry and doing what the paper needs to stay funded.

Today, the paper functions on a 24/7 news strategy, utilizing Twitter and social media to make news jump off the figurative print pages and into the daily lives of media consumers. Every reporter is equipped with an iPhone and laptop, and photographers have the tools to not only shoot photos, but video as well. Wischnowski said there is an expectation that reporters not only have Twitter, but use it, to increase their overall reach. “With the 200-some journalists and the large followings many of them have, we’re reaching more audiences than ever in the history of the newspaper,” Wischnowski said, allowing the paper to engage with its readers better than ever before. In some cases, Wischnowski said reporters are home to 30,000-40,000 followers,

oftentimes including people who may never pick up the physical Inquirer in print. Through these outlets, the audience reach and dynamic of coverage is completely changing in the eyes of the news industry.

However, in reaching a larger audience, there is often pressure associated with covering all necessary stories in a coverage area, which often results in less time being dedicated to the long-form pieces focusing on larger issues. These pieces, consequently, are also the ones that often win the organization awards. In order to maintain the Inquirer's prestige, the newspaper has reporters specifically dedicated to investigative reporting. Wischnowski said that going forward, the paper's niche is in "deep enterprise investigative work that no other media entity can provide on a daily basis." And after 185 years, there is the increased expectation of upholding a brand and credibility.

Currently, an Inquirer print subscriber has full access to all digital products from the newspaper, including the new website Inquirer.com, which utilizes a pay wall for non-subscribers. The website was purposefully designed to be "responsive," allowing for the same product to translate to whatever mode consumers may use to access content. When reading on the iPhone, iPad, desktop or tablet, readers will be provided with the same consistent appearance, Wischnowski said. The newspaper also has Philly.com, which serves as a free, catch-all for Inquirer content and existed long before the implementation of Inquirer.com. Today, the Inquirer-specific website allows the organization to make money, while Philly.com helps to drive traffic to the site. The Inquirer's sister paper, The Philadelphia Daily News, implemented a separate website, as well, allowing them to profit off of the content not made available on Philly.com, as did the Inquirer. However, the worth of Philly.com is still being determined, as many questioned whether the website would be taken down following the addition of the two paid sites. So far, it seems that Philly.com has enough of a standing and longtime tenure that the site won't be

removed. Wischnowski also noted that the paper has all but stopped readership erosion in terms of the print product, which can be interpreted in a variety of ways. For now, though, the paper seems to have hit a plateau in terms of people not renewing their subscriptions.

In addition, the paper has caught on to society's quest for more information and more numbers available at their fingertips and has started making its data archives available to its subscribers online. Wischnowski said the organization offers real estate, crime and school data — data he said “readers can't get anywhere else.” In turn, Wischnowski noted that this information is often what readers want when choosing where to live, where to put their children through school and in picking the right place to ultimately raise a family. In offering the readers with something they can't get from other outlets, they provide more of a reason for readers to stay.

But in keeping readers, editors must also do their part to keep reporters and staff members, a task Wischnowski said isn't hard at a newspaper like the Inquirer.

“I think every member of the Inquirer takes our role in Philadelphia's society very importantly. The history of the place, even more so than that, the responsibility to be the ultimate gatekeeper in terms of accountability journalism... there's not a price you can put on the responsibility and opportunity to watch out for the citizen public knowledge and public record. To keep them informed, our politicians informed, business leaders, our corporations — keeping in check, making sure the city and the whole surrounding region has the media, the fourth estate watching out for their best interest. It's a sense of duty, pride in the fact that the Inquirer has been here for 185 years. The hallway of Pulitzer prizes, it motivates us everyday. It's a history and it's a legacy. Despite all these economic hardships we have incurred, we still have a huge responsibility to carry out the best of what the free press has to offer. I don't think there's an employee out there who doesn't appreciate the fact that they work for such a prestigious institution.

Clearly, despite frustrations and an ever-changing news cycle, there continues to be a real belief that journalism will always have a role. But as for the role that it will take, Wischnowski isn't so sure. From the time he started, the paper has literally shrunk 10 inches, “but there's never been a more exciting time to be at the Inquirer,” Wischnowski said. Though the paper can't cover the hundreds of townships and counties like it used to, editors and reporters are still determined to

be the watchdog, as that will be what ultimately keeps the paper around for the long haul. “There will always be a place for an upholding of the first amendment.”

### **THE HARRISBURG PATRIOT-NEWS**

An outlier in the Pennsylvania news scene, The Patriot-News is one of the few publications that now only puts out a print edition three times a week — Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. Less than a year after welcoming home the newspaper’s first Pulitzer for its coverage of the Jerry Sandusky child sex abuse case, Advance Publications, the newspaper’s parent company, made the decision to cut back print days and instead turn its focus to online-only content and the digital first mindset by joining teams with PennLive, the newspaper’s website management team at the time (Beaujon). Though the company managing the Patriot’s content was at the time outsourced and even housed in a completely different building than the Patriot, the move signified a switch and a joint effort to make digital journalism a focus by combining the companies and forming PA Media Group. In a statement to Poynter, the newspaper’s publisher John Kirkpatrick said “The plan to reinvent ourselves into a digitally-focused organization with a quality print product three-days a week is aimed at making sure that kind of work continues long into the future” (Beaujon).

Editor Cate Barron is the first to tell you the paper is doing and trying new things, but not before first recognizing how far the industry has come. When she first arrived at the Patriot, Barron was the only female editor in the newsroom. “You need diversity in your newsroom to make sure you’re in touch with your readers,” Barron said, when she started out as the Features editor for the paper. But even more than diversity, the newspaper has embraced digital media and the necessity for understanding it in today’s industry. For Barron, the first big change came during the Nickel Mines Amish school shooting in October 2006. Barron said that the newspaper “really saw it coming then” as people were glued to new updates in the story. Suddenly, the Patriot found

a “whole new audience.” When the Virginia Tech shootings happened, again, the paper saw a massive spike in readership and web traffic increase, and used social media to contact students from the area who may have been affected by the shooting. Yet again, the reach for the paper was pushed and the organization was forced to respond accordingly.

Barron admits that Advance papers are “really outliers” in the industry, even today, but cites the need to move where the industry is going as soon as possible. Since the Sandusky case, she said they have gained an international reach and response with their website, yet continued to see a decline in the print product despite the fact that they were producing Pulitzer prize-winning work. Eventually, the Patriot made the hard decision to “stop managing the decline and start managing where we were growing,” Barron said. In January 2013, the decision was implemented and print circulation days were dropped from seven to three days a week.

