

# EJ

*Elon Journal*  
of Undergraduate Research  
in Communications

**2010** Spring  
Issue  
School of Communications  
Elon University

## Joining the World of Journals

Welcome to the nation's first and, to our knowledge, only undergraduate research journal in communications.

We discovered this fact while perusing the Web site of the Council on Undergraduate Research, which lists and links to the 60 or so undergraduate research journals nationwide (<http://www.cur.org/ugjournal.html>).

Some of these journals focus on a discipline (e.g., Journal of Undergraduate Research in Physics), some are university-based and multidisciplinary (e.g., MIT Undergraduate Research Journal), and some are university-based and disciplinary (e.g., Furman University Electronic Journal in Undergraduate Mathematics).

The Elon Journal is the first to focus on undergraduate research in journalism, media and communications.

The School of Communications at Elon University is the creator and publisher of the online journal. The first issue was published in Spring 2010 under the editorship of Dr. Byung Lee, associate professor in the School of Communications.

The three purposes of the journal are:

- To publish the best undergraduate research in Elon's School of Communications each term,
- To serve as a repository for quality work to benefit future students seeking models for how to do undergraduate research well, and
- To advance the university's priority to emphasize undergraduate student research.

The Elon Journal is published twice a year, with spring and fall issues.

Articles and other materials in the journal may be freely downloaded, reproduced and redistributed without permission as long as the author and source are properly cited. Student authors retain copyright ownership of their works.

## Celebrating Student Research

This journal reflects what we enjoy seeing in our students -- intellectual maturing.

As 18 year olds, some students enter college wanting to earn a degree, but unsure if they want an education. They may question whether communication theory has anything to do with real life. Ready to start their media careers, many would rather focus on workplace skills than analyze issues and concepts.

In Elon's School of Communications, we strive for a balance among concepts, writing and production. All are important.

Student media and organizations are terrific venues for the practice of journalism, broadcasting, public relations, advertising and cinema.

In turn, this journal celebrates the life of the intellect through undergraduate research. It represents the intellectual maturing that occurs by the senior year.

These published articles make us aware of the solitary hours that students spend in research and the untold hours in which student and teacher-mentor work together to revise a paper for public consumption. It's exciting to see students conducting research in such arenas as social media and press freedom.

By focusing attention on undergraduate research, this journal helps reinforce all that we think a university should be.

Dr. Paul Parsons, Dean  
School of Communications

## Editor's Note

The Journal's Birth.

Any kind of birth is accompanied by the pangs and joy.

The creation of this journal was no exception. Since day one, there have been hurdles, hurries and delays. But the wisdom and patience of people who were involved in this birth overcame the obstacles. I hope the end result will bring joy to those who directly participated in its production and those who gave support to the project.

From 28 articles submitted for consideration, 12 were selected for final publication. The students each worked diligently to finish their papers and were open to recommendations from reviewers, advisers and, occasionally, this editor.

I appreciate the effort of Fall 2009 senior capstone professors -- Dr. Don Grady, Dr. David Copeland, Dr. George Padgett and Dr. Dan Haygood -- who read student research articles and selected submissions, even with a tight deadline. The same appreciation goes to Dr. Rich Landesberg, who advised one of the authors.

Many were involved in the success of this publication:

- Dean Paul Parsons came up with the idea of having a journal for undergraduate communications students.
- Associate Dean Connie Book chaired the committee for this journal.
- Reviewers completed their work on short notice.
- Jason McMerty filmed and edited videos of the students.
- Kim Walker and Brad Berkner provided photos and graphics.
- David Morton, Christian Funkhouser and Christopher Waters set up the Web site and database accounts for the journal.
- Colin Donohue provided information on online PDF publication of the Elon Journal at [issuu.com](http://issuu.com).

I hope the publishing of communications undergraduate students' papers will encourage future students to become serious about publication, which will sharpen their research, analytical and writing skills.

Dr. Byung Lee  
Journal Editor

## Editorial Board

Eighteen faculty members in Elon's School of Communications served as the Editorial Board that selected the 12 undergraduate research papers appearing in the inaugural issue.

From more than 100 research papers written in advanced School of Communications classes, 28 were submitted to the journal by Elon communications students through the encouragement and mentoring of capstone teachers and other professors in the school. Under the direction of journal editor Byung Lee, each paper was evaluated in a multiple blind-review process to identify the best student work.

Professors who served as the Editorial Board were Brooke Barnett, Connie Book, Naeemah Clark, David Copeland, Vic Costello, Michelle Ferrier, Michael Frontani, Amanda Gallagher, Don Grady, Anthony Hatcher, Dan Haygood, Richard Landesberg, Harlen Makemson, Barbara Miller, George Padgett, Paul Parsons, Glenn Scott, and Frances Ward-Johnson.



# **The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications**

**Volume 1, No. 1 • Spring 2010**

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# Mom Just Facebooked Me and Dad Knows How to Text: The Influences of Computer-Mediated Communication on Interpersonal Communication and Differences Through Generations

Courtney F. Turnbull\*

*Strategic Communications*  
*Elon University*

## Abstract

*This research paper examines computer-mediated communication and its effects on interpersonal communication and the differences between the Baby Boom Generation and Generation Y. Through a 223-person survey and 10 in-depth interviews, research found that the two generations are affected by computer-mediated communication differently due to the theory of uses and gratifications. Both generations felt there was an increase in quantity of interpersonal communications due to convenience of new technologies; however, Generation Y is experiencing a decrease in quality of interpersonal communication. This decrease is due to Generation Y's use of text messaging and email that simultaneously compress descriptive and insightful conversations into lean and direct messages that make ambiguities more prevalent.*

## I. Introduction

"In type that scrolls up the screen like the preface for Star Wars, a YouTube video reads, 'For years, parents could not text message. They could not figure out how to record a voice mail. They could not even connect to the Internet without using AOL.' This was a warning that parents are adapting to technological gadgets; it flips to a short clip of a man learning to use the video capabilities on his cell phone. 'Watch with caution,' it closes, 'and pray that your own parents do not gain these powers'" (Bloom, 2009).

Today the world is consumed with the idea of the Internet and the advancement of technology. Everywhere one looks the Internet and the communication tools associated with new technologies, play a major role in education, politics, and the economy. With new advancements made everyday, individuals must constantly be keeping up with new trends while simultaneously making decisions on what communication medium is most beneficial for fulfilling their particular want and need. The Baby Boomer Generation, born following the end of World War II, did not grow up with this recent phenomenon and so their grasp of the digital world is slower, apprehensive and less accepting to the changes that are taking place. Generation Y, the offspring to the Baby Boomers, grew up in the fast-paced digital world; learning from an early age to communicate through mediated computerized channels. Increasing number of Baby Boomers are becoming part of Internet constituents, following the trends of their children and changing their traditional modes of communication, which untimely changes their quality of interpersonal communication.

This study examines how computer-mediated communication, such as emailing, text messag-

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\* **Keywords:** Computer-mediated communication, Interpersonal communication, generational difference, new technology, lack of non-verbal cues  
Email: cturnbull@elon.edu

ing, instant messaging, and the use of social media sites, have affected the way in which the Baby Boomer Generation and Generation Y communicate interpersonally. The method that they use to communicate most frequently and the effects that decision has on their interpersonal relationships will also be investigated.

## II. Literature Review

Since the invention of the Internet in 1957, as a military strategy during the Cold War, never could the world imagine the scope of its impact. In 2008, 71.4% of the United States was using the Internet, as well as 21.9% of the world (Brenner, 2008). Along with this rapidly growing phenomenon, changes have occurred not just in the way that people find information, but also in the way that people communicate with one another. Different generations use the Internet in different ways and because of this difference, generation gaps have become more apparent. However, as more individuals learn about the capabilities of the Internet the interpersonal differences seen through generations will perhaps diminish.

Over the years the definition of interpersonal communication has shifted and changed, but the basic concept that communication is a fundamental aspect of our lives and an integral part of our needs as human beings, has held consistent. We communicate to satisfy our physical needs, identity needs, social needs and practical needs. People who fail to communicate report negative life satisfaction, early death, lack of identity, negative relationships, and an elevated high school dropout rate, just to name a few. (Adler, Rosenfeld, and Proctor 2010) Interpersonal communication has several definitions, one quantitative and the other a qualitative approach. The quantitative approach looks at interpersonal communication as any type of interaction between two people. These two people who interact are a dyad and they can be anyone from friend and friend, to salesperson and buyer, however one person to a group would not be considered interpersonal. When looking at interpersonal communication qualitatively, this definition describes communication when people treat others as sole individuals, no matter where or between whom. This definition believes that the most important qualities of the qualitative approach are uniqueness and irreplaceability, in other words the person you are communicating with must have some impact on your life. (Adler, et al. 2010)

In recent years, much of the communication that occurs face-to-face has moved to computer-mediated communication. Some studies show that this type of communication is just as important, with a majority of Internet users relying on email to communicate daily (Adler, et al. 2010). Although email is known as the most popular form of computer-mediated communication, social networking, text messaging, and instant messaging, are all methods that family, friends, acquaintances, or unfamiliar persons can all use to communicate (Lenhart, Madden, Caccigill, and Smith 2007).

Computer-mediated communication has had and continues to have an effect on all people around the globe and its effects on interpersonal communication have many benefits as well as many drawbacks. Many studies in the past have proven that without tone, postures, gestures, or facial expressions, the richness of communication is depleted. In previous years, most research agreed that people who spend a majority of time on the Internet in turn spend less time talking in person and on the phone (Bower, 1998). In addition others found computer-mediated communication to be impersonal, task oriented and hostile (Walther, 1995). Some even have proved that it can lead to loneliness and isolation (Adler, et al. 2010).

Due to the lack of non-verbal cues that help clarify a verbal message, computer-mediated communication loses "richness" and in essence the message that comes across is seen as "leaner". These lean messages become harder to interpret with confidence. Things such as irony or humor can easily be taken the wrong way and because of this, these messages are extremely ambiguous. Communication that takes place online also has the ability to be managed by the people communicating. Without face-to-face communication, online communicators can create the idealized version of themselves. Due to these factors participants become less inhibited, discussing personal topics that would never come up during in person conversations. (Adler, et al. 2010)

By contrast, others feel the exact opposite. Lee Rainie, John Horrigan, Barry Wellman, Jeffrey Boase, who are part of the Pew Internet and American Life Project, have discovered that the traditional human orientation around neighborhoods or villages has shifted to communities based around social networks in geographic regions all over the globe. "People communicate and maneuver in these networks rather than being bound up in one solitary community. Yet people's networks continue to have substantial numbers of relatives

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and neighbors — the traditional bases of community — as well as friends and workmates.” Many Americans use the Internet to strengthen community relations, such as planning church meeting or finding new group organizations (Horrigan et al. 2006).

In addition to the quantity of time spent using computer-mediated communication, the quality is extremely significant as well. Fifty-five percent of Internet users have said that e-mail has improved their communication with family, and 66 percent have said their contact with friends has also improved (Horrigan, 2001). Computer-mediated communication has increased interpersonal communication by making it easier. Since face-to-face communication is not always feasible, using the Internet helps connect those who are not able to physically. Computer-mediated communication also is known to increase the levels of self-disclosure, with many people saying things through the Internet that they wouldn't normally say in person (Adler, et al. 2010). Computer-mediated communication can also make it easier for quiet people to strike up a relationship such as with the use of online dating services. “Studies also show that relational intimacy may develop more quickly through CMC than in face-to-face communications as well as enhancing verbal, emotional, and social intimacy in friendships.” (Ellison, Heino, and Gibbs, 2006) (Adler, et al. 2010) On the Internet people are able to decide aspects of their communication such as their levels or clarity, humor, or logic. These options exemplify that CMC serves as a method for managing identity; the communication strategies people use to influence how others view them (Suler, 2002). Managing identity can also be achieved by the use of blogging, or profiles on social networks. “The words, images, and sounds that Web designers choose make a statement about who they are or at least how they want to be regarded by others”(Adler, et al. 2010).

When thinking of the Internet usage, most people associate social networks and instant messaging with the younger generations, mostly Generation Y. In reality, that's not always the case because over half of the adult Internet population are between the ages of 18 and 44, and larger percentages of older generation are doing more activities online according to surveys taken from 2006 to 2008 (Jones, Fox, 2009). Although Generation Y is seen as the 'Net Generation,' both Generation X and the Baby Boomers dominate Internet use in other areas. Instant messaging, social networking, and blogging have gained ground as communications tools, but email remains the most popular online activity, particularly among older Internet users. Simultaneously however, email has lost some ground among teens. Whereas 89% of teens claimed to use email in 2004, just 73% currently say they use email. Teens and Generation Y are also the most likely groups to use the Internet for entertainment and for communicating with friends and family. Internet users ages 12-32 are more likely than older users to read other people's blogs and to write their own; they are also considerably more likely than older generations to use social networking sites and to create profiles on those sites. Teen and Generation Y users are also significantly more likely than older generations to send instant messages to friends (Jones, Fox, 2009).

When looking into the reasons why different generations use the Internet in these clearly different ways, the communication theory of uses and gratifications becomes apparent. This theory came about early in the history of communications research to study the gratifications that draw and capture audiences to the types of media and the kinds of content that satisfy their social and psychological needs (Ruggiero, 2000). This theory published in 1974 by Blumler and Katz suggests that media users play an active role in choosing and using the media. Users take an active part in the communication process and are goal oriented in their media use. The theorists say that a media user seeks out a media source that best fulfills the needs of the user. Uses and gratifications assume that the user has alternate choices to satisfy their need (Blumler J.G. & Katz, E., 1974).

Today, this theory holds true with different generations using the new technologies that are available to them to satisfy their individual wants. Members of the Baby Boom Generation have different wants individually as well as collectively than members of Generations Y. Although the effects of computer-mediated communication will most likely be different for every person, it is quite possible that the influences will generally be consistent within the same generation.

The use of the Internet is broad and complex, however its use in computer-mediated communication is obviously extremely important. While in the past some argued that computer-mediated communication diminished relationships and led to lonely or hostile environments, others believe that computer-mediated communication has enhanced communication for the better; increasing social groups, speaking more openly, and enhancing verbal, emotional, and social intimacy in friendships. Generation gaps change the way people use and communicate online, and because of these differences the interpersonal skills of different generations change as well. With younger generations mostly dominating the social aspect of the Internet, more and



more older generations have caught onto the trend, opening up communication platforms from one generation to another.

This research will look into the gap between the Baby Boom Generation and Generation Y in their belief about how their interpersonal communication skills and habits have been affected by computer-mediated communications. Although there is a lot of research already on how the different generations use new communication tools to interact, this study will answer the following three questions:

- RQ1: What modes of communication do Generation Y and the Baby Boomer Generation use the most to communicate interpersonally and why do they use these modes?
- RQ2: What do members of Generation Y and the Baby Boom Generation believe are the benefits and disadvantages of computer-mediated communication?
- RQ3: Does computer-mediated communication affect the amount and quality of interpersonal communication differently in different Generations?

### III. Method

In order to determine how computer-mediated communication has influenced interpersonal communication and explore the differences in its influences through generations, various methods of research were conducted in order to gain a complete and thorough analysis.

The first type of research was an anonymous survey that consisted of 13 multiple-choice questions, where the survey recipients could add their own response if they chose to do so, and one open-ended question (see Appendix A). These questions looked into the different habits, uses, and opinions of both members of Generation Y and the Baby Boom Generation in relation to their relationship with computer-mediated communication and interpersonal relationships. The two surveys are identical, except for question 9, which was fine-tuned to align with the proper age group. The survey was created through SurveyMonkey.com and the two links were distributed via email and facebook.com to members of the different generations using convenience sampling and volunteer sampling. One hundred and eleven responses were received from Generation Y and 112 were received from the Baby Boom Generation.

In addition to the surveys, 10 in-depth interviews were conducted to gain a deeper insight into the motives, feelings, and reasons why people use a particular medium when interpersonally communicating and to obtain a clearer understanding of exactly what participants mean by their answers (Gubrium, & Holstein, 2002). (See Appendix B.) These participants were chosen based on their age and gender characteristics. Five interviews were conducted with Generation Y members and five were with Baby Boomers, including a total of four males and six females. Eight of the interviews were in person, enabling an intimate connection between the interviewer and the interviewee that allowed for an open and honest conversation. The other two were conducted via telephone due to the inability to meet face-to-face. The interview questions were based upon the survey questions, but they were more general in nature, changing and adapting to the situation and the interviewees, allowing them to freely discuss their feeling without constraints of options or having the questions sway their feelings. A tape recorder was used with the permission of the individuals and then important aspects of the conversation were used to further the research. The responses helped to fill in some of the blanks left out of quantitative research through the survey questions. Greater accuracy was obtained due to multiple viewpoints (Jick, 1987).

### IV. Findings/Results

#### *Findings from RQ1*

The way in which people communicate is situational and different people use different modes to satisfy their particular need. In general however, the situations that both generations find themselves in are consistent throughout that particular generation. Both generations believe that face-to-face interaction is the best way to communicate interpersonally, but due to everyday activities, having interpersonal conversations

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face-to-face is difficult. This type of communication involves planning and a large time commitment and has become increasingly more difficult, although this is ideal for both generations to talk to those they care about. Face-to-face communication occurs for both generations over food and drinks or on the weekends. It is the type of communication that is rich and full of verbal and nonverbal cues and lends itself to what the participants believe is a more open communication level.