Barron still calls the decision “very radical” and admits that “the community wasn’t happy with it,” but feels that a year later, most people who were turning to the Patriot for news still are, just in different ways. Today, the website averages about 1,000,000 pageviews per day, having grown about 14 percent from last year’s readership — which was largely affected by the Sandusky case — and Barron expressed her enthusiasm. Yet she’s quick to add it hasn’t been “for the faint of heart.” Because Barron is known for her role at the paper, she recalls being stopped at locations ranging from the local coffee shop to church pews, often being asked how the paper is doing and if there ever is the chance for print to return. But coverage is different now, Barron notes.

People aren’t turning to the paper for the latest breaking news anymore — that’s where PennLive comes in. Instead, most of the Patriot’s readership in print is viewing the paper as a magazine product, full of analysis and in-depth work often lost on the pages of the Internet. And

now, rather than one weekly, large paper, the Patriot provides almost three Sunday paper equivalents.

The problem, as remains for the majority of newspapers, continues to be finding time for the long-form, investigative pieces, especially when most organizations have less people working for them. However, Barron calls that type of reporting “the reason we all got into the business” and has done her part to make sure the investigative work lives on through the addition of an Enterprise Producer/Director, who specifically focuses on getting enterprise pieces accomplished. When looking at web numbers though, Barron said 100-inch pieces just don’t track as well on the Internet, which has pushed PennLive to post long-form pieces in a series format, providing readers with more information each day and giving them a reason to come back for the rest of the story the next day. In providing short segments, the Patriot also gets to pair photo galleries and multimedia videos with its packages, therefore drawing on a variety of audiences and their interests.

In December 2013, the paper neared its one-year mark from the radical change in production. And Barron, who continues to man the helm, said looking back gives her hope — their business model is working. “It was such a year of experimentation,” she said, noting that some reporters now start their days at 5 a.m. to meet the demand of online readership. Barron said the Patriot has tripled its amount of posts on the website each day, producing more volume and in addition, more wire content picked up from around the world. In fact, PennLive utilizes two trend reporters to keep an eye out for “viral stories” or otherwise interesting reads from around the country each day. Yet “the heart of it is local news” and the very stories that keep the Patriot still at the center of Pennsylvania readership.

Though the paper took some flack for layoffs and cutbacks on staff, Barron said the staff that stayed with the paper through the transition “got it” and are now seeing the very rewards for



their work. But the changes didn't come without some pain. Barron recalls the first morning she opened her front door to find an empty doorstep lacking a print newspaper for the first time. But "the numbers don't lie," according to Barron, who said the paper's following continues to grow. "When you look at our resources, we needed to do this."

Keeping staff members motivated during changing times doesn't come without its hardships, either, yet Barron's message is still the same after 30 years in the industry. "You do not do it thinking you want to work 9-5, home every Christmas morning. If I think of all the events... you either really, really love the business or you can sell insurance," Barron said. In what she calls an industry that has always been demanding, the process seems to have only sped up from what it began as 30 years ago. Today, though, news organizations must be more transparent with how the company is doing and be open in staff meetings to where the company really stands. People still don't get enough praise for the work that they do, yet the job itself is one of the most rewarding for Barron. "It sounds really hokey, but I think you have to have this in your blood to really do it well," she said.

When asked about the future of the industry though, the answer is much the same. Most editors scoff or chuckle a bit, as Barron acknowledged how genuinely hard it is to plan for the future. However, she feels the Patriot and PennLive are on the right track. With at least half of the Patriot's audience coming to the website from mobile devices, the organization needs to do what is necessary to reach this demand. Barron said she thinks there will always be a place for print, a place where the thick, Sunday edition of The New York Times is pored over for hours on end, but she's quick to add that those not embracing the digital future are simply setting themselves up for failure. "Those who do not embrace digital right now are not going to be ready for the future."

**PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE**

One of two daily newspapers in the Steel City, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette is also a paper in a unique situation within the world of journalism. Here, in the heart of Pittsburgh, readers are faced with a decision: read the P-G or read the Pittsburgh Tribune Review. Though it's not a common situation to be in, it's one that Post-Gazette editor David Shribman, a Pulitzer prize-winner, calls exciting and challenging for his newsroom, and one that ultimately keeps his staff members on their toes.

Shribman has worked just about every possible place in the journalism world, racking up a serious resume and a long lineage of experience which ultimately led him to the Post-Gazette. Today, he helps to lead a large newsroom full of employees young and old, many of whom are fighting for wage increases within The Newspaper Guild or union, and some who are still trying to find their place in the ever-changing news cycle.

Ask Shribman about the paper's audience and he's quick to note that much of the P-G's readership comes from an older audience living in and around the city of Pittsburgh. He accounts the paper's high Sunday circulation to the need and tradition many of this same audience associated with opening up a thick paper and casually paging through the contents on a lazy Sunday afternoon. But his audience is changing, and as Shribman said, there must come a time where people start paying for the quality journalism they are receiving. Shribman and his counterpart on the business end have similar visions -- a world in which the Post-Gazette is needed and valued — and neither foresee this need going away anytime soon. But Shribman isn't willing to sit back and wait for that day to come.

As recently as October 2013, the paper began using a system to require most of its content be available through a subscription or paid access. Stories that meet the public safety need like shootings or weather alerts however will be available to non-subscribers. Shribman said he believes that the paper needs to hold its readers accountable and require compensation when it

continues to deliver top-notch work. Again, he insists he can't afford to pay for the best journalists without asking for a little help from his audience. And much like the rest of the industry, online advertisements aren't shelling out nearly the amount that print advertisements garner, making it nearly impossible to rely on digital to keep the presses rolling.

It's not an easy balance, but one that the P-G has attempted to take in stride. Shribman acknowledged an increase in communication between both divisions to make sure that all people are fighting for the same result. But changes within the news division also have helped to push the newsroom forward and into the breaking news cycle. Part of this change involved the implementation of breaking news reporters, with shifts starting as early as 5 a.m. and as late as 4 p.m. to keep the coverage on the website as up to date as possible. The P-G's main web editor said she likes to have all of the day's original content off of the homepage by 4 p.m. and updated with news throughout the day. The paper will even schedule postings of various stories throughout the afternoon to keep it up to date. But when facing another paper and a city full of news, the staff isn't at a shortage. To counteract the work flow during the day, the paper also implemented a breaking news editor, in addition to the typical editors working throughout the day.

The Post-Gazette also took an incredibly large step forward in the summer of 2013 and purchased a new printing press, granting the paper years and years of service to the print product, while also controlling the best quality printing for publications around the area. While many papers are discussing ways to cut down on the typical news cycle press days, the P-G made a statement in taking the necessary steps to help the print edition last, Shribman said.

Design doesn't fall by the wayside either, as the P-G puts out a midday e-edition of the paper, titled "The Pittsburgh Press," which ultimately serves as an interactive PDF of the paper featuring different news than what a traditional subscriber may have found in print on their

doorstep that morning. These stories include early morning breaking news, follow ups from the night before and even features scheduled to be released in the Press. Shribman said this keeps the audience getting new information while also allowing for avenues other than the interwebs for news.

But the industry's future is a wide open book to Shribman, who says the paper product will only be around as long as there is an audience willing to read it. For Pittsburgh, that could be awhile, and thankfully, he added. Yet he's quick to note that journalism itself should be seen as a new trade, and not one that may require years of schooling. Instead, journalists should be trying new tactics to reach their audiences, noting that the P-G has increased both its Facebook and Twitter followings. Many of his reporters are also taking the steps to better understand the ways to let their stories and voices be heard through tweeting and breaking news online, even if that means first, through Twitter. Shribman wants reporters though who are well-rounded and well-versed, who understand Shakespeare and history, who have a knowledge of the world and an appreciation for it. Without this grasp, he said he believes many will become overshadowed by those with unique traits that set them apart.

There's no secret to success though, Shribman said. If there was, someone would have already made a lot of money off of it. Until this industry learns how to balance the money with quality journalism, it's going to be a struggle. Shribman believes that the P-G will continue to be a trendsetter and a frontrunner in the industry, but in order to do so, everyone must be willing to change and to work for it. Otherwise, the future will only be as far as we are willing to go.

### **MILWAUKEE JOURNAL-SENTINEL**

Outside of the Pennsylvania realm, the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel continues to produce top-notch journalism, garnering five consecutive years of Pulitzer prize nominations and accepting the award three out of the five years. Leading the charge and the newsroom is Editor

Marty Kaiser, a long-time “copy boy” and a veteran who is looking to improve the current state of the media through innovation and transparency. After 20 years at the Journal-Sentinel, Kaiser can easily speak to the changes and demands of the daily news cycle, specifically to the Milwaukee area. But his sentiments aren’t far from other newspapers, though the Journal-Sentinel has something figured out — five years of Pulitzer nominations don’t just come from nowhere.

From the beginning, Kaiser said the Journal-Sentinel has served as a “pretty local paper” for such a big area. Typically, most major cities in the golden era of journalism were home to two major newspapers, but as Kaiser came to Milwaukee, the two newspapers in his city converged. Kaiser was left with the task of uniting a staff that was long divided by mastheads and competing coverage. And with the change, Kaiser got to play a role that many managing editors don’t often get the chance to do. As he described it, there wasn’t a large overhead presence dictating decisions and the paper, to some extent, was presented with a blank slate. Yet looking to staff members and telling them they can no longer make the journey to this location or that meeting is far from easy, Kaiser said.

Instead, Kaiser’s task was to turn the paper hyperlocal and give Milwaukee coverage it can’t get anywhere else. The Journal-Sentinel, under Kaiser’s leadership, made a vow to go back to the journalism that “made an impact,” that was enterprise and investigation-focused, that would make a difference for both readers and the community they lived in. To do this, many of the smaller, weekly papers took on the coverage that the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel once did so the daily newspaper could turn its own efforts to projects and investigative pieces. “We’ll spend time and effort on investigations... that’s where we’ll spend our money,” Kaiser recalled telling the newsroom, along with the accompanying expectations of expanding digitally and turning some content to strictly online. Suddenly, the mindset was focusing first on the digital product

and second, on the print edition, something unheard of in the journalism industry long before this time.

But that's not to say the newspaper didn't and doesn't face it's own struggles. Kaiser acknowledged the "generous buyouts" the organization did for some of the older reporters, but also maintained that those who still wanted to be working and in the industry stuck around. Those still there however are attempting to decipher how to make a paywall work, with cookie clearing and other computer hacks making it easier and easier to get around the system, Kaiser said. Though the paper has had the paywall in place since 2012, he said it's "pretty loose" and offers a lot of free content. His Green Bay Packers fans are another story, though, as these readers have been paying for specialized content since 2011, many without batting an eye.

The size of Kaiser's newsroom has also decreased, moving from about 270 reporters in the late 90s to about 150 in the current newsroom, but these numbers don't take into account the 20 to 30 suburban papers that fall within Milwaukee's coverage area. Though the papers don't coordinate on coverage, the weekly editions do make it easier for the Journal-Sentinel to let its focus remain on the journalism that Kaiser believes really makes a difference. That's not to say the newspaper ignores spot news, but in the late '90s, the paper was also home to three suburban bureaus — entities that ultimately got cut when papers downsized nationally. "We put a lot of effort into saying we have to do the stuff that has impact. It inspires the staff," Kaiser said. "If you win three Pulitzers in the past five years, it's not that Pulitzers are the reason you're doing it. But we can do the best work. This is a place where we can do that."

To make that happen, Kaiser implemented an investigative team, allowing reporters to really dig in to their work, but breaking news wasn't forgotten either. Kaiser is quick to recall the day he contacted his right-hand technology man and told him to go buy six televisions and set them up in the center of the office. On them, he wanted local and national news streaming

constantly, as well major news organizations online. Staffing this “newshub” consists of a producer, copy editor, photo editor and an editor in charge of the desk itself, as well as two to three reporters working from early morning until late evening to cover news as it’s happening. “We don’t talk about budgets once a day anymore... we talk about them at 9 a.m., then again at lunch, and then late in the day,” Kaiser said. “When the story is ready, it goes up.” And now, the newshub is not only the place for breaking news, but for staff gatherings and meetings, as well. “I once heard a TV guy talking about putting newspaper and TV newsrooms together,” Kaiser said. When talking about it, he said ‘I feel like the TV newsroom is rap music and the newspaper side is classical’ because TV people are yelling and screaming. So this was to try and get some more energy [in the newsroom].”