Members of Generation Y use text messaging as their most frequent mode of communication on a daily basis. They use this method because it is quick, easy, and to the point. During their daily lives they don't have time to devote to a phone call, which can take a long time to find a simple answer. Instead, they can talk to multiple people at the same time, moving back and forth from one conversation to the next. Generation Y doesn't like to have to "play phone tag," but they want answers to questions quickly. When making plans, texting is their best option (personal communication, November 10, 2009). Text messaging is also extremely convenient when individuals are at work or in class because they can discretely talk to others without having a computer in front of them. Texting also allows senders to see if their message was received so there are less communication interferences or mishaps. Texting is also a way that members of Generation Y make new interpersonal relationships. If they don't know someone well but want to form a bond, either romantically or platonically, they will text the other person, instead of making a phone call. It is a more informal way to start or reinforce a budding relationship.

Generation Y uses the phone to communicate interpersonally less than text messaging. In the online survey of 100 Generation Y participants, only 30% would pick up the phone when making plans with friends or family. Generation Y makes a phone call when they have time to spare or if the message is too complicated to write. They mostly call their parents, relatives, or friends from home when they haven't spoken to them in a long time and want to catch up. Generation Y will call members of the Baby Boom Generation because they don't think they all can text and email regularly. Phone calls are a more in-depth way to communicate interpersonally with the addition of vocal cues to help give depth to the conversation, however they are not used as often as text messages.

Email is currently what Generation Y refers to as "ancient" (personal communication, November 1, 2009). Most Generation Y individuals will only use email for purposes of doing school-related activities or sending one message out to a large group of people. Most Generation Y members would not use email to talk to a friend because they can't know if someone received, looked at, or read the email. Multiple male participants stated that email is a great way to keep in touch with their mothers since phone calls take too long and they can answer an email on their own terms. One interviewee stated:

I never really spoke to my mom because I just didn't remember to call her back. She knows I have to check my email for class and I usually have my computer in class, so if I have time or whatever I email her. It's great cause I can write to her when it's convenient for me and I don't have to sit and talk to her on the phone for 10 hours. (Personal communication, November 15, 2009)

Members of the Baby Boom Generation have all the same communication tools at their fingertips, but they use these tools in different ways. The most frequent means of communication for this generation is the phone. The phone is and has been the best way for Baby Boomers to communicate with others whom they can't see everyday or want to catch up with. Boomers have moved from landline home phones to now mostly only cell phones. Having cell phones has increased their amount of interpersonal communication because they can talk when they are out of the house or taking a lunch break. Baby Boomers believe phone calls are the most reliable form of communication because when they call someone they believe that almost always they will receive a call back. This tool is beneficial by adding competence and understanding through vocal cues and tones to the depth of interpersonal communication.

Emailing has become the Baby Boomers' new favorite tool. Although many Boomers use email for work, only recently have many started using it to communicate with friends or family. Most often they will use this mode when they want to catch up with a friend that they haven't spoken to in a couple years, or to make plans with a large group. Email allows Boomers to write long in-depth meaningful "letters" to those they care about. They have time to think of what to say and they can be thoughtful and deliberate with their messages. Parents use Email as a tool to communicate with their children since they know that Generation Y uses email everyday; they can track down their children with an email leading to a relationship with a greater communication level.

Text messaging for the Baby Boom Generation is a recently up and coming phenomenon. Most

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Boomers began texting to contact their children because they believed it was a way they were most likely guaranteed some type of response. Some Boomers will text their friends but it seems to be very uncommon and if they do text it is always very small fragmented sentences.

### ***Findings from RQ2***

Although both generations use digital communication in different ways, they both have the same feelings on the advantages and disadvantages of computer-mediated communication. Both generations believe that convenience is the main advantage that has emerged through computer-mediated communication. In two surveys of 100 participants each, 73% of members from Generation Y as well as 65% of members of the Baby Boom Generation, believe this to be true. Both generations feel as though computer-mediated communication has allowed them to communicate when it is the right time for them. They can answer an email when they have a free moment; they can send a friend a text if they are bored in class; they can do things on their own terms.

Computer-mediated communication has also enhanced individuals' ability to communicate with more people. A person can reignite an old friendship or talk to a new friend just because computer-mediated communication has made it so easy and convenient to do so. Both parents and children alike have admitted that they communicate more since using computer-mediated communication. Phone calling for Generation Y, especially when away at school, seemed to be inconsistent in the eyes of their parents. Multiple parents have stated they talk more with their children with the addition of text messages, instant messages, and email in their lives.

On the other hand, the disadvantages that individuals have found detract from the positives that were previously stated. The absence of face-to-face communication is a concern that was raised by the members of both generations. Baby Boomers and Generation Y members believed that the absence leads to their missing out on many aspects of interpersonal communication, which enhances their life and wellbeing. Concurring with some who showed concerns for communication in future, a member of the Baby Boom Generation stated:

I fear my grandchildren aren't going to be able to function at a normal level. Are they going to have to email me to say hello because they won't make the time to see me? It scares me what is going to happen to kids in the future. I can talk to a tree but I fear they won't be able to talk to their friends without their cell phones in between them. (Personal communication, November 20, 2009)

Some concern was also for the ambiguity of computer-mediated communication and the effects of communicating without nonverbal cues, but not all generation members felt this way. This concern was mostly for the members of Generation Y, with the Baby Boom Generation not taking this too much into account when discussing their computer-mediated communication habits. Generation Y expressed their distress with problems in not knowing the tone of messages delivered by computer-mediated communication and having issues deciphering between sarcasm and sincerity. Many individuals also mentioned having to ask for clarification while others admitted not asking and just guessing what the person was trying to say. Out of 100 respondents 75% of Generation Y individuals admitted to not understanding the tone (whether it was happy, sad, sarcastic, etc.) of what someone was saying during a computer-mediated conversation within the last month, compared to 40% of Baby Boomers.

Baby Boomers and Generation Y members also mentioned the disadvantage of limited confidence in Baby Boomer digital communication response rate and usage rate. Both generations felt as though not all members of the Baby Boom generation check their email regularly or respond to text messages they receive. Boomers revealed that this leads to a vicious cycle. With Boomers not sending emails because they don't think their friend will answer, their friends in turn don't have the opportunity to use CMC.

### ***Findings from RQ3***

It is apparent that both generations are affected by computer-mediated communication differently because they use digital communication in different ways to fulfill their specific needs. Although both generations use computer-mediated communication in order to communicate, with whom they are communicating with and the intended purpose of the communication changes both the quality and quantity of interpersonal communication. In general, while computer mediated communication has enhanced the quantity of inter-

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personal communication for both the Baby Boom Generation and Generation Y; the quality of interpersonal communication has not been as consistent. Members of the Baby Boom Generation feel as though they have enhanced the depth of conversations, using email as a tool to write letters to old friends or as a way to bring up issue that should be addressed if it was too sensitive to discuss during a face-to-face conversation. Baby Boomers capitalize on the desirable aspect of email that allows people to ponder what to communicate and structure an email to convey an exactly intended message.

Members of Generation Y, on the other hand, have fallen into the world of abbreviations and text messaging. When speaking to one another, messages are short and to the point with limited fillers and gaps. Generation Y members agree with the negative effect it is having on their interpersonal relationships at times. Generation Y members know that their interpersonal relationship is somewhat negatively affected by the lack of depth in conversations, but due to their needs it is the most convenient way to talk to others.

## **V. Discussion**

The findings have proven that computer-mediated communication has influenced interpersonal relationships differently in the Baby Boom Generation and Generation Y. These differences arise from the fact that the two generations use computer-mediated communication to fit their specific needs, which is supported by the uses and gratification theory. The two generations have different social and psychological needs, so the method and the medium that they choose to communicate with are different as well. Both generations feel that face-to-face communication is the ideal mode of communication, but agree that it's sometimes impossible in hectic everyday life. Although face-to-face communication, a "rich" way to communicate, is filled with non-verbal cues, all previous research suggested that people are more inhibited when speaking in person. The research suggested that the computer gives individuals the opportunities to speak more openly, however when asked directly in this research if they speak more openly most individuals denied their change in inhibition. The tendency to transmit messages without considering consequences or volunteer personal information mistakenly is greater in online communication where people don't see or hear the target of the remarks (Adler, et al. 2010). This idea leads to the conclusion that people in both generations do not realize or want to admit that they are less inhibited and speak more openly and more freely via computer-mediated communication.

Less inhibition comes from text messaging, the preferred method of Generation Y communication. The text messages that Generation Y uses to communicate are mostly shortened versions of a deeper conversation and because of this method of communication, Generation Y is missing out on their conversation quality. Nonverbal cues that help clarify meanings of another's words and offer hints about their feelings are stripped. (Surinder & Cooper, 2003) The ability to decipher what another is saying is an important concept in perceiving others. Failing to understand another can leave people feeling isolated and frustrated, despairing that our words don't seem able to convey the depth and complexity of what we think and feel (Adler, et al. 2010).

The ambiguity of computer-mediated communication is an issue that many Generation Y members raised throughout the research. Baby Boomers write how they feel in long emails and through phone calls and so there isn't much room for error when interpreting what they are trying to say. Generation Y members sometimes read a message and due to the ambiguity will interpret it the wrong way leading to difficulties in relationships. If a person doesn't receive the response they are looking for, or the support they need, it can lead to many conflicts that could have been avoided if the intended message had been clearer.

Many participants of the survey and the interviews believed that the best way to communicate interpersonally in the future will be through the use of video chats, such as Skype and iChat. These modes of communication give users the "best of both worlds" (personal communication, November 10, 2009). These modes will allow people to communicate thorough a mediated channel with convenience and ease and allows for the facial gestures, vocal tones, and hand movements that are important components for interpersonal communication to come through.

One additional component to the findings is the idea that the gap between generations is diminishing. Not too many years ago, Generation Y dominated all web 2.0 components, but today people of all ages use the Internet and communicate via mediated channels. Although the Baby Boomers have not caught up entirely with the tech savvy Generation Y, who grew up learning, communicating, and discovering through the computer and the Internet, they are an upcoming force in the world of computer-mediated communica-

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tion. With a decreased generation gap, there are better interpersonal relationships because there is a better understanding of other generations. Better generational relationships will lead to healthier communication habits avoiding unnecessary dysfunctional conflict, which has a damaging effect on the relationship.

## VI. Conclusions

This study found that computer-mediated communication influences interpersonal relationships differently in the Baby Boom Generation and Generation Y. Computer-mediated communication enhances the amount that all generation members communicate interpersonally due to the increase in convenience, ease and availability of the person with whom one is communicating with. Due to the fact that Baby Boomers statistically use computer-mediated communication less, they in turn are less likely to communicate with the large amount of people that Generation Y members do. On the contrary, Baby Boomers have used computer-mediated communication to their advantage, increasing their quality of interpersonal relationships with long emails to their friends and family. Generation Y members, on the other hand, have decreased their quality of interpersonal relationships, making things quick and to the point, losing out on communication depth, which leads to ambiguities and possibly interpersonal conflict due to misunderstandings.

The conclusions to this research were drawn through qualitative and quantitative research methods, and both of these methods had some limitations. Both the survey and the interviews were conducted with a convenience sample of participants, a non-probabilistic sample. All the participants were familiar people or friends of familiar people, so the research cannot be generalized to the general population. The research was also skewed with more females participating in both the survey and the interview than males.

Further research can be done to monitor the progression that Baby Boomers would make in their use of computer-mediated communication in the future, for example, in 10 years. In addition, a study on what different impact the lack of non-verbal cues will have on the interpersonal skills of Generation Y and Baby Boomers can be conducted, too.

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Dr. Daniel Haygood at Elon University for his supervision and advice, without which the article could not be published. The author also appreciates numerous reviewers who have helped revise this article.

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## Appendix

### Survey (Baby Boom Generation)

1. How many days out of the week do you use digital communication (Instant messages, social media sites, emails, text messages, etc.) to speak with others?

- a. 0
- b. 1-2
- c. 3-4
- d. 5-6
- e. 7

2. Please fill in the blank:

When making plans with friends or family, I most often \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Call
- b. Text message
- c. Email
- d. Write on his/her Facebook or MySpace wall
- e. Stop by his/her home or office

3. Please fill in the blank:

The Internet enables me to communicate \_\_\_\_\_ with others.

- a. More
- b. Less
- c. The same amount

4. Please fill in the blank:

When using the Internet, I spend most of my time \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Speaking to others
- b. Surfing the Internet for enjoyment
- c. Researching and learning new information
- d. Shopping
- e. Paying bills/managing accounts
- f. Other

5. Please fill in the blank:

When trying to keep in touch with friends or family, I most often \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Call
- b. Text message
- c. Email
- d. Write on his/her Facebook or MySpace wall
- e. Stop by his/her home or office

6. When speaking to others online or through text messages there are misunderstandings between what I am saying and what I really mean.

- a. Never
  - b. Rarely
  - c. Sometimes
  - d. Often
  - e. Always
  - f. I don't know
-

7. True or False:

I have met a friend or a significant other via the Internet

- a. True
- b. False

8. Please fill in the blank:

I speak more openly and more freely when I communicate with others via\_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Internet
- b. Text messages
- c. Phone
- d. Face-to face
- e. I speak with the same amount of disclosure either way

9. Please fill in the blank:

I believe my generation uses the Internet to communicate \_\_\_\_\_ than members of Generation Y (ages 15-30).

- a. More
- b. Less
- c. Same amount

10. True or False:

In the past month I have not understood the tone (whether it was a joke, serious statement, sarcastic statement, etc.) of someone I was communicating with via computerized channels.

- a. True
- b. False

11. True or False:

In the past year, digital communication (Instant messages, social media, emails, text messages, etc.) has allowed me to reach out to an old friend.

- a. True
- b. False

12. What do you believe is the major advantage of email?

- a. Increased Convenience
- b. Increase of Privacy
- c. More Control
- d. Immediacy
- e. Absence of face-to-face interaction
- f. Other

13. What do you believe is the major disadvantage of email?

- a. Lack of Privacy
- b. Absence of face-to-face interaction
- c. Impersonal nature
- d. Permanence
- e. Possibility of being ignored

14. What is your ideal mode of communicating with friends?

15. Are you male or female?

- a. Male
  - b. Female
-

## **Appendix B**

### **Basic Interview Questions**

1. Would you describe yourself as an active user of digital communication, such as instant messaging, emailing, texting, or using social media sites?
  2. Why do you use computer-mediated communication?
  3. Who would you say is the person with whom you communicate the most via mediated channels?
  4. If you wanted to make plans with a friend, how would you most likely get in touch with them?
    - a. Why?
  5. When you use the Internet what are you most likely doing?
  6. Would you say in the past month, you didn't understand what a person was trying to communicate because you weren't face-to-face with them?
    - a. If so, did you do anything to better understand him or her?
  7. Through what medium would you say you feel most comfortable saying exactly what you mean without any hesitation?
    - a. Why?
  8. Has the use of the Internet or social networking sites allowed you to communicate with someone you haven't spoken to in a long time?
  9. What do you believe is the major disadvantage of computer-mediated communication?
  10. If you could choose anything, what would be your ideal mode of communicating interpersonally?
    - a. Why?
-

# Social Media and the Evolution of Corporate Communications

Laura Matthews\*

Senior majoring in Corporate Communications  
Elon University

## Abstract

*Social media has revolutionized corporate communications, rapidly changing the way that public relations campaigns or programs are distributed and measured. Rather than the traditional method of pure output, social media has forced corporate communications to shift to a dialogue in which the stakeholders, and not just the companies, have power over the message. Social media is a revolutionary communications tool that has quickly changed the ways in which public relations is practiced, becoming an integral part of corporate communications for many companies and offering public relations practitioners new options for every aspect of the corporate communications process.*

## I. Introduction

Social media has revolutionized corporate communications. Social media marketing allows companies to communicate directly and instantly with their stakeholders, marking a shift from the traditional one-way output of corporate communications, to an expanded dialogue between company and consumer. This paper aims to examine the relationship between social media and corporate communications, specifically focusing on the uses of social media for public relations and analyzing the changes that have occurred within the industry as a result of social media tools.

Social media marketing is an umbrella term that includes the use of social media for sales, marketing, customer service and public relations, indicating a convergence of these traditionally separate corporate departments. Social media consists of online technologies, practices or communities that people use to generate content and share opinions, insights, experiences and perspectives with each other (Television Bureau of Advertising, Inc., 2009). Examples include blogs (e.g. Blogger, Wordpress), intranets, podcasts, video sharing (e.g. YouTube), photo sharing (e.g. Flickr), social networks (e.g. Facebook, MySpace), wikis (e.g. Wikipedia), gaming sites, virtual worlds (e.g. SecondLife), micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter), videoconferencing, instant message chats, social event/calendar systems (e.g. Eventful), social bookmarking sites (e.g. Delicious, Digg, StumbleUpon), and news aggregation sites, among others. In the last decade these technologies have risen in popularity and ubiquity, and are being utilized by public relations practitioners to perpetuate the ever-changing industry of corporate communications. While it represents many different technologies, social media will be referred to in the singular form throughout this paper.

In today's corporate world, the success or failure of any company hinges on public perception. The opinions of key company stakeholders, such as shareholders, investors, consumers, employees or members of the community in which the organization is based, are all crucial to the long-term success of the company, and should be viewed as such by executives. Social media allows for corporate communications opportunities

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\* **Keywords:** social media, public relations, corporate communications, marketing  
E-mail: lauramatthewspr@gmail.com



that a decade ago would not have been plausible.