The energy doesn’t stop there, though. Kaiser plays his own part in making sure the negative talk about the industry stays out of his newsroom and out of the heads of his top journalists. He noted that the Journal-Sentinel isn’t part of a bigger chain of newspapers, which allows all of the numbers and information to stay within the building. He does his best to be open and honest with his employees about the state of the newspaper and where it’s headed, including open meetings about digital numbers and how to be a “mobile first newsroom.” Once every week or so, Kaiser even hosts a “brown-bag lunch” for staff members to show the digital numbers and what is really going on. Even when the President comes to town and news is breaking, Kaiser said it’s important to keep these meetings and discussions a priority as they show staff members dedication and honesty. Not all editors can do this though, as Kaiser said he’s lucky to have spent such a large amount of time with his colleagues. “It’s brutal to have to go in and make those cutbacks,” Kaiser said. “There’s a trust from being here. Culture is so, so important.”

Today, Kaiser said his newsroom is a strong mix of young people and veteran reporters, allowing both parties to learn and grow from their counterparts in an industry that constantly

demands new skills. “The people that are here want to be here,” Kaiser said. Under Kaiser, the newspaper continues to excel in long-form and enterprise work relevant not just to the Milwaukee community but to a national audience. And Kaiser is quick to note it isn’t the salaries that are motivating his staff members. “Money doesn’t motivate people unless they’re majorly overpaid. Then take money off the table... [People] want a sense of purpose and autonomy,” Kaiser said. He remembers two moments in particular where news broke and reporters and editors just showed up in the newsroom, no phone calls or emails prompting their arrival. As Kaiser said, some of the best people “just came and said ‘Yeah, we’re here.’ ” Such is not always the case at other newspapers, as many of Kaiser’s newspaper friends often remind him, but that doesn’t stop Kaiser. “People energize me.” And 20 years later, that’s exactly why Kaiser is still in his job.

When it comes to the future, he is positive about the need for truth and the role journalists play in holding our society accountable. He notes that the source of funding may change and newspapers may start seeking revenue in outlets once unexplored and even considered. He added that it may be time to teach our society they must pay for coverage if they want the best. And though those owning newspaper companies may not walk away with a huge profit, he expressed a hope that the people who are in positions of power will be dedicated to “real, truthful journalism.” He worries about a day that MSNBC and Fox News will be the only two sources of information people are turning to, because more and more, it is cheaper and easier to share an opinion rather than facts. And without watchdog journalism and investigative work like that of the Journal-Sentinel, our society will be left with no answers at all. But the doom and gloom everyone continues to talk about it? Kaiser just isn’t buying it. At this rate, it may be exactly why his newspaper is up for another Pulitzer and will continue to be. “Even through all of this, to get through all of this, we have to embrace new ways of doing things,” Kaiser said. “Sure, you grew up reading newspapers but now you ask what you’re doing digitally. That’s just part of it.”



## Chapter 4

### **Following the leader: The new model of industry**

For as different as these newspapers may look when judging them by their covers, it seems that the model to success is much the same. Do strong investigative journalism that readers can't find anywhere else and you'll garner an audience that trusts you. Be first on the news and get it to your online audience before anyone else, and they'll keep coming back for more. Strengthen and expand the skills and resources of your staff and they will believe in where you are leading them. And most of all, love what you do.

The messages are resoundingly similar and yet, they make sense. For the past five years, as Wischnowski noted, the Philadelphia Inquirer has genuinely been shrinking in size, but the quality and trust in the newspaper hasn't diminished. The audience may read coverage differently and the Inquirer may have to consider all platforms before posting and printing a story, but the name and the prestige hasn't decreased. Just as well, the size of the newsroom in Milwaukee may be 100 people less, but the Pulitzer nominations have only increased and the readership has continued to hold despite national trends. Even the Patriot-News, which took a giant leap into the dark, stands by the worth of investigative journalism, with Barron willing to admit this past year lost some of that quality long-form work in moving to a three-day publication cycle. Clearly, there are answers and driving forces that are helping to make this process continue to expand.

There's no doubting that our society is invested and interested in long-form journalism and enterprise pieces. These are the stories that set newspapers apart and often reflect the running storylines in communities, both locally and nationally. Milwaukee's Pulitzer-winning coverage of infant testing wasn't restricted to just Wisconsin, but the entire United States, making its work needed and necessary to members outside of its expected audience. In holding these agencies accountable and on their toes, news organizations are snubbing the stereotype of sensational

journalism and spot news coverage and proving that what goes on within the walls of a newsroom aren't something we can live without. And editors are recognizing this need, with many creating investigative teams strictly dedicated to long-range projects and answers they can't get overnight. This push and faith in investigative journalism also proves that "citizen journalism" will never outweigh the role of real journalists trained and dedicated to making a living asking questions and getting answers. It shows that our community, too, believes in the importance of this work and will continue to support it as long as it's there.

Just as well, editors are doing a fantastic job at remembering the importance of breaking news and the new audience that is tuned in 24/7 to online coverage. For the most part, news organizations are recognizing that it's impossible to cover everything and instead focusing on major storylines. However, the Patriot-News is a bit different, as decreasing print coverage has driven its online posting up immensely, as well as its coverage area. In printing less, the paper has effectively expanded. Unfortunately, many would argue that the paper sacrificed printing days for this gain, but Barron argues that when the website is hitting almost a million views a day, it's hard to say the model isn't working. However, most organizations are creating breaking news desks or positions to help the ebb and flow of news rather than assign specific beats and coverage areas. Though reporters are still expected to have specialties, there is also an increased pressure to be well-rounded and well-informed.

Most newsrooms are also adopting paywalls, though most editors were quick to note that anyone with a little bit of computer knowledge can often easily get around the restrictions of pageview limits. Some even noted that the effectiveness is hard to measure, with different policies and paywall bypasses sometimes offered by the newspapers themselves. However, there seems to be a real belief from editors that at some point, consumers will need to start paying for the coverage they are receiving on the web, just as they currently are for print. Until the business

end of the industry can catch advertising prices up to where they still are in print editions, the model of pageviews still isn't selling nearly as well as physical copies of advertisements.

But at the heart of all newsrooms are the editors leading them, and from talking to numerous editors in many different geographic locations, the overall message rings the same. Transparency, honesty, truth — the very words journalists strive to protect and uphold — are the same traits editors must embody to lead a positive newsroom and to educate and protect the staff. Open conversations about web numbers and print numbers and how these organizations can improve is vital to the very vitality of journalism, for in educating reporters and editors, there is a dialogue and room for discussion. These editors aren't closing the doors on new ideas, but rather, they are welcoming thoughts from all staff members, which more often than not represent the very readers we spend our careers trying to better reach.

If one thing is for certain, it's that there is no perfect business model or method for creating a newspaper that will magically last a lifetime. Those in the industry are investing in work that requires change and innovation every single day and a dedication and willingness to try new things. Kaiser made a similar point, but the future of journalism lies in the reporters and editors in the field, working day in and day out to make a difference and to make this industry worthwhile to our society. Readers and consumers can't just be expected to know what they're missing if they skip a newspaper during the week. It's our job as journalists to show them why the daily newspaper is so important to their lives and so important to our country.

## Chapter 5

### **An Editor Perspective: Reflection on a year**

The journalism world is one that I consistently believe you must work in to truly understand. It's a bubble of sorts, a world that depends not only on prior experience but in living and breathing the daily grind of getting up and putting out a paper. As previously discussed, these deadlines continue to change and increase as "digital first" journalism becomes the standard rather than the ideal. We function on fast paces and even higher expectations on not only producing quality work, but quality work faster than every other competitor.

From the minute I arrived at Penn State, I knew I wanted to be a part of The Daily Collegian, Penn State's independent, student-run newspaper. During my first interview for the prestigious candidate program, which trains future reporters for the paper, I told my interviewer that my goals included being the editor in chief my senior year. At the time, the goal seemed feasible and realistic — set the bar high and rise to meet it. Three years later, though, I sat down to write a proposal full of vision and innovation for a changing industry that I hoped to further on a college campus. Without much direction or guidance other than firsthand knowledge and past failed attempts, I worked to develop a plan that would not only benefit the educational experience of students but allow their real-world experience within a newsroom to carry into their post-graduate careers.

My proposal included a focus on newsroom morale and a better attempt to motivate staff members to work for little to no money (scholarships are awarded on a merit-based system) while balancing a social life and college courses. I wanted to implement a peer-to-peer recognition system which encouraged staff members to recognize the work of their colleagues who were contributing to a positive newsroom and news organization. I also wanted to increase the Collegian's retention rates from our candidacy program — numbers that are now up 27 percent since Fall 2011 — and ensure that those the Collegian invested in training actually stuck around

long enough to reap the benefits and see the organization through to their senior year. To do this, I wanted to focus on cross-staff writing, a hard-hitting breaking news desk and guest speakers to provide outside perspective. In addition, I saw a significant disconnect in staff-wide communication, which I looked to change through monthly all-staff meetings. I also looked to draw social media directly onto our print pages through the use of Twitter handles accompanying staff writer bylines.

Now, almost a year after accepting the position of editor in chief, it's strange to look back and reflect on what I was actually able to accomplish and the difference that it in fact made for the newsroom. However, I believe it's important to acknowledge how The Daily Collegian is faring when placed against major news outlets — and in most cases, facing the same challenges as organizations three to four times its size.

Like many major news organizations, it's often the love of journalism that motivates staff members to pull long hours, make extra calls and give up free time for the good they believe journalism can accomplish. The stand-out members of my staff are those who want to make this a career rather than an extracurricular. They are those that want to see the entire organization progress and move forward. Most importantly, they are those that work to understand the implications and weight their work carries into the surrounding community. To motivate them, I found the hardest part was putting them in positions to succeed and giving them the support and time they needed to complete quality work, all while respecting the positions they originally applied for. There was and continues to be a mutual understanding of the urgency of breaking news and the responsibility we have to our community in delivering it accurately and efficiently. But with that came an educational factor in explicitly stating the expectations I had for each and every member long before they ever accepted these positions.

In covering the Jerry Sandusky child sex abuse case, one of the biggest news stories to come out of higher education and college football, our organization lost sight of the direct role it had in educating staff members through in-person training and communication. While we

excelled at throwing staff members out into the midst of the story, we lacked in slowing down the news and explaining it step by step. We lost the middle piece of the puzzle in explaining why we do what we do and what makes it so important. But in bringing that back to the forefront of my staff members' minds, I believe the Collegian excelled at better understanding its readers and coming back to its original purpose. No matter how we deliver the news, it is our job to deliver it to the best of our ability while meeting the needs of our readers. At times, that may mean pulling back from the most "newsy" story to focus on a major concert coming to State College. On other days, it may be recognizing that though our readers may not think they care, the bill being pushed through the Senate that day will actually affect their college tuition and ability to have their voices be heard by top university administrators. It's about walking the fine line between determining what your readers want and what they need — all while listening to the college voices in our own heads. In getting back to the root of our jobs, journalism forces its employees to stop talking and really listen to the problems and concerns at hand. Though we can't always give the readers everything they want, we can do our best to try.

Notoriously, journalism also carries a heavy expectation of cynicism and cold-hearted natures from reporters seeking the story at all costs. Yet from personal experience, these are not the traits that make the best journalists, for people that can't listen or sympathize are often those that walk out of interviews empty-handed and confused. To curb this expectation, I worked to understand the reporters in my own organization and recognize their strengths and weaknesses. I quickly realized that my job was not about putting out the best newspaper every day, but creating the best people in my organization and giving them the tools they need to leave college prepared and ready for a journalism career. I wanted staff members to head into the field being strong representations of The Daily Collegian and of journalism. I wanted to cultivate people who cared about the future of our society, who were willing to challenge what they were told and ask the hard questions. And though this all seems idealistic and a bit far-fetched, it's what I believe has made the Collegian again a place people want to be and work.

Much to the surprise of my news adviser, the peer-to-peer recognition system has also caught on in ways even I didn't expect. In asking staff members to recognize and appreciate the work their colleagues were doing, it produced a more understanding and patient newsroom at times for the simple fact that their work didn't go unnoticed. At times, it may be for the extra coffee a reporter snagged for their beat partner, and for others, it may be a stellar graphic presentation for the front page. The important part is that this recognition is not coming from the same person every time (namely me) and instead challenging staff members to be cognizant of the work of the people around them. We also added the incentive of a gift card for a local restaurant for the top-performing person each week, but from conversations and interviews, it's clear that these gift cards are not the motivating factor for filling out the small, anonymous slip of paper recognizing the fellow staff member. Instead, there seems to be an understanding that pointing out where people succeed is important to the morale of the newsroom and to making the paper better overall.