Public relations is an old industry that has relied on the same tactics and formulas for much of its history, and that has traditionally been measured by the amount of media coverage resulting from output company messages. Social media is rapidly changing the way that public relations campaigns or programs are distributed and measured. Rather than the traditional method of pure output – completely company-controlled messages being broadcast to the stakeholders – social media has forced corporate communications to shift to a dialogue in which the stakeholders, and not just the companies, have power over the message. Social media allows stakeholders to ask questions and have those questions answered directly by corporate executives, and for corporate executives to receive important feedback and even ideas from their stakeholders (Owyang, 2007).

Public relations in the traditional sense has come to be seen by many as “smoke and mirrors,” deceptive messages being created by “spin doctors.” Because of this, many people have come to distrust media – the traditional means by which the industry is measured – and put more trust in the opinions of their peers, which they have access to on social media sites (Woolf, 2009). Social media not only offers an opportunity for direct and instant corporate communication, but also an opportunity to get back to the ideal basics of public relations – building and maintaining relationships – and to change some of the negative stereotypes typically associated with the industry.

## II. Literature Review

A number of research studies have been conducted to examine the transition from traditional practices to public relations in the social media age. The majority of these studies aimed to answer a common set of questions regarding the use of social media for corporate communications, involving the most common forms of social media marketing, the time commitment involved for social media marketers, the benefits of social media marketing, the audiences being reached by social media marketers, how the effectiveness of communications are measured in social media marketing and the impact that social media marketing will have in the future.

An online survey of 880 participants was conducted in March of 2009 by social media marketer Michael Stelzner. Most of the participants use social media marketing to some extent, and the study sought to uncover the “who, what, when, where and why” of social media marketing (Stelzner, 2009). In the report titled *Social Media Marketing Industry Report: How Marketers Are Using Social Media to Grow Their Businesses*, Stelzner examines the top 10 social media questions being asked by public relations practitioners, the time commitment and benefits of social media marketing, the most commonly used social media tools, the social media tools practitioners want to learn more about and additional analyses of demographic information (Stelzner, 2009).

Social media is a relatively recent innovation, and social media marketing is a comparatively new industry. Of the almost 900 survey respondents, most still had questions regarding the best tactics to use in social media marketing, how to measure the effectiveness of social media and where to begin with social media marketing (Stelzner, 2009). Eighty-eight percent of the practitioners surveyed in Stelzner’s study reported using social media for marketing, but 72 percent of those have only been doing so for a few months or less. When measuring the time devoted to social media marketing efforts, 64 percent of respondents spend five or more hours weekly on social media, and 39 percent devote 10 or more hours each week. The number one advantage of social media, according to 81 percent of respondents, is getting more exposure for the company. This was followed by increased traffic and the formation of new business relationships. The practitioners surveyed in Stelzner’s study reported using Twitter, blogs, LinkedIn and Facebook most frequently for social media marketing, and reported wanting to know more about social bookmarking sites (Stelzner, 2009).

The survey indicated that the longer a practitioner has been using social media, the more time he or she devotes to it per week. Another benefit of social media cited by more than half of respondents was a rise in search engine rankings. The study also examined some demographic information for social media marketers, and found that people between the ages of 30 and 39 are most likely to be using social media for marketing (Stelzner, 2009).

In a 2007 PRSA online survey, working public relations practitioners were asked about their use of

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18 social media tools and “their perception on the growth of social media trends in public relations practice” (Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, 2008). The survey found that social media technologies allow PR practitioners “to reach out to and engage their publics in conversation . . . and provides an avenue to strengthen media relations,” and that a majority of practitioners felt that communications technologies such as social media had made their jobs easier, allowing them to reach broader audiences and expedite the circulation of information (Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, 2008). On average, survey respondents used 5.97 of the 18 social media tools listed, with e-mail, a long-established tool, being the most widely used, followed by intranets, blogs, videoconferencing and podcasts (Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, 2008).

Josh Bernoff and Charlene Li, both researchers at Forrester Research, Inc., coauthored a book called *Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies*. Forrester is an independent technology and market research company, and Bernoff’s and Li’s book pulls data from Forrester research studies to examine audience demographics for social media marketers. The authors define the groundswell as “a spontaneous movement of people using online tools to connect, take charge of their own experience, and get what they need – information, support, ideas, products, and bargaining power – from each other” (Bernoff & Li, 2008). This “groundswell” gives the control to the consumers, rather than the company, something that many companies are wary of, but that Li and Bernoff address as an opportunity in their book.

Bernoff and Li examined the usage of various forms of social media by online Americans. They found the following: 25 percent of online Americans read blogs, and 11 percent write them; 29 percent watch user-generated video, and 8 percent upload user-generated video; 25 percent visit social networking sites; 18 percent participate in discussion forums; and 25 percent read ratings and reviews (Bernoff & Li, 2008).

All of the relevant studies of social media and corporate communications report similar findings. Along with demographic information for both practitioners and audiences, are the ideas that content is no longer exclusively controlled by professionals, corporate communications are moving from pure output to dialogue, and traditional public relations practitioners are interested in using social media for marketing, but there are still questions and concerns regarding the proper way to infiltrate this rapidly growing market.

### III. Methods/Results

This research is presented as a critical analysis and interpretation of existing research studies, trade publications, online technologies, case studies, current trends, public relations theories and academic literature. The purpose of this research is to qualify aspects of traditional public relations and aspects of public relations utilizing social media, and through comparison to analyze the changes that have occurred within the industry and make projections for the future.

#### ***Analysis of Traditional Public Relations***

Public relations traces its origins to the days of hype, promotion and propaganda and is often associated with negative perceptions and stereotypes. A history of misleading campaigns and unethical practices date back to the father of public relations, Edward Bernays. While Bernays was a pioneer of the public relations industry, his practices advocated the manipulation of public opinion, and it was this trend of thought that has dominated public relations practices for much of the industry’s history (Mallinson, 1996).

A May 2000 ethics survey of public relations professionals by *PR Week* indicated that manipulation of the truth in public relations was not left behind in the early days of unabashed propaganda. The survey found that one out of four public relations professionals admitted to lying on the job and another 39 percent admitted to “exaggerating the truth.” In all, 64 percent of the respondents admitted to lying or exaggerating the truth in public relations. In response to other questions, 44 percent of the respondents said there had been times when “they felt uncertain about the ethics of tasks they had been asked to perform” (Turney, 2009).

This trend of public relations as hype and propaganda has led to public relations becoming synonymous with “spin” and “flack.” These manipulative techniques have led to a sense of distrust in the industry and in the media, but are often successful because traditionally, corporate communications practices have been marked by highly controlled, one-way output. There has been a directive of “staying on-message,” ensuring that the company or organization has complete control of the message at all times, virtually telling the consumer or stakeholder what to think or feel about the message being communicated.

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Public relations theorists James Grunig and Todd Hunt have outlined four models of public relations that are traditionally practiced by organizations: press agency, public information, two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical. The press agency model describes public relations programs with the sole purpose of attracting favorable publicity for an organization using mass media. One of the earliest examples of press agency public relations is P.T. Barnum's circus (Hunt & Grunig, 1994). The man who famously coined the phrase, "There's a sucker born every minute," was famous for his manipulation of the media to get publicity (Stauber & Rampton, 1995). The public information model, like the press agency model, is a one-way communication model that uses "journalists-in-residence" to disseminate information to the media. The two-way asymmetrical model uses research to develop messages that are likely to persuade target audiences to behave as the organization wants (Hunt & Grunig, 1994).

The fourth model of public relations recognized by Hunt and Grunig is the two-way symmetrical model. This model is based on research and uses communication to manage conflict and improve understanding with strategic publics. The two-way symmetrical model is one that is mutually beneficial, based on negotiation and compromise, and is practiced by organizations that understand the importance of listening and responding to their publics (Hunt & Grunig, 1994). This is the ideal model for successful corporate communications, as it indicates an organization that is committed to honest and ethical practices and is willing to adapt its practices to improve public perception.

Public relations campaigns and programs have used the same strategies for much of the industry's history and are generally based on some variation of the RACE formula developed by communications professor John Marston. RACE, an acronym for research, action, communication and evaluation, is a communications planning tool that practitioners use to develop public relations campaigns or programs. When using RACE or a variation of similar steps to develop a public relations campaign, the research phase generally involves surveying or focus group testing of the target audience; action entails the planning of the message and its delivery; communication involves the actual distribution of the message, generally via traditional media including TV, radio and print news; and evaluation of the communication is measured by quantifying media mentions (Hunt & Grunig, 1994).

### ***Analysis of Public Relations Utilizing Social Media***

Social media marketing is a revolutionary communications tool that has quickly changed the ways in which public relations is practiced, becoming an integral part of corporate communications for many companies. Social media offers public relations practitioners new options for every aspect of the corporate communications process. From research to evaluation, social media tools can be utilized to create and distribute meaningful content to wider audiences than traditional media allows.

This video, "Social Media Revolution," created by Erik Qualman, author of the social media blog Socialnomics and a book by the same name, includes a series of overwhelming social media statistics – illustrating with some shock value just how powerful a tool social media can be and giving an indication of the ways in which it can be utilized by public relations practitioners.



Since the advent of the social media revolution, public relations has widely become the department responsible for organizing and maintaining a company's social media presence, leading marketing and other departments in the adoption of these tools. According to the *2009 Digital Readiness Report* based on the survey responses of 278 public relations, marketing and human resources professionals with hiring responsibilities, "Public relations is leading the social media revolution inside organizations of all types and sizes" (Schwartzman, Smith, Spetner, & McDonald, 2009). According to the report:

- PR leads marketing in the management of all social media communications channels.

- In 51% of organizations, PR leads digital communications.
  - PR is responsible for blogging at 49% of all organizations and is responsible for social networking at
-

48% of all organizations.

- PR is responsible for micro-blogging at 52% of all organizations.

(Schwartzman, Smith, Spetner, & McDonald, 2009).

According to social media and public relations theorist Jason Falls, “PR has taken on an entirely new role in the organization over the last two to three years. It’s the most dramatic shift in the industry since the invention of email, but is happening faster and more dramatically” (Falls, 2009).

One remarkable change that the influx of social media in corporate communications has led to is the creation of new social media-specific jobs. According to former Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, “The top 10 in-demand jobs in 2010 may not have existed in 2004” (Gunderson, Jones, & Scanland, 2004). Companies hiring public relations practitioners are no longer content with knowledge of the traditional tools of the trade like news releases – public relations practitioners in the social media age must have an understanding of how to use social media for corporate communications.

According to the Digital Readiness report, “When searching for prospective candidates, knowledge of social media is almost as important as traditional media relations skills” (Schwartzman, Smith, Spetner, & McDonald, 2009). According to the report:

- Among those responsible for hiring PR and marketing employees, 82% of respondents said mainstream media relations expertise was either important or very important. More than 80% said knowledge of social networks is either important or very important. Nearly 77% said knowledge of blogging, podcasting and RSS is either important or very important, and almost 72% said an understanding of micro-blogging services like Twitter are either important or very important.
- Other new media communications skills that hiring decision makers found important or very important are search engine optimization (62%), email outreach (56%), web content management (52%) and social bookmarking (51%).
- To meet the needs of internal and external communications in today’s organizations, public relations or marketing job seekers need to develop a comprehensive portfolio of digital communications skills.
- 18% of hiring decision makers have no interest at all in traditional public relations skills, signaling a shift from a mainstream media relations-focused approach.

(Schwartzman, Smith, Spetner, & McDonald, 2009).

## **IV. Discussion**

The social media revolution has had a resounding impact on the public relations industry. It offers new opportunities and new requirements for successful public relations practices. The pressing need for social media expertise in public relations has led to the creation of new careers, and practitioners must be aware of how social media marketing can be used for corporate communications. Social media marketing is an extremely effective tool for the public relations industry, as it offers new channels for the necessary communication between an organization and its publics, and new opportunities for this communication to be meaningful and mutually beneficial.

As public relations has most widely adopted social media marketing techniques, the aspects of the traditional RACE formula have evolved. While the basic principles are the same, social media tools offer practitioners new ways to implement the traditional elements of public relations practices. Research is a crucial stage in the development of a public relations campaign or program, and social media offers new opportunities for research to be conducted. Survey distribution and reception can be greatly aided through the use of social media, and as an alternative to traditional research methods like focus group testing, public relations practitioners have the opportunity to witness the conversations stakeholders are already having and implement the findings into campaigns.

Public relations campaigns in the social media age have to adapt and become much more flexible. The perceptions of stakeholders must constantly be taken into account in the development of campaigns, and

if perceptions change during the process, the campaign needs to be altered to accommodate those changes. The actual communication of a public relations campaign or program has a myriad of options for distribution. Public relations is no longer about inundating news rooms with news releases and media alerts. While traditional media still matters, practitioners need to know how to design their messages for new audiences. Social media offers opportunities for interactive news releases that can be pitched on the Web, to bloggers, rather than journalists. Evaluation has changed as well, with social media tools offering new opportunities for measuring the effectiveness of communications. The success of a public relations campaign or program is no longer measured solely by the weight of newspaper clippings it achieved, but by the number of blog posts, conversations, comments, re-tweets, bookmarks, etc. that it garnered online.

Social media marketing is a powerful tool that lends itself very well to the adoption of Hunt and Grunig's ideal model of public relations – two-way symmetrical. Public relations practices based on one-way output or manipulation of the truth cannot survive in the social media age. Public relations has changed, and is changing still, emphasizing practices that are more aligned with the ideals of the industry. Simply put, public relations revolves around the public. If social media is utilized to its full potential for corporate communications, the industry has an opportunity to strive for its ideal, and through transparent, honest practices, implement successful campaigns and reverse negative stereotypes.

The creation of new jobs has resulted in a need for new skills – skills that are not currently being widely taught. Current students of public relations are still learning the formats for traditional tools like news releases, and a shift needs to occur in academia to incorporate the new aspects of the industry. Practitioners need to know how to create content for new audiences, as well as how to use social media to have meaningful conversations with the publics of an organization.

## **V. Conclusion**

This industry shift from traditional corporate communications practices to public relations utilizing social media is unprecedented. The speed with which this shift has occurred has led to a split within the industry, separating early adopters from those who are slow to join the social media age. How companies are responding to the social media revolution is an indicator of future success. Companies that are too slow to adopt these new technologies and practices are going to be left behind. Consumers are communicating with one another via social media, even if the companies that are their topics of discussion are late to join the social media game.

Social media is going to continue to develop and change, and corporate communications practices are going to change with it. Social media has already proven an invaluable tool to the industry, and the future holds a wider teaching and implementation of these tools. The advent of social media has resulted in the evolution of corporate communications. From unchanging, traditional practices, the public relations industry has evolved rapidly to accommodate constant change and new tools, creating opportunities for meaningful conversations, successful campaigns and realizing industry ideals.

## **Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank her father, Ted Matthews, for his advice and expertise. The author also thanks Dr. George Padgett at Elon for his supervision and appreciates the numerous reviewers who have helped revise this article.



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# Privacy and Perceptions: How Facebook Advertising Affects its Users

Katherine K. Roberts\*

*Strategic Communications  
Elon University*

## Abstract

*This research paper details a study of Facebook users and their perception of advertising on the site. Characteristics such as privacy, micro targeting, Facebook use, awareness, and reactions, were all important factors that influenced these responses. The objective of this study was to see how undergraduate students from four colleges across the country view Facebook and its advertisers. The results indicated that student reactions did not overwhelmingly lean in a particular direction: Individual users perceive the site differently, and this determination directly correlates with the uses and gratification theory.*

## I. Introduction

### **Facebook Overview**

Facebook is a social networking site (SNS), which provides users with a platform to create a personal profile page, add 'friends', and send messages. Since the company was founded in 2004, it has become the top ranked social networking site (Kazeniac, 2009). According to Facebook Statistics (2009), there are over 300 million current active users (i.e. users that have logged-on in the past 30 days). Facebook users have claimed the site a "necessity, along the lines of oxygen, water, and food" (Verna, 2009). For many people, visiting Facebook has become an integral part of their daily lives, and has even caused some to have an unhealthy obsession with the site. According to Elizabeth Cohen (2009), a CNN medical correspondent, therapists are seeing more and more "Facebook addicts," who become compulsive Facebook users to the point where the site interferes with relationships, jobs, and normal daily life. The site has transformed social communication in the 21st century, with Facebook and other SNS reaching hundreds of millions of people across the globe.

### **Features and Advertising**

Facebook continues to add new features and developments on a consistent basis. Since it is free to create an account, Facebook has to generate its revenue elsewhere, through a venue such as advertising. Companies can utilize Facebook's features to reach their audiences in different ways. Gangadharbatla (2009) states that SNS are changing the way advertisers reach consumers, and that these changes are transforming online advertising all together. There are a variety of ways to use Facebook, and the different features allow creativity and experimentation in advertising. For instance, when users log-on, they are taken to a homepage called a "News Feed" which highlights recent activities from other users. Each Facebook account also includes a personal profile page, a "Wall" to write public messages to other users, Facebook-generated ap-

\* **Keywords:** privacy, Facebook, corporate advertising, perception of ads, effective advertising.  
Email: kroberts10@elon.edu

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plications (photos, events, groups, video, notes, and links), and an inbox to write private messages to other users. The site also allows users to add optional features called Platform applications to connect in new ways. According to Facebook's statistics (2009), more than 70% of Facebook users utilize Platform applications on a monthly basis. Since these Platforms are optional, it is significant that users are seeking out additional Facebook features and uses for the site. The purpose of Facebook has shifted, as the continued popularity of added features proves that its users are looking for more than just casual networking with friends.