Despite positive attitudes though, I find myself facing the same lack of funds and decreased advertising that national papers are seeing, too. There is the constant question of how we can make our content match what our readers are looking for, yet we see the same trends. When huge news breaks, readers flock to us — papers can't be found on stands the next day and web numbers spike through the roof. Coverage excels, and much like the journalists writing the stories, deadline makes the experience that much more exciting.

However, as editor in chief, I can't control advertising and I face a Board of Directors focused on the bottom line: a sinking revenue stream that once carried and supported the daily newspaper. Ironically, there is only so much that the news side can do to ensure the newspaper will continue to thrive, but with no "correct model" of what works and what doesn't, we're left to the same devices as major news outlets — a system of trial and error that we will hopefully figure out soon. Similar to the editors I spoke with, our Board of Editors have placed a strong emphasis on long form journalism that requires more than a few hours and interviews to write. I added the

position of a Long-Form/Special Projects Editor this year to coordinate and guarantee the constant appearance of long feature pieces in the paper. Unlike our day-to-day coverage, these pieces focus on stories and issues that can't be crammed into 10 inches and can't be easily written by our competition. They tell stories that readers should care about and are given the appropriate attention to prove it. Similarly to major news outlets, we also see the appropriate response from readers when we write these pieces — an engagement and understanding of the importance of this type of work and a mutual respect. When we deliver quality news in an interesting way, our readership responds. When we cover news the same as we always have, we see the expected results.

To balance out the need for long form journalism though, we've also continued our breaking news desk, a requirement of all staff members to contribute two hours a week to breaking news happening in and around our community. This training allows reporters to cover news outside of their own specific beats and forces the Collegian's website to be updated throughout the day as the news cycle changes and evolves. While the news desk was initially set up to eliminate delay in reporting from staff members who were in class when news broke, it has evolved into a key educational tool that allows reporters to gain insight and experience in all areas of the newsroom. Much like the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, there is a better expectation now in our newsroom that news matters and it needs to be written quickly. We tell reporters that the standard for a web story turnaround should be no more than 20 minutes and is the only article acceptable with less than three sources. These reporters are then expected to continue reporting while updating the online story with more information as it is gained. That way, our coverage is not neglected until the following day and it also provides context and updates for readers looking for answers.

Admittedly, it's a hard balance to cover the every day breaking news stories along with the in-depth features that require hours of energy and work. The Collegian doesn't have freelancers or a small weekly newspaper in the suburbs to rely on extra coverage, and while the



staff is arguably bigger than most major news outlets, we are still students paying tuition and taking classes. Therefore, the incentive of a paycheck isn't applicable and encouraging staff members to spend extra hours on stories often comes down to the profession they plan to pursue after college. Even in those circumstances, though, we often hit walls or the misunderstanding that journalism is not solely based on grade point average but clips. It's difficult to sell parents on the very real fact that experience at a daily newspaper, be it collegiate or professional, is often the grounds for hiring someone.

The most important part of being an editor though is empowering the people in your own building to achieve all that they can and give them the resources necessary to do so. It's not an easy task and it's one that I've found has cost me more hours than expected and more stress than asked for, but it's also a job that I find to be the most rewarding. If a reporter is going to stay until 11 p.m. and wants my feedback on a story, who am I to say "no, I'm tired" and go home? As editors, like it or not, we must reciprocate the work level that those working for us are putting in. We must show that the same investment they have in writing stories every day is the same investment we have in making sure the organization as a whole continues to succeed. There is a drive and motivation present in so many people because this is the career and the life that they believe in, and to turn away that passion is putting down the journalism field as a whole. We can't expect our employees to be interested and excited about what they're doing if their leadership is negative and looking to the past for answers.

Though I've been told my leadership style is unlike that of most newsroom editors, I believe that there must be more of a cheerleader role present in newsrooms, especially when national surveys are ranking this career as one of the worst in the business. Yet those working this job day in and day out often look perplexed at the label. As I've said before, I don't believe anyone goes into this field looking to get rich and get famous, but instead make a difference in the community they hope to one day live. There has to be a level of questioning and cynicism, but there must also be a love for the written word and for storytelling. And for editors, there must be a

love of cultivating this experience in the newsroom, for in motivating staff members to care about what they're doing, you must also care about it. This isn't a career that you leave at the doorstep every night, but a career that crawls into bed with you and at times wakes you up in the early morning hours. What it really comes down to for me is a mutual respect and understanding — that if editors expect their reporters to give up their lives for their jobs, then they must do the same.

When I talk about the future of journalism, I'm quick to note that the "future" is really only six months or so out. We can look years down the road and pretend we know how media will be interpreted. We can assume we know what our readers will want. But until we start asking ourselves these very questions, we're not going to get real answers. Consistently, I find myself asking my staff to pitch the stories and projects that they themselves would want to read and watch. There has to be the reminder that if a reporter or journalist isn't interested in the story they're looking to tell, then neither will the media consumer. It's a give and take business — because yes, there is a bottom line involved in all of this — and it's our job to figure it out. It's unacceptable for journalism outlets to simply say "we don't know what the right business model is" and therefore not print or not publish. Granted, as more outlets move to a more "digital-centric" approach, coverage instead shifts from the pages of a paper to the Internet. But all of these models are still in extremely early stages, making it impossible to tell whether readers are dealing with the change in coverage or growing and adapting with it. We also have no idea whether advertisers are fully cognizant of the necessary changes the journalism industry is being asked to make, proving that though readers may be demanding different coverage, the money may not follow suit.

There are a lot of takeaways from my job as editor in chief of a newspaper reaching a community of more than 40,000 college students and the surrounding area. I've been touched and affected by the passion and excitement of the journalists in my newsroom. There is a love and understanding of the industry and each other that isn't easily taught, but that must be really

experienced to fully grasp. I'm constantly reminded that the words we write and the stories we publish reach more people than the numbers actually denote and that a lot can be disguised in web and circulation figures. I'm also a big believer in that the work we do doesn't go unnoticed, if for no other reason than the simple fact that we work really, really hard. Granted, my news adviser has rolled his eyes at that comment, but the one difference we have as a college newspaper is that the community we are in still promotes learning. Learning to pick up the paper, learning to be engaged through social media and the web, learning to care about the news and events happening around you — we live on a college campus filled with more than 40,000 students. If we can't teach them how to better understand and utilize the news, then what community can we?