A few of the currently popular Platform applications include games, fan pages, and gifts. Social-network gaming company Zynga has dominated the site with applications such as FarmVille, Café World, and Mafia Wars. Zynga has over 126 million monthly active users, making it the leading Facebook development platform (O'Neill, 2009). The company reported that they currently spend approximately \$50 million on Facebook advertising annually, and this figure is expected to increase as the company continues to develop over the years (O'Neill, 2009). The games allow Facebook users to purchase virtual products with a credit card, as a means to advance further in the game. Techniques such as these provide Zynga with Facebook-user generated revenues and encourage more advertising and developing on the site.

Advertisers also have the option to create a free fan page, where companies and individuals can invite users to become a "fan" of a product, service, person, company, brand, etc. The page is set up similarly to a profile page, with the option to add status updates, photos, announcements, etc. According to Facebook's statistics (2009), over 10 million users become fans of pages on a daily basis, which provides growing possibilities to reach consumers without any financial risk. There is also a chance to buy birthday gifts, as Facebook has expanded its 'gift shop' to include real gifts alongside virtual ones (Klaassen, 2009, p. 38). This type of online shopping connects cyber space with the real world, so that what happens online does not necessarily stay online.

## **Growth**

Another benefit to Facebook advertisers is the site's growth. "Traffic to Facebook is up almost 200% over the last year. ... Social media is no longer just for techies or younger generations—it has become a mainstream phenomenon" (Swedowsky, 2009). Not only traffic to Facebook increasing, but users are also spending more and more time on the site. According to Anchin (2009), network and blogging sites account for 17% of all time spent on the Internet in August 2009, and that figure is triple what it was the year before. All of these increases show how technology has revolutionized the lives of people around the world, and advertisers need to recognize and react to these changes. Klaassen (2009) reports a recent study, where 43% of online purchasers named social-network surfing as the reason they decided to make their purchase. This statistic shows the potential power that advertisers have to reach a willing and active audience. However, to fully understand the effect of Facebook advertising, it is important to understand how consumers perceive Facebook and its advertisers. This study will show how advertising can affect Facebook users, and provide further suggestions for a more effective means to reach a target audience through social networking.

## **II. Literature Review**

### ***Uses and Gratification Theory***

The "uses and gratification" theory (Katz, et al., 1974) provides important insight into why Facebook is so widely used. As an audience-based theory, uses and gratification hypothesizes that different consumers use the same media messages for different purposes, depending on their individual needs and goals (Sheldon, 2007, p. 40). According to Katz et al. (1974), the uses and gratifications theory is based on the assumption that (1) the audience is active, (2) the media choice lies with the audience member, (3) all mediums compete with other sources of need/goal fulfillment, (4) mass media goals can be found in the message of the source, and (5) cultural value judgments should not be taken into consideration as the audience explores their own opinions.

By directly applying these assumptions to mass media in terms of the social networking sites (specifically Facebook), a few customized observations can be made. First, the average Facebook user is active, as he or she has willingly created an account, and is a member of the site. Next, the user chose Facebook as a

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means to fulfill his or her wants and goals over other sources. Essentially, the Facebook user came to the site for a unique purpose. This can include the need to connect interpersonally as well as the want to promote a business or product (i.e. advertising).

In order to understand the perspective of a potential consumer, it is essential to study why Facebook users visit the site in the first place. The uses and gratification theory is a reminder that these needs are customized for each person, and therefore cannot be generalized to an entire population. However, meaningful information can be developed covering smaller populations with common characteristics. For the purpose of this study, our subjects are college students who are already Facebook users, having joined the site for their own specific reasons.

## **Advertising**

With individualized motives comes an individualized need for advertising. Social networking sites provide unique opportunities for companies that simply don't exist elsewhere. Among the advantages are increased interaction between the business and customer, a more targeted means for reaching an audience, and a direct way for customers to connect to each other (as well as potential customers). Learmonth (2009) states that Facebook is an effective marketing platform because networking and communication are already taking place. This allows companies to be directly woven into conversations simply by appearing on the site. Facebook presents an entirely new way of scrutinizing a product or brand: "(It) has not only transformed the research and purchase consideration phase, but it also provides shoppers with a platform to advocate for the products and stores they love" (Swedowsky, 2009). For example, product raves and reviews could appear on a fan page, or in an application.

Not only does interactivity increase, but Facebook also allows for a complete customization of advertisements by the ad creators. For the traditional web site advertiser (i.e. using a banner ad on the side, bottom, or top of a site), Facebook advertisements are relatively easy to generate, and allow the creator a variety of choices when making an ad. The site lets advertisers select the exact demographic that sees the ad, which helps them not waste time or energy on people outside of their chosen market. The advertiser can view the results of who is clicking their ad, and modify it accordingly. Gangadharbatla (2008) found that Facebook ads are extremely relevant to users because they are so highly targeted.

To test the effectiveness of Facebook's advertisers' micro-targeting method, Lessin (2008) did an experiment by creating his own Facebook advertisement. It was an ad targeted to his girlfriend, so he typed in her specific demographic (a Wall Street Journal Reporter, 25 years old, living in San Francisco, graduated from Harvard in 2006, majored in history, etc.) and was able to get the ad directly placed on her Facebook website. This test demonstrated advertisers' ability to nano-target their market in a unique way not seen in traditional advertising.

## **Privacy**

While the aforementioned story does show a highly effective means in reaching a target audience, it also brings up the question of the accessibility of private information. Although users put up all personal information willingly, they may or may not know that their information can be shared with a third party. Facebook's recent partnership with Nielsen in September 2009 is just beginning to change the advertising front of the site; so very little research currently exists in terms of consumer response to nano-targeted ads (Anchin 2009). However, the online privacy debate has existed since the creation of the Internet, with private information becoming increasingly available to companies and individuals alike.

For a variety of reasons, Facebook privacy settings are not always fully utilized. Users can change the way others see their private information, and Lange (2008) hypothesized that privacy settings may not be adjusted due to ignorance or the "it won't happen to me" assumption. Lange's study also points out that when users click the "Accept Terms and Conditions" button when joining a site or adding an Application, they tend not to read the fine print, which may say that the user is (unknowingly) agreeing to sell or give away his/her personal information. Sherman (2008) adds that a term such as "Privacy Policy" on a website may make users automatically assume that their information is safe when that may not actually be the case. This shows how Internet ethics and morals can come into question, and asks "How far is too far?" in terms of providing information to third parties.

In an announcement in late October 2009, Schrage (2009), the vice president of communications

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and public policy for Facebook, admitted that one of the goals of the site is for the ads to be “relevant and interesting” for viewers. Facebook is also assuring that the information shared is “anonymized,” meaning that advertisers receive demographic information, but no individual information that could be traced back to one person (Schrage, 2009). Although Facebook is improving communication with its users through blog announcements such as these, it does not make it clear as to exactly what information is shared, and to whom the information is given. Therefore, Facebook is not necessarily guaranteeing that certain information will be kept private, and this may be information that the user may not want a third party to have access to.

Like Facebook privacy, prior research on SNS in general is limited, as Facebook in particular has only existed for the past five years. Therefore, there has not been a significant amount of research done in the area of social networking sites and advertising’s effect on the users. Since SNS have become such an integral part of our daily lives, it is important for advertisers to understand how customers and potential customers on the site perceive them.

To advance that understanding, three primary research questions were constructed. The first question examines the Facebook user’s point of view, which is essential for success and understanding: *RQ1: How are Facebook and its advertisers scrutinized in the eye of the consumer?*

The second question deals with the issue of privacy, as online safety and the control of private information is more difficult to monitor online: *RQ2: How is privacy perceived on Facebook?*

Lastly, the third question yields the opportunity to provide suggestions and ideas for advertisers, which would be beneficial information for advertisers, as well as future research: *RQ3: What would make Facebook advertising more effective?*

### **III. Method**

#### ***Sample***

To address these questions, a survey of undergraduate students at four universities was conducted using the Facebook site. The participants were recruited from Elon University in North Carolina (n=125), Pomona College in California (n=69), Miami University in Ohio (n=108), and University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania (n=47). These four schools were chosen because they represent all different geographical regions of the country and, additionally, Miami and Pittsburgh represent relatively large (> 15,000 undergraduate students), public institutions, while Pomona and Elon represent relatively small (< 5,000 undergraduate students), private institutions. According to Gangadharbatla (2008), a student sample is a relevant and significant group, as college students fit the demographic of SNS users. As an incentive, students were offered the chance to win a \$15 iTunes gift card through one random selection per school.

#### **Design and Procedure**

Because the goal was to reach as many students at the four schools as possible, a simple survey was developed. The survey consisted of 12 questions, including three major sections: (1) demographic, (2) Facebook and advertising, and (3) privacy and perception. There was an optional box at the beginning of the survey for students to enter their e-mail addresses for a chance to win a \$15 iTunes gift card. With the exception of optionally providing an e-mail address, the survey was completely anonymous. Participants answered close-ended demographic questions regarding their year in school (freshman, sophomore, etc.) and gender. In the Facebook and advertising section, close-ended questions were asked regarding the number of Facebook “friends” the participant currently has, how often the participant checks his or her Facebook, and what Facebook “Applications” the participant has used. In terms of advertising, the participant was asked how aware he/she is of advertising on Facebook, and where he/she has seen advertising on Facebook.

In the privacy and perception section, participants were offered a chance to express how they feel about Facebook advertising, and relate this to their personal privacy. Participants were first asked about their current privacy settings on Facebook, in an effort to gauge their interest in protecting their personal information and identity. They were then asked about Facebook ads they have seen for their specific demographic, and were asked to share what specific ads they had seen. From this information, they were asked if this type of advertising changes their perception of privacy on Facebook, as well as their perception of the companies that advertise, and to elaborate if they so chose. In closing, the participants answered an open-ended ques-

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tion about how companies can utilize Facebook to advertise more effectively.

Four separate but identical surveys were hosted at Survey Monkey, which allows users to create their own web-based surveys ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)). To maximize the potential for a large quantity of participants, Facebook itself was utilized for maximum, quick, and fast exposure. Four Facebook “events” were created, specialized for each school, and the event included a description of my research, as well as a link to take the survey. Next, hundreds of students from each school were invited to their schools’ “event.” The survey stayed open for exactly one week during mid-November 2009.

## IV. Findings

The goal of this study was to see how Facebook users perceive the site and its advertisers. Each section of the survey provided information and opportunities for participants to honestly and openly express their perceptions, and give specific examples as to why they feel the way they do.

### *Demographic*

Out of the total amount of participants: 74.2% were female and 25.8% were male. For year in college, 2.3% were freshman, 14.9% were sophomores, 16.9% were juniors, and 65.9% were seniors. Individual school demographics were as follows:

Elon University:	Gender:	75.2% female, 24.8% male
	Year:	1.6% freshmen, 15.2% sophomores, 24.0% juniors, 59.2% seniors
Miami University:	Gender:	74.1% female, 25.9% male
	Year:	0.9% freshman, 17.6% sophomore, 9.3% junior, 72.2% senior
Pomona College:	Gender:	66.7% female, 33.3% male
	Year:	0.0% freshman, 4.3% sophomore, 23.3% junior, 72.5% senior
University of Pittsburgh:	Gender:	83.0% female, 17.0% male
	Year:	10.6% freshman, 23.4% sophomore, 6.4% junior, 59.6% senior

### *Facebook and Advertising*

Collectively, 48.1% of respondents had between 500 and 1,000 Facebook “friends,” and only 2 out of the total 349 had less than 100 friends. Miami matched that number with 48.1%, of respondents having between 500-1,000 friends, while at Elon, the highest response came at 1,000-1,500 friends (44.2% of respondents chose this option). Pittsburgh showed that 63.0% had between 500-1,000 friends, and Pomona had 55.2% of respondents fall in the 500-1,000 category.

In terms of Facebook usage, 80.1% of participant’s log-on to their Facebook *multiple* times daily, and 95% of the respondents check their Facebook at least once a day. At Pomona, 98.5% of students surveyed check their Facebook daily, and 95% of Elon students are logging on daily. Pittsburgh showed that 95.6% of participants were on Facebook at least once a day, and this number was 92.6% at Miami.

Across the board, 100% of participants used Applications on Facebook. All of the students used Facebook-generated Applications, such as events, photos, and groups. The next most popular application was “fan pages,” with a combined 66.2% of participants using this application (76.1% for Elon; 59.3%, Miami; 68.2%, Pomona; and 54.3%, Pitt). Games, quizzes, and gifts were spread out relatively evenly, with no percentage greater than 34.8% (which was for the quiz application at Pomona).

Advertising awareness varied by school, but 79% of respondents were aware of advertising on Facebook at least half of the times they log-on. Data from the individual schools in terms of advertising awareness is shown in Table 1.

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**Table 1. Logged-on users who were aware of advertising**

	100% of the time	75% of the time	50% of the time	25% of the time	0% of the time
Elon University	30.00%	25.00%	30.00%	12.50%	2.50%
Miami University	27.80%	20.40%	28.70%	22.20%	0.00%
Pomona College	25.40%	17.90%	26.90%	26.90%	3.00%
University of Pittsburgh	32.60%	23.90%	21.70%	17.40%	4.30%

Students had seen advertising in a variety of places on the site. As a whole, 39.8% of respondents saw advertising on applications; 82.0% saw advertising on their main page; 34.5% saw advertising when they write on a friend's wall for their birthday; and 83.2% saw advertising on the side bar of other people's profiles.

### ***Privacy and Perception***

In an analysis of all participants, the majority at every school considered their profile settings to be "strict," meaning only their Facebook friends can see all of their information, but they are searchable to other users. Of the total, 88.2% of respondents said that their current privacy settings on Facebook are "strict" or "very strict," meaning they do not appear in search results, and have an extremely limited profile. No respondents admitted that their Facebook pages were "extremely open," meaning that everything on their Facebook page can be seen by everyone. Only 4.7% students of Miami, 28.4% of Pomona, 13.0% of Pittsburgh, and 3.5% of Elon would consider their profile pages to be considered "open," meaning that friends and networks can access all of their information).

When asked about specific Facebook ads, 88.0% of total respondents have seen ads that directly target their demographic. Among those who saw nano-targeted advertising were 90.5% of Miami students and 84.4% of Pittsburgh respondents. At Pomona, the percentage was 83.9%, and at Elon it was 87.7%. Some of the ads seen by all of the schools included t-shirts for shows they like, law school advertising, dating services for the newly single, internships in their specific majors, study abroad, sorority merchandise, housing in the area where they live, etc.

After describing the highly targeted ads, participants were asked if these ads change their perceptions of privacy on the site. For this question, respondents were split. Collectively, 54.7% of students thought that the ads did *not* change their perception of privacy, but this majority did not hold up at all schools. At Miami, only 40.6% of students said the ads changed their perception of privacy, followed by 45.7% at Pittsburgh and 45.6% at Elon. However, Pomona was slightly swayed in the opposite direction, with 52.2% of respondents thinking that the advertising changed their perception of privacy. Respondents at Pomona cited the following as reasons for the change: invasion of privacy, feeling less secure, or questioning why the information is accessible when privacy settings are strict. Each school had respondents that expressed concern over their privacy on Facebook, but the results were not particularly clear either way.

When asked how they felt about the companies that create this highly targeted advertising, the majority of respondents at each school answered that the advertising did not change their perception of the company (a total of 66.7% of students).

However, each school did have some who disagreed. The number of students who said that they saw the companies in a new light because of advertisements reached 28.3% at Miami, 38.8% at Pomona, 34.2% at Elon, and 34.8% at Pittsburgh. Their perception of the companies, as described by one exact word they used, is shown page 30. in Table 2.

**Table 2. Common Perceptions of Companies by Facebook Users**

Open-Ended Answer	Elon	Miami	Pomona	Pittsburgh	Total
Relevant	1	5	1	2	9
Manipulative	4	1	6	0	11
Smart	4	4	2	3	13
Less credible/legitimate	3	3	1	3	10
Technologically savvy	2	2	2	4	10
Desperate	4	0	3	1	8

In the last question, respondents were asked to give constructive criticism, and respond as to how they thought Facebook could be used to advertise more effectively. Table 3 below shows the top eight common responses.

**Table 3. Suggestions for more Effective Advertising on Facebook (unit: response)**

Open-Ended Answer	Elon	Miami	Pomona	Pittsburgh	Total
Not advertise at all	8	6	8	5	27
Keep it the way it is	6	12	5	5	28
More targeted ads	5	10	4	2	21
Less targeted ads	5	4	3	3	15
Not sure	4	3	5	2	14
Fan pages	5	3	1	3	12
Incentives	3	4	3	2	12
More creative/exciting	9	7	8	3	27

## V. Discussion

Based on the results generated from the surveys, a number of inferences can be made. First, the average participant had between 500-1,000 Facebook friends. This number is significant, because according to Facebook's Statistics (2009), the average user on the site only has 130 friends. This may indicate that the participants in this survey are more active on the site, and know more fellow "Facebookers" than the average user.