I've also learned that no matter what anyone tells you, the college newsrooms and collegiate news organizations are no different from those of the national scale. We fight the same battles and we struggle to uncover the same big stories each and every day. But it is here where we learn the skills necessary to achieve these goals and here where one's view of the news industry can be completely transformed. It's easy to forget the role college journalists play in the future of the industry, as we're often more concerned with balancing our lives while also contributing to the paper than stepping back and taking a look at the bigger picture. But the innovation and creativity displayed in these newsrooms, including The Daily Collegian, is what is going to continue to grow and spill over into the professional industry. It's here, in these newsrooms, where reporters must continue to push the limits and try new things, for maybe, just maybe, we'll figure this whole thing out.

In preparing to leave The Daily Collegian, I had hoped this investigation would allow me better perspective on the field I am entering, as well as the newsroom I will be leaving. And while the process has been informative, it's also been entirely too bittersweet. More times than not, we discount the work of student journalists because we're not sure whether to take them seriously or whether we trust what they're doing, but this is the place where the future journalists must be

pushed more than ever to learn and grow. Now is the time and place to try new things and to make large mistakes, and if we thwart college journalists' opportunities to mess it up and then try again, we're really not teaching them anything. In that same vein though, more and more we must get away from the idea that everything must be so perfect, and instead focus on making sure we are teaching the future of journalism how to do this the right way, or at least, the creative way. We need to keep asking questions and asking new kinds of questions, rather than worrying about the way this "new" journalism will be perceived. At the end of the day, our readers will sit down and get through a 60 inch piece if it's well written, presented well and worth reading. But we also need to stop rolling our eyes at the "10 ways not to get arrested this State Patty's Day" stories, too, for they draw different readers and are presented in a different format. Rather than focusing on the web numbers and circulation, we need to start worrying about doing what we're here to do — deliver the news and the stories most people may not be able to find out themselves.

I used to be asked on a regular basis whether I was nervous about the future of my industry or the difficulty in finding a job upon graduation, but today, I find that I don't get those questions as much. Maybe it's my demeanor or the way I talk about journalism, or maybe it's just the fact that I often roll my eyes at that question more often than I entertain it. There's never going to be a perfect formula for journalism nor should there be. We live in a society where the world changes from hour to hour and consumers demand something new every day. We can't honestly believe that we are going to be able to account for every error or every news story, but we can bank on the fact that this world needs information and needs people dedicated to telling the truth. So organizations like the New York Times and the Philadelphia Inquirer, as well as organizations like BuzzFeed and Gawker, will continue to succeed, for they do what they do well and understand the audience that comes to them. What we fail to see though is that these organizations are also starting to account for the turnover and the demand from readers of providing both types of engagement. So they're doing what all organizations have either started to do or need to quickly learn how to do: Adapt. Over the next year, two years, 12 years, etc., we

are going to see more changes than ever expected in this industry, and rather than closing our eyes and running from them, we need to embrace them head on. That starts within the walls of college media organizations dedicated to trying new things and being open to the changes coming every which way in this industry.

I believe The Daily Collegian can be a leader in this change by first focusing on making the people within the building the best journalists they can be and passing along the love of journalism to every storyteller. We need to make sure that every reporter we send into the world is the best representation of journalism and the core values of telling the truth before we can ever believe we have it all figured out. News will happen — good journalists won't magically appear overnight. And the willingness to learn can never be lost. After four years at the Collegian, I have a faith in journalism and a belief that no matter what happens — four days of publishing, no days of publishing, blog posts versus news stories — the Collegian will continue to be a staple when talking about good college journalism. Not because the campus and community is raked with news, but because the people here are dedicated to the future. Ask any editor in any organization, and they will tell you the same thing: that's where it starts. I couldn't be more lucky to have been given the opportunity to learn from those at the Collegian and to have the ability to actually make a difference in the news industry, starting right where it all begins -- in the heart of a college newsroom. From there, the possibilities are endless. We just have to start paying attention.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusions

It's nearly impossible to predict what the perfect model of journalism really is and what will work in six weeks, let alone 10 years from now. Thus, the job of putting an answer to one of the industry's biggest questions is far from easy. Ask most editors and they'll tell you that if they had the answer, they would be rich by now. However, editors will tell you that though it's a difficult time to be a journalist, it's also incredibly historic and special to come into the industry at a time where the journalists of "the golden era" are on their way out and more and more spaces are opening for the tech-savvy, social media-minded millennials of this generation. The trick, however, comes in bridging the gap between both parties and learning from each other, much like the advice offered by Marty Kaiser in his breaking newshub collaboration. In finding the balance between old-school techniques and new-age models of reaching consumers, there is a really important middle ground that showcases the talented, long form journalism with not only text, but accompanying audio, video and photos. In uniting all methods of storytelling — and all journalists trained in these various mediums — the industry becomes a force to be reckoned with and arguably the best way to find all pieces of the story.

The world needs writers and the world surely needs a clear, concise way to get its news. We are foolish to believe that giving up on an industry dedicated to truth, honesty and integrity from our world leaders will get us any farther than we are right now. And more importantly, we are letting down our very own society if we truly believe they will not make the necessary sacrifices to receive this information, be it through online subscriptions, higher advertising fees and paid content (Edmonds). Though there are "notable holdouts," it's unrealistic to believe that all newspapers have the amount of money and resources available at USA Today and the Washington Post, and therefore, cannot afford to operate and take the same risks as these large scale organizations (Edmonds). Even the Times, which has often set the standard for industry

models, has made the shift to require payment in return for product. And why shouldn't it? If a newspaper is delivering original, important content, readers should and will recognize the significance of a world without that type of coverage and the necessity for accountability delivered by these organizations. The shift is slow, but the industry is catching on and the leaders in these newsrooms are dedicated to sticking out the storm.

Though the business and news sides of journalism still remain heavily divided, there must be a severe collaboration between those selling the content and those producing it. Editors must be savvy of not only their situation, but of the situation often across the room or down the hallway, and do all that they can to recognize the business model and the needs of consumers, too. Readers must be at the forefront of our minds without sacrificing the integrity and the meaning behind the words we write. And more and more, we need to turn inward and ask ourselves what exactly we want to see in our own newspapers because though fuzzy animals and "25 top places to visit this year" are entertaining, journalism exists to inform and engage, and journalists have a very strong duty to continue to uphold this.