Another significant statistic was that only 5% of participants did *not* log-on to their Facebook account on a daily basis. According to Social Peel (2009), 70% of college students log-on daily, making this particular group of college students even more active on Facebook than the average college student. The fact that all participants used applications was expected, as participants were told about the survey through a Facebook event (which is technically an application). The next most popular application set was the fan page, which over 66% of respondents use/visit. This should be noteworthy to companies and potential advertisers, as it is a free way to get Facebook users connected to a specific brand or product. The rest of the application types did not get enough respondents from the participants to be as important in the same sense.

The study proved that the majority of students are fully aware of advertising on Facebook, with less than 5% of respondents from each school not noticing it at all (at Miami, every student noticed the advertising). The most common places these ads were seen were on the "news feed" home page, and on the side bar of other people's profiles. These are typically displayed as traditional banner ads, and the fact that students did not notice ads in other places (i.e. in Platform applications) could indicate that they are not fully aware of untraditional advertising on Facebook.

In terms of privacy, all students surveyed had taken some precautions and modified their privacy settings on Facebook. All participants knew what their settings were—and none classified themselves as having "extremely open" profiles. This indicates that the students are concerned and aware that their information may leak out to third parties. This may also correlate with the fact that the majority of respondents have seen

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microtargeted ads, specifically to their demographic. Although participants gave many examples of these nanotargeted ads, it did not necessarily change the way the students thought about Facebook or its advertisers. Participants were split in terms of whether or not it changed their perception, and even when their perception was changed, it was not necessarily for the worse. This indicates that there was not an overall consensus as to the effects of advertising on Facebook users.

It may seem obvious that students would prefer the advertising not to exist in the first place; however, less than 30% of all respondents suggested that Facebook stop advertisements all together. For effective advertising, many suggested ideas, such as give-aways, promotions, and more eye-popping advertisements to catch a user's attention. Advertisers should use this information to their advantage when pursuing an advertising campaign on Facebook.

## VI. Conclusion

This study took a critical look at Facebook advertising and how it affects the users of the social networking site. As of now, there is no conclusive data as to a "universal" perception of Facebook advertising. This conclusion directly relates to the uses and gratification theory mentioned in the literature review. This study was limited because it could not be entirely random due to limitations in contacting students at the participating colleges. Also, the manner in which the survey was advertised limited the participants to students who checked their Facebooks during that particular week in November. Therefore, less frequent Facebook users were not represented in the results.

In order to further understand how to effectively advertise on social networking sites, more research should be conducted. It would be beneficial to follow a specific company who is advertising on Facebook, and see how the company grows or changes as a result of social network exposure.

## Acknowledgments

The author would like to extend sincere thanks to Professor Haygood at Elon University for his guidance, suggestions, and the amount of time spent helping with research techniques for this article. The author would also like to thank the numerous participants and reviewers who have significantly strengthened this work.

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## Appendix

### Survey Questions:

#### *Demographic*

**a. What is your gender?**

- i. Male    ii. Female

**b. What is your class year?**

- ii. Freshman    ii. Sophomore    iii. Junior    iv. Senior

#### *Facebook and Advertising*

**a. How many current Facebook ‘friends’ do you have?**

- iii. Less than 100    ii. 100-500    iii. 500-1,000    iv. 1,000-1,500  
v. 1,500-2,000    vi. Over 2,000

**b. How often do you check your Facebook?**

- i. Multiple times a day    ii. Once a day    iii. A few times a week  
iv. A few times a month    v. Hardly ever

**c. What Facebook ‘Applications’ have you used?**

- i. Events, Photos, Groups (Facebook-generated Applications)  
ii. Games (Farmville, Jetman, Mafia Wars, etc.)  
iii. Quizzes (Social Interview, Quiz Monster, etc.)  
iv. Fan Pages (Being a “fan” of a product or service)  
v. Gifts (Giftshop items—including virtual and real gifts)

**d. To what extent are you aware of advertising on Facebook?**

- i. I am aware of advertising 100% of the time I go on Facebook  
ii. I am aware of advertising 75% of the time I go on Facebook  
iii. I am aware of advertising 50% of the time I go on Facebook  
iv. I am aware of advertising 25% of the time I go on Facebook  
v. I am not aware of advertising on Facebook

**e. Where do you see advertising on Facebook?**

- i. In Facebook “Applications”  
ii. On the main homepage  
iii. When I write a wall post for a friend’s birthday  
iii. On the side bar of other people’s profiles
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## ***Privacy and Perception***

### **a. What are your current privacy settings on Facebook?**

- i. Extremely Strict (Extremely limited profile page, I do not appear in search results or news feed, pictures are blocked, etc.)
- ii. Strict (Only my “friends” can see all my information, but I am searchable)
- iii. Open (My friends AND networks can see all my information, and I am searchable)
- iv. Extremely Open (Everyone can see everything about me)
- v. I have no idea

### **b. Have you seen Facebook ads targeted toward your specific demographic? (for example, job opportunities for recent or soon-to-be college graduates?)**

- i. Yes (If so, briefly describe this experience):
- ii. No

### **c. Does Facebook advertising change your perception of PRIVACY on the site?**

- i. Yes (If so, how?)
- ii. No

### **d. Does Facebook advertising change your perception of the COMPANIES that advertise (Do you see them as smarter, more relevant, etc. or as less ethical, more manipulative, etc.?)**

- i. Yes (If so, how?)
- ii. No

### **e. How do you think companies could use Facebook to advertise more effectively?**

# Iconic Photos of the Vietnam War Era: A Semiotic Analysis as a Means of Understanding

Angie Lovelace\*

Elon University

## Abstract

*The Vietnam War was defined as the “first televised war,” but it has been the still photos, the single frames, that have carved its place in history. Eddie Adams’ image of the execution of a Viet Cong member on the streets of Saigon and Nick Ut’s photo of a little girl running naked down the street after being burned by napalm are two examples of “iconic” photos as defined by scholars. These iconic photos have appeared repeatedly in the media, they have been reused and repurposed by popular culture, and they appear in history books as visual representations of the war. For this study, a synthesis of previous literature on the photographs, and a semiotic analysis examined five iconic photos in order to determine the common qualities of a photograph that catapulted these specific photos to iconic status. Results indicated the common threads of emotional outrage, the portrayal of innocence, and the sense of powerlessness existed among the iconic photos.*

## I. Introduction

Prior to the Vietnam War, censorship in war reporting was used to prevent damage to the spirits on the home front as well as prevent the opposing side from gaining significant information.<sup>1</sup> According to Daniel Hallin (1986), Vietnam was the first war in which journalists were not subjected to official censorship, in large part because the United States government did not recognize Vietnam as an official war. Americans saw the first televised war in their living rooms, and U.S. media gave citizens more information about Vietnam than it had in any prior conflict.<sup>2</sup>

News photographs added significantly to the impact of words in print media, contributing to the significant role the media played in the Vietnam War.<sup>3</sup> The Vietnam War was a turning point for photojournalism. According to Robert Elegant (1981), it was the first war in which the outcome was not determined on the battlefield, but rather in print.<sup>4</sup> Brothers (1997) found that photographs of the Vietnam War “influenced public

\* **Keywords:** Iconic Photographs, Semiotic Analysis, Vietnam War, Kent State, Self-Immolation, Tet Execution, My Lai Massacre, Accidental Napalm

Email: [angie.lovelace4@gmail.com](mailto:angie.lovelace4@gmail.com)

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1 Daniel C. Hallin, *The “Uncensored War”* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986): 127.

2 Sidney W. Head and Christopher H. Sterling, *Broadcasting in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), 537-539.

3 Ulf Hannerz, *Foreign News: Exploring the World of Foreign Correspondents* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).

4 Robert Elegant, “How to Lose a War: Reflections of a Foreign Correspondent,” *Encounter* 57

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attitudes to the hostilities.”<sup>5</sup>

Photographs are a valuable source of information in the media because, as many studies have shown, visual images are recalled more quickly and for a longer time than words.<sup>6</sup> Domke, Perlmutter, and Spratt (2003) found that images have the ability to “trigger” people’s pre-existing values, cognitions, and feelings. These pre-existing ideas can reflect how an image is interpreted.<sup>7</sup> Mendelson (2003) found that photos are more or less significant based on the viewer’s learning styles because high visualizers are able to store information about individual news photographs, recognize news photographs to be less complex than the written word, and find photographs more appealing than those who are not visual learners.<sup>8</sup> Historical conditions are also important to the understanding of a photograph.<sup>9</sup>

If people have different learning styles, and some individuals are more susceptible to remembering and digesting visual images, how is it that certain “icon images” are claimed to be understood and recognized by everyone? According to Hariman and Lucaites (2007), Nick Ut’s “Accidental Napalm” photograph is the defining image of the Vietnam War because “that little girl will not go away, despite many attempts at forgetting,” and it confronts U.S. citizens with the immorality of the war.<sup>10</sup> Hariman and Lucaites (2001) defined iconic images as those that are recognized by everyone, are understood to be representations of historically significant events, activate strong emotional responses, and are regularly reproduced across a range of media, genres, or topics.<sup>11</sup> Iconic photos also can motivate public action on behalf of democratic values.<sup>12</sup> Michael Griffin (1999) said the “great pictures” typically symbolize national valor, human courage, inconceivable inhumanity, or senseless loss.<sup>13</sup>

Perlmutter (1998) found that iconic images are created and kept in circulation by media elites.<sup>14</sup> Perlmutter also defined many qualities of an icon image, including celebrity, prominence, frequency, profit, instantaneousness, transposability, frame of subjects, importance of event, metonymy, primordially and/or cultural resonance, and striking composition. He said that an icon provokes a strong negative reaction, or outrage. Contrary to popular beliefs, Perlmutter found that the population as a whole is not familiar with “icon images.”<sup>15</sup>

## II. Methods

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(1981): 73-86.

5 Caroline Brothers, *War and Photography* (London: Routledge, 1997): 1.

6 Joseph R. Jenkins, D.C. Neale and S.L. Deno, “Differential Memory for Picture and Word Stimuli,” *Journal of Educational Psychology* 58 (1967): 303-7 and J.G. Anglin and W.H. Levie, “Role of Visual Richness in Picture Recognition Memory,” *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 61 (1985): 1303-6.

7 David Domke, David Perlmutter, and Meg Spratt, “The Primes of our Times? An Examination of the ‘Power’ of Visual Images,” *Journalism* 3 (2003): 131-59.

8 Andrew Mendelson, “For Whom is a Picture Worth a Thousand Words? How does the Visualizing Cognitive Style Affect Processing of News Photos?” Conference Papers – International Communication Association 2003 Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA: 1-30.

9 Wendy Kozol, *Life’s America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994): 6.

10 Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photos, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007): 173.

11 Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, “Dissent and Emotional Management in a Liberal-Democratic Society: The Kent State Iconic Photography,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* (2001): 4-31.

12 Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, “Public Identity and Collective Memory in U.S. Iconic Photography: The Image of ‘Accidental Napalm’,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2003): 35-66.

13 Michael Griffin, “The Great War Photographs: Constructing Myths of History and Photojournalism,” in *Picturing the Past: Media, History, and Photography*, ed. Bonnie Brennen and Hanno Hardt (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 131.

14 David D. Perlmutter. *Photojournalism and Foreign Policy*. (Westport: Praeger, 1998): 1-34.

15 Perlmutter, *Photojournalism*, 1-34.

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The methods of this research will be a synthesis of the literature on the iconic photos and a semiotic analysis of the chosen photos, searching for themes and gaining an emotional understanding of the images. This research study will examine five iconic photos of the Vietnam War era. The photos include John Paul Filo's "Kent State" (1970), Malcolm Brown's "Self-Immolation" (1963), Eddie Adams' "Tet Execution" (1968), Ronald Haeberle's "My Lai Massacre" (1968), and Nick Ut's "Accidental Napalm" (1972).<sup>16</sup> According to Sturken, all of these photos include depictions of horror, challenge ideological narratives, and have acquired far greater currency than any video of the war. The photos "acquired iconic status by shocking the American public and creating widespread disillusionment over the United States' role in the war."<sup>17</sup> To gain a deeper understanding of the photos, this study will use semiotics to place the photos in a cultural context and examine recurring patterns and meanings to fully understand the photos.

This semiotic analysis will follow the method of Mendelson and Smith (2006), first identifying the signs in the images, then determining what the signs signify, and lastly exploring the meanings of the signs in a cultural context; in this case, the context of the Vietnam War era.<sup>18</sup> The purpose of a semiotic analysis is to understand the meaning of the image, "which arises from understanding the social context in which the images were produced and within the images themselves, as well as from the minds of the audience members."<sup>19</sup> The patterns of composition, specifically the vantage point of the photographer as well as the cultural meaning of the subject matter must be taken into consideration.<sup>20</sup>

According to Messaris (1994), some aspects of the composition can communicate different meanings to the audience. The audience is more likely to identify with a subject that is in the foreground of a photo rather than in the background. The more a subject is turned to the camera, the more open they are to being understood by the viewer. And lastly, a subject taken from a high angle is considered powerless while those taken from a low angle tend to be viewed as having more power.<sup>21</sup>

Through the method of a semiotic analysis of the five iconic photos, this study attempted to understand the common qualities that catapulted specific photos of the Vietnam War era to iconic status?

### III. Findings and Analysis

#### Photo 1: Kent State



The Kent State Massacre occurred on May 4, 1970, when soldiers of the Ohio National Guard opened fire on students who were protesting the Vietnam War. Thirteen students were shot, killing four. Student photographer John Filo took a photo of a girl screaming out over a body lying on the pavement and the photo went out on the AP wire later that day. That photo would become an iconic photo of the Kent State Massacre and the Vietnam War.

According to the categories that Perlmutter uses to define the qualities of an iconic photo, the Kent State photo is iconic because it has a celebrity quality, meaning people recognize the photo, it instantaneously achieved fame, and it shows a significant historical event. The subject of

<sup>16</sup> These photos are defined as iconic images by Hariman and Lucaites (2007) and Sturken (1997).

<sup>17</sup> Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997): 89-94.

<sup>18</sup> Andrew L. Mendelson and C. Zoe Smith, "Vision of a New State: Israel as Mythologized by Robert Capa," *Journalism Studies* 7 (2006): 191.

<sup>19</sup> Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies* (London: Sage Publications, 2001): 69.

<sup>20</sup> Mendelson and Smith, "Vision of a New State," 191.

<sup>21</sup> Paul, Messaris, *Visual "Literacy" Image, Mind, & Reality* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1994).



the photo is not famous, and therefore does not fit into Perlmutter's category of fame because, as he states, only a handful of people alive today could identify the woman kneeling over the body.<sup>22</sup>

The Kent State photo has been studied excessively by scholars, finding that much of the power of the photo comes from the expression of outrage on the woman's face. According to Hariman and Luciates, "The girl's cry is a direct demand for accountability and compensatory action."<sup>23</sup> The feeling on her face is powerful not only because of its expressiveness but also because it matches the political situation represented by the photograph.<sup>24</sup> The woman draws attention onto herself, away from the boy who is lying in front of her, presumably dead, because of her intense emotional response. In their book *No Caption Needed*, Hariman and Luciates said, "Her scream seems to be ripping out of her heart, spontaneous, uninhibited, and unanswerable—almost if she had been the one shot."<sup>25</sup>

Hariman and Luciates also believe that the photo has become an icon for the event because the photo is gendered. A woman is a more appropriate vessel for a public emotional response. The woman is positioned between two males, the one lying motionless on the ground and the one standing beside her, seemingly unmoved.<sup>26</sup> Hariman and Luciates also pointed out that the Kent State girl acts as a ventriloquist for the murdered body on the pavement.<sup>27</sup>

One of the less than praising aspects of the photo, as Perlmutter pointed out, is that this photo is technically poor; it violates the techniques of photography because "a fence post grows out of the woman's head."<sup>28</sup> This compositional error prevents it from falling into the striking composition category that Perlmutter has determined a quality of an iconic photo.

### **Photo 1 -- Semiotic Analysis**

The victim in the photograph is lying face down. His hair is disheveled and he is wearing a jacket and pants. His clothing has no identifying qualities. His face is hidden and thus his identity is hidden as well. This anonymity of the victim creates a national interest. He could be anyone. He could be any college student—anyone's son, brother, or friend. The anonymity of the victim yields to national outrage and could have created a sympathy and anger on a larger scale than if his face had been clearly shown.

The girl who is crying out in anguish is the focal point of the photograph as her body is open towards the photographer. The emotion on her face is communicated to the viewer and conveys the outrage that she is feeling. Her arms extend out, almost as if she is reaching for something that is not there. She is expressing a loss that she cannot fully grasp onto or understand. Her body posture is similar to the posture of Mary that is commonly represented in the Pieta. Her arms are outstretched as if she should be holding the lifeless Jesus, who in this case is represented by the victim. This creates a maternal quality in the girl and further strengthens the gendered quality of the photo that Hariman and Luciates have established. She also has a white scarf around her neck, which could be a symbol of peace or neutrality, a peace that did not occur that day.

The boy standing in the foreground is looking away, showing disinterest or confusion. His face is hidden by his long hair, which shows ambiguity and rebellion. The boy behind him, with his back to the camera has two holes in the butt of his jeans. Again showing rebellion, this also conveys the idea of being shot or hurt.

The fence in the photograph has been the site of controversy over the years, but the fence also raises questions about the landscape. What was the purpose of the fence? Was it there to keep the students in and the national guard out? It represents a barrier that should not have been crossed. The students should have been safe on a college campus, but that barrier was broken and four were killed.

This photo communicated the anguish and frustration that the nation felt in reaction to the event that took place at Kent State. The anguish on the face of the girl represented the emotions and internal turmoil

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22 Perlmutter, *Photojournalism*, 16.

23 Hariman and Luciates, "Dissent," 9.

24 Hariman and Luciates, "Dissent," 8.

25 Hariman and Luciates, *No Caption Needed*, 140-1.

26 Hariman and Luciates, "Dissent," 8-9.

27 Hariman and Luciates, "Public Identity," 56.

28 Perlmutter, *Photojournalism*, 18.

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that the students at Kent State were protesting about the draft and the war in Vietnam. That anguish was catapulted to a national level due to the anonymity of the victim who was gunned down by the National Guard who should have been protecting him.

### Photo 2: Self-Immolation



The “Burning Monk” photograph was taken by Malcolm Browne on June 11, 1963, when Thich Quang Duc sat down in a busy Saigon intersection and set fire to himself to protest the South Vietnamese government. A march of 300 Buddhist monks and nuns blocked all entrances to the intersection while fellow monks poured a combustible mixture on Thich Quang Duc. He struck a match and was instantaneously engulfed in flames.<sup>29</sup> This photograph was one of the first to introduce Americans to the conflict in Vietnam and “its undeniable force transfixed the attention of the American public on the dramatic events portrayed.”<sup>30</sup>

According to Perlmutter, this photo is one that exemplifies the emotional reactions that iconic images incite. “Typically, the picture is annotated as one that occasioned a reaction of “shock and dismay.”<sup>31</sup> When he saw the photo for the first time, “President Kennedy’s reaction was undoubtedly similar to that of many others, as he was heard to exclaim ‘Jesus Christ,’ when the morning papers were delivered to him.”<sup>32</sup>

According to Hariman and Luciates, the photo indicated that the Saigon government was so powerless that it could not put out the flames as the body burned.<sup>33</sup>

### Photo 2 -- Semiotic Analysis

In the photograph, the flames are consuming a man and are blowing to the right in the wind. Dark, heavy smoke is coming off of the flames and is hiding the background in the top right corner. The flames are chaotic and look like they could not be contained, but yet they are very focused in the specific area surrounding the man.

The right side of the man burning can be seen fairly clearly. His head is shaved and he is sitting straight up. His posture indicates that he is not scared or stressed, but that he is sitting there with patience and purpose, letting the flames consume him. His posture shows that this is an act of suicide not an act of murder. He is not trying to escape or resist the flames; instead he is allowing them to kill him.

To the left there is a gas can, indicating that the flames are burning on gasoline that has been poured on the man. The gas can is an important element that helps to tell the story of the photograph. As the gas can helps to tell the story, the car with its hood up behind the burning body adds confusion to the photo. The background is lined with people all wearing white robes. The robes are atypical and indicate that they have a religious, or group affiliation. The white indicates neutrality or peace. The people are looking on, observing the act that is occurring in front of them, but doing nothing to stop it.

This was a protest photograph, but the purpose of self-immolation was lost on many Westerners. The exact purpose of the protest might have been lost along the way, but the patience that the monk demonstrated as he experienced the agony of being burned alive communicated his desire for change. The monk died to communicate his message, but it was Malcolm Browne’s photographs that drew international attention on Indochina.

29 Lisa Skow and George Dionisopoulos, “A Struggle to Contextualize Photographic Images: American Print Media and the ‘Burning Monk,’” *Communication Quarterly* Vol. 45 No. 4 (1997): 393-4.

30 Skow and Dionisopoulos, “A Struggle to Contextualize Photographic Images,” 396.

31 Perlmutter, *Photojournalism*, 20.

32 Skow and Dionisopoulos, “A Struggle to Contextualize Photographic Images,” 396.

33 Hariman and Luciates, “Public Identity,” 56.

### Photo 3: Tet Execution



The photograph that has become known as the “Tet Execution” captured the precise moment that a Viet Cong prisoner was executed at point-blank range. Brigadier General Nguyen Ngoc Loan, chief of the South Vietnamese National Police, shot the prisoner with a small Smith & Weston detective pistol in front of AP photographer Eddie Adams, as well as NBC and ABC camera crews. The execution was aired on television, but it was the still photograph that captured the “decisive moment.”<sup>34</sup> According to Sturken, this photo acquired far greater currency than the video footage of the event: The photograph highlights the facial expressions and circulated more

easily, while the video footage of the events is actually more chaotic and horrific.<sup>35</sup> The photo won the Pulitzer Prize for spot news photography in 1969.

“Eddie Adams’ still photo appeared on the front page of most major newspapers; it was to be reprinted *ad infinitum* in magazines and books to the present day,” fulfilling both the instantaneous and prominence categories of an icon.<sup>36</sup> The photo’s prominence in the media yielded the credit of changing the course of history.<sup>37</sup> Eddie Adams said, “Still photographs are the most powerful weapons in the world.”<sup>38</sup>

The photo has a striking composition because it shows the two subjects with the gun in the center. “Its simplicity is crucial—the war depicted in this photograph is man against man, not the complex war of bombs, defoliation, and unseen enemies.”<sup>39</sup> The photo “became famous for its depiction of the indiscriminate brutality of the war.”<sup>40</sup> The executioner’s businesslike manner and lack of emotion indicate that this situation is routine.<sup>41</sup> And the Viet Cong’s expression of the unknown creates an empathy with the viewers. Hariman and Luciates describe the Viet Cong’s expression as one that might be seen in a dentist’s office.<sup>42</sup>

### Photo 3 -- Semiotic Analysis

In the photograph of the Tet Execution, the influence of the camera must be taken into account. The executioner must have been aware of the cameras pointed at him when he chose to point his gun at the Viet Cong prisoner. He turned his body and face away from the cameras, thus concealing his expression and the purpose in his action. On the other hand, the face of the victim reveals the emotions of fear and anguish as he is being shot.

The victim’s disheveled, plaid shirt is the opposite of the typical camouflage pattern of a military uniform, which would be kept in place representing pride. The way he is dressed indicates to a casual viewer that he is not a military party, but rather that he is a citizen who is being shot in cold blood. He received no trial, but instead was shot at point-blank range in the deserted street. He also was not shot with a machine gun or a rifle that a military soldier would typically carry, but a pistol, increasing the inhumanity of the act because it no longer represents a military action, but intimate hatred between two men, or in this case, a hatred between the two sides of the conflict.

The uneven distribution of power can be seen in the arms of the two characters. The shooter’s arm is extended out horizontally. As he clinches the trigger, the muscles in his arm are accentuated, showing the power that he is exerting over his victim. The Viet Cong man’s arms cannot be seen; they are tied behind his

34 Perlmutter, *Photojournalism*, 35.

35 Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, 89-94.

36 Perlmutter, *Photojournalism*, 36.

37 Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, 93.

38 *Time Magazine*, July 27, 1998.

39 Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, 93.

40 Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, 93.

41 Hariman and Luciates, “Public Identity,” 56.

42 Hariman and Luciates, “Public Identity,” 56.

back, stripping him of his power and leaving him there with no way to fight back. He is also standing motionless, no one is holding him, but he is not trying to run away. He has accepted his fate and is not even trying to turn his body; he is not cowering from the gun and his imminent fate.

The soldier to the left of the frame is gritting his teeth, the emotion on his face mirrors the gruesome act that he is watching. He is wearing a helmet, which creates irony because the Viet Cong would have benefited from a helmet at this point in time, as he is being shot in the head.

This photo created an empathy for the victim and villainized the shooter. One could not understand the situation from the photo, but could empathize with the victim and deem this action inhumane. This scenario is echoed in the lack of understanding for the two opposing sides in the Vietnam War and the misunderstanding for the need to take life during the conflict. The photo shows an inhumane act that emphasizes the inhumanity of the Vietnam War as a whole.

#### Photo 4: My Lai Massacre



On March 16, 1968, the men of Charlie Company under the command of First Lieutenant William Calley expected to find the Viet Cong. They found no enemy soldiers, only old men, women, and children, but they still killed them all in what would later be referred to as the My Lai Massacre. Army photographer Ronald Haeberle accompanied the troops to My Lai that day and turned in a few black-and-white self-censored photographs of the infantrymen and Vietnamese huts. However, on his personal color film camera, he took photos of the atrocities and murders that occurred that day.

On November 20, Haeberle gave the exclusive rights to the photos to *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* and an unusually large photo of a tangle of bodies, that were clearly women and children, was printed at the top of the front page. The photos were later reproduced in newspapers and magazines around the world, including in the *New York Post* and the *New York Times*.<sup>43</sup> The photo became known as “And Babies?” and was used as evidence during the court proceedings that resulted in the conviction of Calley.

Scholars have studied the photo, and Sturken claimed that it “acquired iconic status by shocking the American public and creating widespread disillusionment over the U.S. role in the war.”<sup>44</sup> Sturken also said that the photograph “depicts terror and American atrocities in intimate detail.”<sup>45</sup> According to Goldberg, “The ‘And Babies?’ photograph got loose in the culture as an easily recognized symbol of what was wrong with America.”<sup>46</sup>

Scholars have studied the photo, and Sturken claimed that it “acquired iconic status by shocking the American public and creating widespread disillusionment over the U.S. role in the war.”<sup>44</sup> Sturken also said that the photograph “depicts terror and American atrocities in intimate detail.”<sup>45</sup> According to Goldberg, “The ‘And Babies?’ photograph got loose in the culture as an easily recognized symbol of what was wrong with America.”<sup>46</sup>

#### Photo 4 -- Semiotic Analysis

This photograph was taken from a high angle, portraying the subjects as powerless, emphasizing the obvious, as they are all dead. Everyone in the photo is horizontal, a rarity as people are typically represented vertically. The tangle of bodies creates confusion. Confusion for the viewer to visually untangle the horror that they are looking at and also representing the confusion that the people must have experienced as they were being gunned down.

The focal point of this photo is a baby’s rear, drawing attention to the innocent children who were killed in the massacre. As you look at the people along the road, the composition continues down the road where there are more bodies scattered about. When the frame cuts off the road, the viewer is only left to wonder if there are even more bodies off in the distance.

43 Vicki Goldberg, *The Power of Photography: How Photographs Changed our Lives*, (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991): 229-36.

44 Sturken, 94

45 Sturken, 93

46 Goldberg, *The Power of Photography*, 236.



One body is lying face up with his/her legs spread open and both hands covering the genitals. This covering prevents the viewer from knowing whether or not the body is male or female. If one was to assume that the body was a woman, which would help to explain why she is not wearing any pants: Was she trying to protect herself in the last moments of life? Did she fear rape or other actions by the soldiers who were gunning her and the other people down? All of the people in the photo are barefoot indicating that they were powerless to run away.

In the landscape of the photo, there is a fence running along the road. The fence could have trapped them in, preventing them from running away. The fence also appears to be bent down, indicating that it could have been trampled as people tried to escape. This is the only photo of the five iconic photos in this study that was taken in color. In this photo, the color creates contrast. The green grass that borders the road is full of life, it is the only life left in the photo as it surrounds the dead bodies on the road.

The shocking gruesome qualities of this photo were shocking to Americans when they were confronted with the atrocities of the My Lai Massacre. At first they did not believe that their soldiers would commit such inhumane atrocities, but the photo created the evidence that forced Americans to believe. After seeing this one photo, they were forced to conceive that this massacre might not have been the only one, simply the only one that there was evidence of.

### **Photo 5: Accidental Napalm**



The “Accidental Napalm” photo was taken by AP photographer Nick Ut on June 8, 1972, near Trang Bang in South Vietnam. The photo shows children fleeing in terror, with the focus on nine-year-old Phan Thi Kim Phuc, in the center, who ripped off her burning clothes after she was splashed by napalm. There was a brief editorial debate about whether to print a photo involving nudity, but it was subsequently published all over the world the next day.<sup>47</sup>

According to Hariman and Luciates, “The photo violates one set of norms in order to activate another; propriety is set aside for a moral purpose. It is a picture that shouldn’t be shown of an event that shouldn’t have happened.”<sup>48</sup> Sturken claimed that the young, female,

naked figure represents the victimized, feminized country of Vietnam.” □

There is a stark contrast between the soldiers and the children, the soldiers’ business as usual attitude contrasts with the girl’s pain and terror. The soldiers show that this seemingly rare event is not all that uncommon. The soldiers are supposed to be protecting the children, but they are merely herding them down the road. □

This photo ignites a strong emotional response. According to Hariman and Luciates, “The dramatic charge of the photo comes from its evocation of pity and terror.” □ Pain is the central frame of the photo. “The photograph projects her pain into our world.” □ The child that is closest to the camera, in the foreground, has a look of terror on his face, resembling Eduard Munch’s famous drawing of “The Scream.”

Sturken claims this photo is one of the most famous images of the Vietnam War and among one of the most widely recognized photographs in American photojournalism. □

### **Photo 5 -- Semiotic Analysis**

The focus of this photo is the little girl who is nude in the center of the photo. She is screaming in pain and her arms are stretched out from her body. The photo provides no details of why she is in pain or why she is naked. The caption that accompanied the photo said that she was burned by napalm and ripped her clothes off of her because they were burning. Her nudity represents innocence, an innocence that has been taken away from her by the war. The children are running right at the camera, creating an intensity and haste. The photographer who took the photo was taller than the children, therefore shooting from above the subjects

47 Hariman and Luciates, “Public Identity,” 39.

48 Hariman and Luciates, “Public Identity,” 41.



and deeming them powerless.

The boy who is in the foreground of the photo has a look of terror on his face. He is also closest to the camera of all of the characters so the viewer is more emotionally connected to him. He is also depicted as innocent because of the shorts he is wearing. The shorts indicate youth where pants would have indicated maturity.

The soldiers behind the children appear to be herding the children, moving them along away from the danger. The authority of the soldiers over the children raises questions about their parents. Where are their parents? Were they killed in the fighting? Are these orphans? The soldiers' actions create a notion that they are herding the children, and that the Vietnamese are animals that need to be tamed and controlled by the Americans. In the background of the photo, the smoke from the fire can be seen. The dark smoke represents the dark, ominous, and dangerous situation that is occurring in Vietnam.

## IV. Conclusions

Through this research, the combination of literary scholarship and a semiotic analysis of iconic images from the Vietnam War uncovered the common threads of emotional outrage, the portrayal of innocence, and the sense of powerlessness. The first consistent theme that emerged throughout all of the photos studied was emotion: the emotions that the characters in the photos presented as well as the emotions that are triggered by the photos to the viewer. Perlmutter's idea that an icon provokes a strong negative reaction or outrage was supported by all of the photos.

All of the photos with the exception of the My Lai Massacre photo conveyed emotions through the characters in the photos. In the Kent State photo the girl clearly conveys emotion as she cries out in anguish. In the self-immolation photo, the monk portrays patience and determination, emotions that conflict with those of Americans who saw the photo. The photo of the execution that took place in the streets of Saigon shows the fear of the captive and the hate of the police chief. The little girl who is running naked in the napalm photo demonstrates fear, panic, and pain. The exception of this rule is the photo of the My Lai Massacre, but only because all of the figures in the photograph are lying dead and no longer able to convey emotions. The only emotions that they can communicate are the ones that the viewer can imagine they were feeling in the moments before their deaths.

The semiotic analysis of these photos indicated that they would ignite strong emotional responses by the viewer. Some of the common characteristics that these photos show are death, pain, and suffering. The common viewer would experience strong negative reactions to seeing all of these photos, which is why Perlmutter deemed them "icons of outrage."

Another common theme found through the semiotic analysis was innocence. The killing of the innocent, which, with the help of these photographs, became a common theme of the Vietnam War. In the photograph taken at Kent State, the victim was a student who had been protesting, a right he should have had in America. He was portrayed as a student, not a soldier, whose life was taken because of the war. In the execution photo, the victim is dressed as a civilian, not a soldier. His hands are tied behind his back and he is murdered at point-blank range there in the streets. He was identified as a Viet Cong man, but the photo cannot convey that, the photo shows he was executed without a trial, thus his innocence or guilt could not be determined. He was not taken as a prisoner of war, but was shot; all of these details were not consistent with the American concept of war.

In both the My Lai Massacre photo and "Accidental Napalm," innocent children were the focus of the photograph. The My Lai photo shows small children and babies who were gunned down, murdered for no apparent reason. The baby's rear as the focal point of the photo emphasizes the child's innocence as well as the greater innocence of all of the victims. As the children flee the jungle in the napalm photo, the little girl's nudity represents her young age as well as her innocence that has been stripped from her because of the war. It is also apparent that there are no parents in the photo, only the children. They are alone and one of the girls has taken up the maternal role, helping a younger child. All of these children represent innocence, an innocence that the war has stolen from them.

All of these photos also show the people as powerless. The Kent State girl is powerless because she cannot save the boy or understand the senseless killing. The burning monk is powerless to the flames and

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in a greater capacity than the frame of the photo can portray, the South Vietnamese government is powerless because they cannot stop the protest. The Viet Cong prisoner is powerless because he cannot control his imminent death. The My Lai victims are obviously powerless because they lay dead in the road, but also because they had no means to fight back against the soldiers who murdered them. Finally, the little girl is powerless to the napalm burning her skin and the war that is occurring in her country. All of these photos show the victims as powerless, but the viewers of the photographs were also powerless. They were shown the war catapulting out of control by the media, but they were essentially powerless to stop it. Only as their dissent grew did the administration start to hear them, but by this point it was too late—too late for the victims in these photos, photos that have so far withstood the test of time as iconic photos, as well as the countless thousands who were killed in Vietnam because of an ideological battle against the spread of communism.