There must also be an improved respect for the education and training that goes into molding new journalists. As Tom Rosenstiel put it, "If journalism has value to democratic society that makes it more than another form of commerce, then licensed or not, it has the qualities of a profession and should be evaluated as we evaluate other professional schools" (Rosenstiel). Instead of discrediting a field, we must embrace it with open arms and take the necessary steps and procedures to ensuring not only the industry's future, but the people who make it run.

It's no secret that times are changing and will continue to push journalists to be not only writers but photographers, videographers and all around better storytellers. Yet this can't and shouldn't scare off journalists from jumping into the trenches with pen and paper in hand, no matter how old school it may seem or feel. Richard Gingras told a room full of young journalists and news advisers "In my view, the future of journalism can and will be better than it's past. We

have never had a more open ecosystem for the expression of information and ideas,” and his words couldn’t be more true (Gingras). The fundamentals of journalism haven’t changed, and if we do it right, they won’t. The written word will continue to be rooted in integrity and honesty, qualities and traits that speak to both the people storytelling and the industry supporting these stories. But that won’t come easy. We can’t expect for readers to suddenly understand the changing news model any more than those in the industry do, but we must acknowledge that the tools and resources we give these consumers will ultimately help them determine how and what they want. People got into this industry to listen — now it’s time to start doing just that. Listening to readers and the stories that they want to see gracing the front pages every day. Listening to the voices that may not be heard and their need for exposure in groundbreaking issues happening in our own backgrounds. Listening to all generations and meeting the needs of those having grown up with a paper on their doorstep, as well as those more accustomed to push notifications and digital alerts. We must stop talking so loudly and listen, because that’s what we’re good at, and because that’s the only way to improve.

If there’s one thing we know for sure, it is that there will never be a shortage of news and a demand for what is happening in the world around us. And as long as there is a thirst for that knowledge, journalists will never be out of a job. The models and modes for which media consumers access stories may change, but the storylines will remain much the same. Tragedy and hope will juxtapose themselves on the front pages of national papers, just as sports coverage will continue to feed an audience hungry for a career unattainable to many. Readers will continue to expect breaking news to fill websites minutes after an event occurs and turn to social media when the answers don’t seem as clear. And journalists will most likely face the same ethical headaches of anonymous sources, news urgency and placement as they did decades ago. To put it in the words of Poynter’s ethicist Kelly McBride, “Words are like wine. Consumption is up



dramatically. Our options are greater than ever. There's an entire supermarket aisle filled with choices. We find what we need. And every once in a while, we taste the great stuff" (McBride).

It's our job as successful journalists and news organizations to make sure that every piece of news we deliver is just like the great stuff — unique and hard to come by anywhere else. If we can continue to prove that newspapers are a resource this world can and should not go without, the money will come and so will the readers.

## Appendix

### Comparison of front pages during crisis

Terrorist Attacks, Sept. 12, 2001:

(Post-Gazette unavailable)



(Patriot unavailable)



Tsunami coverage, Monday, Dec. 27, 2004:

**Pittsburgh Post-Gazette**  
 MAKE YOUR PLANS FOR FIRST NIGHT - MAGAZINE, PAGE C-1  
 STEELERS WIN REST, PLAYOFFS AT HOME  
 QUAKE RAVAGES ASIA  
 Triggers gigam scale of water off Indonesia creating tsunamis across coast  
 Eyewitness Accounts: Tsunami reached suddenly from a corner area  
 Family denies 'boomerangs' back  
 Ex-Podolsky on state activity, identity in DC  
 Pro-Western candidate a rare U.S. winner  
 Ukraine's Yushchenko declares victory

**The Philadelphia Inquirer**  
 MORNING BREAKS HADDO'S RECORD  
 EAGLES GO FOR 14TH WIN TONIGHT  
 TSUNAMI KILLS 13,340  
 From Asia to Somalia  
 Cuts to Chases  
 Eight countries hit after quake  
 Reggie White  
 Minister of Defense dies at 43  
 Eyewitness Accounts: Tsunami reached suddenly from a corner area  
 What Are Tsunamis?  
 Complete Coverage Inside  
 Opposition leads in Ukrainian runoff

**MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL**  
 REGGIE WHITE, 1962-2004  
 He loved God, green and gold  
 Quake sparks killer tsunamis  
 Total waves up to 30 feet ■ Widespread carnage ■ Thousands killed ■ Millions displaced  
 GM, Citgo turn up often in injector issue  
 Ukraine's Yushchenko declares victory

**The Patriot-News**  
 'All the planet is vibrating'  
 Tsunami kills thousands in 8 Asian countries  
 Ex-Eagle, 'Minister of Defense,' White dies  
 A GREAT EQUALIZER  
 Cedar Cliff youth wrestlers go to the mat for fun  
 2 airlines slowly solve travel woes  
 State keeps weather eye out for drought's inevitable return

**The New York Times**  
 Thousands Die as Quake-Spurred Waves Crash Onto Coastlines Across Southern Asia  
 Eyewitness Accounts: Tsunami reached suddenly from a corner area  
 Disaster Strikes In and a Village Is Presumed  
 Auction Thompson Still a Mystery, But Parents Take a Leap of Faith

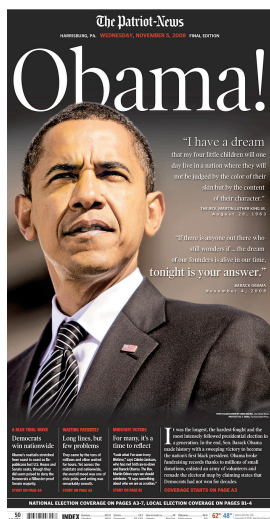
**The Washington Post**  
 Sea Surges From Massive Quake Kill Over 13,000 Across South Asia  
 In India, Death Hours In From The Ocean  
 It Seemed Like a Scene From the Bible  
 West-Leaning Leader Appears Headed for Win in Ukraine Vote  
 Jet Is an Open Secret in Terror War  
 In a Changed Ward, Berry Is Back

Virginia Tech massacre, Tuesday, April 17, 2007:





Obama makes history, Wednesday, Nov. 5, 2008:



Osama bin Laden killed by U.S. forces, Monday, May 2, 2011:



Sandyhook shootings leave 27 dead, Dec. 15, 2012:



(Patriot-News unavailable)

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