## Acknowledgments

This author is thankful to Drs. David Copeland and Harlen Makemson at Elon University for their supervision and advice, without which the article could not be published. The author also appreciates numerous reviewers who have helped revise this article.

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# Modern Portrayals of Journalism in Film

Alexa Milan\*

Senior majoring in Journalism  
Elon University

## Abstract

*As the journalism profession has evolved, so has the portrayal of journalism onscreen. Based on trends in past journalism films explored by scholars and research about current trends in the industry, it is hypothesized that journalism films released in the past five years fall under three categories: films about current media trends, nostalgic films about media history, and films about media ethics issues.*

## I. Introduction

Just as the industry of journalism is evolving, so is the portrayal of the media in film. In the 1930s, screwball comedies like *It Happened One Night* and *Meet John Doe* featured newspaper reporters who run into moral slip-ups but emerge as heroes in the end. In the 1970s, movies like *All the President's Men* portrayed newspaper reporters as determined, hard-working people who will stop at nothing to expose wrongdoing, while films like *Network* began addressing broadcast news and the dangers of becoming too consumed with ratings. Today, the portrayal of journalism onscreen is still evolving as new media moves to the forefront of reporting. Scholars like Matthew Ehrlich (2004) and Howard Good (1989) have devoted much of their careers to the study of journalism in film. However, often the most recent movies these scholars address are 2003's *Shattered Glass* and 2005's *Good Night and Good Luck*. Though there is a wealth of scholarship surrounding older journalism films, there is little research on films reflecting modern trends in journalism, perhaps because these films are just now emerging.

There are countless films depicting newspapers, magazines, television and media ethics cases. Films only recently began exploring current journalism trends, such as the advent of the Internet and recent struggles with shield laws and confidential sources. Based on a general knowledge of current journalism films and existing scholarship about trends in past journalism films, it is hypothesized that journalism movies now typically fall into three categories: films depicting modern developments in the profession (like *State of Play*, which examines the conflict between traditional print media and online journalism), more nostalgic films that harken back to the media's glory days (like *Frost/Nixon*, which recounts how David Frost and his team, through a series of TV interviews, persuaded Richard Nixon to admit his guilt in the Watergate scandal), and films examining media ethics issues (like *Thank You For Smoking*, in which a reporter sleeps with her source to obtain more information for a story).

This study does not determine cause and effect. Whatever the motivation behind these onscreen portrayals of the media, journalism films enter into "a cinematic public sphere that could be used to communicate ideas and shape public opinion" (Ross, 2002, p. 3). Without interviewing the filmmakers, one can only speculate the reasoning behind the way journalism is portrayed in film, and without interviewing the audiences that consume those films, one can only speculate how these portrayals have influenced how viewers feel

\* **Keywords:** portrayals of journalism, Nostalgia in film, ethics in film, images of current media  
Email: amilan@elon.edu

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about the media. However, through a qualitative content analysis, observations can be recorded and analyzed that paint an overall picture of how the media are being portrayed onscreen today, adding to the wealth of scholarship about media portrayals onscreen pre-2005. This overall picture of the media onscreen likely influences audiences to some degree. According to film historian Steven Ross (2002), movies are “partly a reflection of what [audiences] are. And what they are is no less influenced by what they see” (p. 1). Regardless of the reasoning behind these portrayals, observing and analyzing the media’s representation onscreen says something powerful about how the media are viewed in society today.

## II. Literature Review

While there is little scholarship on recent journalism films like *Frost/Nixon*, *State of Play*, and *Nothing But the Truth*, researchers have examined related areas like journalism ethics in film and the use of nostalgia in journalism films. There is also scholarship about specific modern media trends conveyed in cinema, like the rise of online journalism and recent struggles surrounding confidential sources and shield laws.

### **Media and ethics in film**

One researcher at the forefront of journalism in film scholarship is Matthew Ehrlich, whose book *Journalism in the Movies* details the overall portrayal of the media in film throughout history. Ehrlich deals primarily with films in the “journalism genre,” or movies in which the main plot is about journalism or the main characters are journalists. Ehrlich notes the contradictory nature of the portrayal of the media onscreen, saying “The movies have portrayed journalists both as upstanding citizens and heroes and as scruffy outsiders and villains” (Ehrlich, 2004, p.1). Ehrlich addresses the negative portrayals of journalism in film in his article “Facts, Truth and Bad Journalists in the Movies.” According to Ehrlich, many real-life journalists would likely say many onscreen journalists exercise inappropriate and unprofessional behavior. However, he says “‘bad journalist’ characters actually have helped shore up the press’s preferred self-image, either by seeing through lies and pretense to the truth or by paying the price for not telling the truth,” (Ehrlich, 2006, p. 502). Ehrlich also says that by examining the profession in this way, journalism movies can be seen as “a culture thinking out loud about itself” (Ehrlich, 2004, p. 2). This idea is the primary focus of Ehrlich’s article “Thinking Critically about Journalism through Popular Culture.” In this article, Ehrlich argues that people can be educated about the media profession by studying journalism “more broadly as a practice and institution by analyzing movies as a long-running commentary on the press,” (Ehrlich, 1996, p. 35).

In *Outcasts: The Image of Journalists in Contemporary Film*, Howard Good focuses on some of the same points Ehrlich does, but Good tends to dwell more on the negative portrayals of journalists in film. Good says, “It is a rare film today that honors journalists for their absolute commitment to their profession, or that celebrates their legendary disdain for legal niceties and ethical restraints” (1989, p. 16). However, Good says journalism films of the 1970s, like *All the President’s Men*, focused more on the heroics of the media because “Watergate restored some of the prestige and glamour the press had lost in the sixties” (1989, p. 18). In “The Hollywood Version: Movie Portrayals of the Press,” Thomas Zynda (1979) acknowledges that many film portrayals of the press are negative, but like Ehrlich, he chooses to look at the larger picture of the overall portrayal of the media in film. He uses films like *Five Star Final*, *His Girl Friday*, *Meet John Doe*, *The Green Berets*, and *Network* to exemplify the characteristics often portrayed in journalism films and offers key phrases to describe the character of the reporters in these films: “manipulate public opinion,” “increase their wealth,” “essentially sociopathic characters,” and “must resort to the equivalent of spying” (p. 19-20). Above all, Zynda upholds Ehrlich’s argument that journalism films hold the press accountable, saying “As the press serves as a watchdog on government, so Hollywood, likewise on behalf of the public and with a like commercial basis, keeps an eye on the press,” (1979, p. 32).

### **Current media trends**

Ehrlich’s “*Shattered Glass*, Movies, and the Free Press Myth” (2005) is one of the few journal articles to address the presence of online journalism in film. Ehrlich briefly addresses that it was an Internet journalist from Forbes Online who exposed Glass. According to Ehrlich, “Some [audiences] took comfort that it had been an ‘honest, blue collar’ reporter, Adam Penenberg, who finally exposed Glass” (2005, p. 108). Other scholars focus on current media trends outside of film. In “Facing ‘The Fabulous Monster’: The Traditional

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Media's Fear-Driven Innovation Culture in the Development of Online News," An Nguyen (2008) argues that a culture of fear surrounds online journalism but it ultimately plays a role in facilitating development because news organizations want to stay relevant, and that through this development, traditional news outlets can grow to embrace online media. In "A Contemporary History of Digital Journalism," Ben Scott (2005) focuses less on the fear angle of Nguyen's article and more on how online media have the potential to aid what he sees as a decline in the quality of journalism. He says through online media, "the public may finally be able to use journalism as it was intended, as a set of guidelines and talking points that convene a discussion among a democratic citizenry" (Scott, 2005, p. 92).

In terms of research about recent issues with shield laws, Rachel Smolkin (2005) in the article "Under Fire" cites First Amendment attorneys who express fear over the increasing number of high-profile court cases ordering reporters to disclose confidential sources, saying, "They warn of a chilling effect on sources' willingness to share unflattering information about employers, stifling reporters' ability to unearth – and to tell the public – government secrets such as Watergate and the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal" (p. 19). In a 2005 article from the journal *Communications Lawyer*, journalist Judith Miller argues why confidential sources are important to journalists and why she would go to jail to protect them. Miller, who was jailed for her reporting on the Valerie Plame case, argues, "In a post-9/11 era in which dramatically increased amounts of information are being classified secret, and hence, are no longer available for public review, confidential sources, particularly in the national security and intelligence arenas, are indispensable to government accountability" (2005, p. 9).

### **Nostalgia in film**

While some modern journalism films explore recent trends in the profession, others hearken back to a significant period in journalism history and rely on a sense of nostalgia in their storytelling. In *Recycled Culture in Contemporary Art and Film*, Vera Dika (2003) examines the use of nostalgia in film overall. Dika uses *American Graffiti* as an example of the quintessential nostalgia film. Though it was produced in the 1970s, the film takes place in the early 1960s, which is reflected in everything from the neon sign-style opening credits to the music to the way the characters speak. Dika says "*American Graffiti* invokes that historical period directly, eliciting a sense of regret and confrontation with it" (2003, p. 90). In "The Tube is Flickering Now: Aesthetics and Authenticity in *Good Night and Good Luck*," Sina Nitzsche (2007) applies the type of cinematic nostalgia Dika discusses to a journalism film. Nitzsche says *Good Night and Good Luck* is nostalgic both in its content, focusing on McCarthyism and the Cold War in the 1950s, and its style. Nitzsche argues that audiences connect with this particular nostalgia film because the overall look and feel of the film (such as the costumes, the attitudes and demeanor of the characters, and its black and white style) give it a sense of authenticity.

There is a great deal of scholarship surrounding journalism in film, but most of this scholarship ends with 2005's *Good Night and Good Luck*. There is very little research on journalism films that have been released in the past five years, a hole in the scholarship this study aims to fill. Nostalgia in film and media ethics in film have also been studied in the past, but not in recent journalism films. Some scholarship exists surrounding recent trends in the media like the rise of online journalism and issues with shield laws, but as these issues have only recently begun being portrayed onscreen, there is virtually no scholarship surrounding their use in film. This study takes existing scholarship on journalism in film, media ethics in film, nostalgia in film and current trends in journalism and applies it to recent journalism movies that do not yet have much scholarship surrounding them.

## **III. Methodology**

This study is a qualitative content analysis about current portrayals of journalism onscreen. The project follows Susanna Priest's (1996) definition that "content analysis is a means of trying to learn something about people by examining what they write, produce on television, or make movies about" (p. 23). The study describes these recent portrayals of media in the movies but does not determine the cause and effect of those portrayals. The project presents a critical analysis of the major journalism films of the past five years, a total of ten films. These films are either solely about journalism, or journalism plays a major role in the plot.

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There is a great deal of scholarship surrounding journalism in film throughout history, and the purpose of this study is to build on that scholarship by addressing more recent films that have not yet been subject to much research. The first step in the research process was figuring out which films to include in the study. A sample of journalism films released from 2005-2009 was compiled using the Web site for the Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture project ([www.ijpc.org](http://www.ijpc.org)). The sample began with *Good Night and Good Luck*, the last journalism film that has been studied heavily by scholars. Every film listed on the site from *Good Night and Good Luck* onward is listed below:

- *Good Night and Good Luck* (2005)
- *Superman Returns* (2006)
- *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006)
- *Scoop* (2006)
- *Thank You for Smoking* (2006)
- *Blood Diamond* (2006)
- *Zodiac* (2007)
- *Frost/Nixon* (2008)
- *Nothing But the Truth* (2008)
- *State of Play* (2009)

Once the film titles were obtained, secondary research was conducted to determine the existing scholarship on journalism in film. Based on the findings of Ehrlich, Good, and Zynda and a general knowledge of the films being studied, it was hypothesized that modern journalism films would generally fall into three categories: stories focused on media ethics, nostalgic films hearkening back to journalism's glory days, and movies with a primary emphasis on current trends in journalism. Once this hypothesis was proposed, additional secondary research was conducted on media ethics in film, nostalgia in film, and current trends in the media.

With the hypothesis and secondary research in mind, a series of open-ended research questions were developed to answer for each of the ten films:

- What is the primary type of media depicted in the film (newspapers, television, radio, magazines)?
- When and where does the story take place?
- How are the time period and location in which the story takes place portrayed onscreen?
- Are the journalists honest in their newsgathering practices?
- What kinds of relationships do the journalists have with their sources?
- What kind of relationship do the journalists have with their co-workers and superiors?
- How is the journalist's personal life portrayed?
- Are any modern trends in journalism portrayed onscreen?
- If so, are there any tensions between these new trends and old ideals?
- What do the journalists look like (race, gender, age, size, how they dress)?

Each of the ten films was then viewed, and each research question was answered for every film. The notes on each film were compiled, and based on the data for each individual film, the researcher attempted to place the films into the three hypothesized categories. The data for the films in each category was analyzed for trends and common themes, and that data in each category was also compared to the other data in the ten-film sample as a whole.

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## IV. Findings and Analysis

Overall, the films did fall into the three hypothesized categories, with the ethics category containing the most films. *State of Play* and *Nothing But the Truth* fell under the current issues category; *Good Night and Good Luck*, *Frost/Nixon*, and *Zodiac* fell under the nostalgia category, and *The Devil Wears Prada*, *Thank You for Smoking*, *Blood Diamond*, and *Scoop* fell under the ethics category. The only anomaly in the study was *Superman Returns*, which was not as easily definable because while the *Daily Planet* newspaper and journalists Clark Kent and Lois Lane played prominent roles in the story, journalism was not the primary focus of the film and was used less than in the other films. However, the film does raise a few ethical questions about journalism and could therefore be considered part of that category, but this film does not place the same emphasis on ethical issues in journalism as the other films in that category. For the most part, however, journalism films today do either deal with current issues in journalism, nostalgic portrayals of journalism, or ethical dilemmas in journalism.

### ***Current issues in journalism***

Although there are a number of current issues in journalism affecting the industry today, such as the struggle between print and online media, only two of the ten films in the sample focused primarily on current journalism trends – *State of Play* and *Nothing But the Truth*. Though the two films share a few similar themes, they focus on different issues for the most part. *State of Play*, a suspense film about a jaded newspaper reporter and a fresh-faced politics blogger who team up to investigate a corporate conspiracy, heavily emphasizes the struggle between print and online journalism. In the film, there is clearly a hierarchy at the newspaper involving print and online media. Though Cal McAffrey is a veteran crime reporter at the *Washington Globe*, a fictional representation of the *Washington Post*, he comments that Della Frye, the new politics blogger, has a new computer and fancy equipment while he has been there “15 years with a 16-year-old computer” (*State of Play*, 2009). Cal and his editor, Cameron Lynne, also discuss a potential redesign for the paper early on in the film. The mockups she shows him of the new design is much more colorful and eye popping than the newspaper’s traditional design. She tells him the owners want them to turn a profit so they have to figure out better ways to appeal to their readers, and he sarcastically replies that “I hear the online side is doing just fine” (*State of Play*, 2009). Cameron replies that they are emphasizing the online side because of young new reporters like Della, who she says is “hungry, she’s cheap, and she turns out copy every hour” (*State of Play*, 2009).

This five-minute exchange between Cal and Cameron emphasizes the tension between print and online media that most newspapers and magazines today are attempting to balance. Readers are becoming less interested in traditional text-and-photo stories and more interested in bright design that breaks up information into more accessible, bite-sized chunks. They are also turning to online journalism for shorter stories that are updated more frequently. Like Cameron says, young new reporters like Della are eager to work, cheaper to employ than veteran reporters like Cal, and are able to generate more content faster. In a world where people are busier than ever, that is what print media organizations want. In order to keep up with the increasing popularity of online media, they have to start using online media themselves. Based on their conversation, it seems the *Washington Globe* is driven more by fear of becoming irrelevant in an increasingly technology-driven world rather than excitement about new media developments. This supports An Nguyen’s argument that “by forcing traditional media to act, the fear of new media usually plays a crucial role in facilitating their birth and development” (2008, p. 93).

It is evident from the beginning of the movie that while the newspaper as a whole is focusing on its online staff, Cal does not think Della and the other bloggers are serious journalists. When she asks him for help on a piece she is writing about relationships in the political sphere, he sarcastically replies “I don’t know, I’d have to read a couple of blogs before I could form an opinion” (*State of Play*, 2009). The film also contains a continuing plot point that Della never has a pen with her when she needs to write down a crucial piece of information. While a pen is supposed to be a reporter’s most basic tool, Della relies more on her computer. Here, the film seems to be implying that while Della’s job is technology-based, she should not forget the basics of traditional reporting. At the end of the film, once Cal and Della finish their story revealing the corporate conspiracy, Cal says he is surprised Della is not posting the story to the Web site, but Della says, “A story this big, people should probably have newsprint on their hands when they read it” (*State of Play*, 2009). The message behind *State of Play* seems to be that while online media may be the new trend, traditional print media will not disappear because it is still considered the most serious form of media, a permanent record of

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an event's impact.

The tension between print and online journalism is also briefly alluded to in *Nothing But the Truth*. When her son's classmate tells Washington, D.C., reporter Rachel Armstrong that they get the newspaper at her house, Rachel tells her to tell her friends to do the same "because the Internet is killing us" (*Nothing But the Truth*, 2008), implying the newspaper is struggling in the wake of online media. Other than this exchange, however, the movie focuses more on the issue of shield laws than online media. The film follows Rachel as she is arrested and held in contempt of court for not revealing her source in a story in which she revealed the identity of a CIA operative. While some states have shield laws, there is no federal shield law, so Rachel had no legal protection. *Nothing But the Truth* is a fictional story, but it was released three years after *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller was jailed for refusing to name her source in a story revealing the identity of former CIA agent Valerie Plame. The film even opens with a disclaimer that the events in the film are fictional, indicating the filmmakers knew how similar the story was to Miller's situation and were likely inspired by it to some degree. According to an article in *American Journalism Review*, more than two dozen subpoenas were issued to obtain journalists' sources or notes in the two years preceding the Judith Miller/Valerie Plame case, and "the last time there was such a concentration of court cases seeking reporters' confidential sources or notes was during the height of the Nixon administration" (Smolkin, 2005, p. 20). Issues surrounding shield laws and confidential sources still affect journalists today, but when this film was being written and in pre-production, this concentrated period of court cases would have been fresh in the filmmakers' minds.

*Nothing But the Truth*, while presenting both sides of the issue, seems to be arguing in favor of legal protection for journalists when asked to reveal confidential sources and a federal shield law. The movie cites significant events in media history involving confidential sources like Watergate and the Pentagon Papers, arguing that without confidential sources, reporters would have never been able to break those stories and communicate that information to the public. Rachel's lawyer, Albert Burnside, reminds the Supreme Court what a close decision *Branzburg v. Hayes* was and argues that abandoning confidentiality would mean no source would speak to Rachel or her paper again. He also tells the court that jailing reporters for not revealing confidential sources makes news publications and the First Amendment irrelevant, saying "How would we know if a president has committed crimes? We as a nation would never be able to hold those in power accountable" (*Nothing But the Truth*, 2008). This argument is consistent with Miller's argument when she was released from jail. In a 2005 article in *Communications Lawyer*, Miller said, "We are only as good as our sources. So their confidence that we will not divulge their identity is crucial to their willingness to come to us with allegations of fraud or abuse or wrongdoing, or a dissenting view in their agency or company that might be critical to the American Public (p. 4).

*State of Play* and *Nothing But the Truth* emphasize the important current issues in journalism of the tension between print and online media and the controversy surrounding confidential sources and shield laws, but they are the only two movies in the past five years to do so. The only other movie mentioned in the study's secondary research that addresses the rise of online journalism is 2003's *Shattered Glass*, in which a reporter for Forbes Online realizes that Stephen Glass fabricated one of his stories. *State of Play* and *Nothing But the Truth* are the two most recent films in the sample, indicating that journalism films are just now beginning to address current issues in the industry. In 2008 when *Nothing But the Truth* was released, the other journalism film released that year, *Frost/Nixon*, was much more popular and received more acclaim. That film falls under the nostalgia category, reminding audiences of what is arguably the peak of glory for journalism – Watergate. While these two most recent journalism films address some of the most important issues facing journalists today, it seems journalism films in the other two categories resonate more with audiences. However, perhaps the fact that the two most recent journalism films deal with current issues in the industry is an indication that upcoming journalism films will follow the same path. Both films in this category are also about newspapers, indicating that newspapers are the type of media facing the most challenges today.

### **Nostalgia for the old days of journalism**

While journalism films are only now beginning to address current trends in the media, some of the most recognizable journalism films of the past five years have more of a nostalgia angle. *Good Night and Good Luck*, the 2005 film about Edward R. Murrow's series of CBS news pieces against Senator Joseph McCarthy, is perhaps the best example of a journalism film based primarily in nostalgia. In the film, as much emphasis is placed on creating the movie's atmosphere and the feeling it invokes in the viewer as is placed on the actual story. To capture the sleek, classic feeling of a 1950s newsroom, director George Clooney shot the



film in black and white. This style of filmmaking enhances the setting by recreating the look and feel of 1950s film and consequently enhances the feeling of nostalgia for the audience. The technique sets the stage for a depiction of 1950s journalism as classier and less corrupt than the images of journalism portrayed in more ethics-centered films. The costumes and hairstyles also contribute to the nostalgic 1950s image of the film. The women wear conservative skirts and shirts buttoned to the neck and have curly, short to shoulder length hair, while the men always wear suits, have their hair slicked back and parted to the side, and constantly have a cigarette in hand. The slow, jazzy piano music that plays throughout the film also gives viewers an audible cue about the nostalgic atmosphere in addition to the visual cues of the costumes, hair, and black and white coloring. Additionally, the film also uses real footage of McCarthy, adding to its sense of authenticity.

According to Nitzsche in "The Tube is Flickering Now," the film's reflection of both the 1950s lifestyle and 1950s films provides a feeling of authenticity. Nostalgia films like *Good Night and Good Luck* are likely often popular because they not only hearken back to what is often seen as a brighter time for journalism but simultaneously contain themes relevant to modern journalism. For example, Nitzsche says *Good Night and Good Luck* "launches an imaginary journey back to the beginnings of American television through the construction of an 'authentic' filmic evidence of that time. It further serves as an instance of articulation about the dissatisfaction with current American politics by offering a connection to the era of McCarthyism" (2008, p. 1). Additionally, Murrow is portrayed as an honest and thorough reporter who is in constant pursuit of the truth. Nothing is shown of his personal life. The audience only knows that at work, Murrow is a true professional. *Good Night and Good Luck* portrays Murrow as a hero, which audiences likely relate to more than the flawed characters driven by negative stereotypes often portrayed in films in the ethics category. The hero role combined with the feelings of nostalgia that draw viewers back to the 1950s creates a highly positive and artistic portrayal of journalism that is pleasing for viewers both visually and emotionally.

*Frost/Nixon* and *Zodiac*, both set in the 1970s, use this same technique. Unlike *Good Night and Good Luck*, these films are in color, so they rely primarily on costumes, hairstyles, and set pieces to capture a nostalgic setting of the 1970s. The men wear suits and have longer, wavy hair while the women wear plain dresses and have straight, long to waist-length hair. The set pieces contain primarily warm colors like browns, yellows, and oranges, a popular 1970s color palette. Though both films are in color, *Zodiac* has a grittier look to it, as though some of the color may have been removed in post-production, reflective of both the Technicolor appearance of 1970s film and the gritty murders that drive the story. While *Good Night and Good Luck* and *Frost/Nixon* both focus on the rise of television, *Zodiac* revolves around the *San Francisco Chronicle* newspaper, and several blunt references are made to the organization's lack of technology and the lack of technology in the era in general. For example, when detective Bill Armstrong tells a detective in Vallejo that he will telefax him a handwriting sample, the detective replies that they do not have telefax yet, and Armstrong will have to mail him the sample. These mentions of technology, along with the 1970s soundtrack, also contribute to the nostalgic setting of the film as well as its sense of realism.

Also present in *Frost/Nixon* and *Zodiac* is the portrayal of the reporter as a hero as seen in *Good Night and Good Luck*. *Frost/Nixon* and *Zodiac* both portray more of the lead characters' personal lives than Murrow's in *Good Night and Good Luck*, and consequently the characters in the 1970s-set films are more flawed. Of the three leads in the films in the nostalgia category, David Frost in *Frost/Nixon* is probably the most flawed, but in the end he emerges as an underdog hero. At first he is viewed as a playboy in his personal life and nothing more than a celebrity talk show host in his professional life, but he proves himself to be an honest and thorough reporter dedicated to pursuing the truth about Richard Nixon's involvement in Watergate and persuading him to issue a confession. In *Zodiac*, crime reporter Paul Avery is an alcoholic with some pushy and questionable reporting practices, but editorial cartoonist Robert Graysmith, the film's protagonist, emerges as the story's true hero. He may not be able to maintain a relationship in his personal life, but his thorough reporting, dedication, and initiative lead him to be an honest reporter, publishing a detailed book about the Zodiac killer.

In addition to featuring more heroic characters than most of the films in the ethics category, the films in the nostalgia category are built around time periods that were arguably two of journalism's highest peaks – McCarthyism of the 1950s and the Watergate scandal of the 1970s. *Good Night and Good Luck* and *Frost/Nixon* address McCarthyism and Watergate directly, and while *Zodiac* does not address Watergate directly, it still takes place around the same time in the 1970s, a time in which more and more people wanted to pursue careers in journalism following Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's exposure of the Watergate scandal. While Cal and Della in *State of Play* and Rachel in *Nothing But the Truth* are also portrayed as heroes, audi-

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ences may prefer not to think about the current struggles of journalism in what they perceive as an entertainment medium. Audiences may get more entertainment value out of seeing stories in which heroic characters are depicted in times they already know to be bright spots in journalism history.

### **Media ethics**

The highest number of films in the sample fall under the media ethics category, which is not a surprising statistic given that most of the existing scholarship surrounding journalism in film addresses ethical situations onscreen. Good argues that journalism movies focusing on ethical situations often foster negative stereotypes about journalists, saying “Hollywood has given us reporters corrupted by cynicism, ambitions, and drink, careless of others’ lives and reputations, and ever reluctant to let the truth stand in the way of a good story” (1989, p. 9). As indicated in previous scholarship, this study also found that most ethical situations presented in journalism films often focused on negative characteristics, actions or decisions of the journalists. The majority of the journalists depicted are corrupt or unethical in some way, while the protagonist is usually either the only ethical reporter in a sea of unethical ones, or an unethical reporter who rises above the rest to become a heroic and honest journalist. This type of portrayal has been discussed in journalism in film scholarship before. Good emphasizes this idea in one of his books, saying “every year brings yet more journalists to the screen, sometimes to play the hero, sometimes the villain, and sometimes something of both” (2008, p. 5). This study found that three types of ethical situations were most often presented in the films – deception or unethical reporting practices, most often involving relationships with sources, and questionable choices in personal relationships and home life.

Given Zynda’s observation that reporters are most often portrayed onscreen as “confident, aggressive people who are young, attractive, and single” (1979, p. 23), it is not a surprising finding that romantic relationships often find their way into journalism movies. Perhaps the most glaring example of an unethical relationship in the sample is in the Woody Allen comedy *Scoop*, in which student journalist Sondra Pransky develops a romantic relationship with millionaire Peter Lyman because she believes he is the murderer in a crime story she has been investigating. Not only does she become romantically involved with a potential source, but she is deceptive about it. She does not identify herself as a reporter but tells him she is an actress named Jade, making it a habit of sleeping with him and snooping around his house looking for possible clues while he is asleep. The line between what is a matter of her career and what is a matter of her personal life becomes even more blurred when Sondra actually falls in love with Peter, admitting “I’m an investigative reporter who’s fallen in love with the object of her investigation” (*Scoop*, 2006). Her relationship with Peter is not the first time she has slept with a source. At the beginning of the film, she wants to interview an actor and decides she should “use my sex appeal like Katherine Hepburn” (*Scoop*, 2006) to get answers out of him, but ends up sleeping with him and getting no story. Sondra is not even a professional journalist – she is only a student. The movie implies that negative behavior in the media starts before journalists become professional reporters, that unethical choices are somehow tied to the profession.

Inappropriate relationships with sources are also explored in *Thank You For Smoking* and *Blood Diamond*. In *Thank You For Smoking*, the journalist in question, Heather Holloway, is another example of the “young, attractive, and single” stereotype Zynda mentions. She meets tobacco lobbyist Nick Naylor in a romantic restaurant for an interview and proceeds to flirt with him, ultimately suggesting that they continue the interview at his apartment and saying “I want to see where the devil sleeps” (*Thank You For Smoking*, 2006). They continue engaging in a sexual relationship, which quickly comes to an end when Heather’s article about Nick is printed. She used information that he assumed would be off the record since he told her in an intimate setting, but she replies, “You never said anything about off the record” (*Thank You For Smoking*, 2006). She said she talks to some sources over dinner or drinks, but he wanted to have sex and that was fine by her. Not only does Heather engage in an inappropriate relationship with the subject of her story, but, like in *Scoop*, she engages in deceptive behavior while in the relationship. She knew all along she would use all of the information Nick gave her while he thought she actually liked him. These movies seem to be implying that young, attractive female reporters are not afraid to use their sex appeal if it will help them land a story, a practice seen again with the character of *Time* magazine foreign correspondent Maddy Bowen in *Blood Diamond*.

In her pursuit of a story about conflict diamonds in Sierra Leone, Maddy recognizes smuggler Danny Archer at a bar and proceeds to flirt with him. She does not identify herself as a reporter until Danny realizes she is a journalist when she asks him about blood diamonds. The first few times Danny meets Maddy, they are at a bar, and she always has a beer in hand, fueling the negative stereotype Good mentions that jour-

nalists are heavy drinkers. Of the three flirtatious journalists in these films, however, Maddy is perhaps the most professional. She uses her resources as a reporter to help Danny's friend Solomon find his son, who has been forced into the military as a child soldier. While the ethics behind Maddy pulling some strings to do Danny and Solomon this favor could be considered questionable, in this case she is doing it for the good of someone else, something that did not occur in *Scoop* or *Thank You for Smoking* and therefore resulting in a more positive portrayal here. However, all three of these films feature female reporters using their sex appeal to achieve results in their reporting, an act that is highly frowned upon in the real professional world. This sends the message that women reporters in particular use questionable reporting practices. However, older journalism films often portrayed male reporters in a negative light, so this trend may also be reflective of the fact that today more women work in the industry, and they are now portrayed negatively just as their male counterparts once were.

*The Devil Wears Prada* explores a journalist's ethics on a more personal level. The film follows eager, fresh out of college journalist Andy Sachs, who is forced to take a job at *Runway* magazine (a fictional version of *Vogue*) when she cannot find a job anywhere else. As Andy spends more and more time with her stuck up, demanding boss Miranda Priestly, the film shows how she progresses from an honest reporter to someone who makes questionable choices at work and at home. She views her job as more important than anything else, continuously working late and leaving for work again early in the morning. She even misses her boyfriend's birthday to attend a gala for work, reinforcing "the myth of the self-reliant individual" (Good, 1989, p. 14), the journalist who is so obsessed with work they no longer focus their energy on relationships, perhaps even considering them unnecessary. In the end Andy does find herself again and lands a job at a small newspaper, an example of the corrupt individual who rises above the rest to become a good, honest reporter. Had Andy remained the unethical professional she had become, she very well could have taken the next step and become a Heather Holloway or a Sondra Pransky, one so obsessed with the job she would do just about anything to achieve results.

The one anomaly in this study that does not fit as easily into one of the three categories is *Superman Returns*. The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture project likely included it on their list because the *Daily Planet* newspaper and reporters Clark Kent and Lois Lane are featured so prominently, but journalism is not the primary focus of the film. Particularly the newspaper itself and Lois' role as a reporter do not actually impact the plot of the film for the most part. The focus is kept on Clark's identity as Superman, his battle with Lex Luthor, and the more science fiction aspects of the film. However, a few ethical questions about the journalism in the film are raised, so the movie could potentially fall under the ethics category. The most glaring example is yet another instance of an inappropriate relationship between a reporter and a source. Lois continues to cover Superman even though, as Jimmy Olson informs Clark, the whole office knows they had a romantic relationship. She even won a Pulitzer Prize for a piece called "Why the world doesn't need Superman." Even when Lois asks to be allowed to cover something else, her editor refuses. He knows of their relationship and uses it to his own advantage. He knows because Lois and Superman had an intimate relationship she will be able to get information other reporters will not, even if she cannot be objective in her coverage. This indicates that it is not only that reporters sometimes form inappropriate relationships with sources – it is that editors sometimes not only allow the relationship to continue but encourage it for the benefit of the media outlet. Lois is also often shown working at home at night, demonstrating an obsession with the job like Andy in *The Devil Wears Prada*. While there are instances of ethical questions like this, they are not as obvious as in the other four films in the category. The other films focus primarily on those questions, while this film serves primarily as a comic book movie that alludes to some ethical questions.

While some of the journalist characters in the films in the ethics category emerge as heroes, for the most part the films reinforce the notion that the portrayal of the media in journalism movies "is usually not very favorable; despite an occasional *All the President's Men*, the films are more like *Network* in their critical and even cynical view of journalism" (Zynda, 1979, p. 17). It is also worth noting that the primary journalist characters in the films in this category are all women. In all of the movies in this category, including *Superman Returns*, it is female journalists who engage in unethical relationships with sources and fill the role of the workaholic reporter whose personal relationships and home life suffer. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the films in the nostalgia category are all centered on male reporters and their roles as heroes fighting against a corrupt or illegal entity. While some of their flaws are shown, the same emphasis is not placed on them as is placed on the flaws of the female reporters in the films in the ethics category, partially because the historically-based situations presented in the films in the nostalgia category are not as conducive to emphasizing these negative traits.

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## V. Discussion

Several key ideas about the portrayal of journalism in film emerge from the findings of this study. While journalism films cover a wide range of subjects, they often can be categorized into groups of films containing similar themes. In the case of this study, it was found that modern journalism films are most often focused on current issues in journalism, nostalgic portrayals of journalism, and media ethics. These are certainly not the only categories of journalism films, but they are the categories that emerged from the journalism films of the past five years.

Only two films in the study were included in the current issues category, indicating this is an area of journalism film that is still developing. In the past, films like *Network*, which addressed concerns about the rise of television following the Vietnam War era, dealt with topics in journalism that were current at the time, and films addressing similar subjects later followed suit. The lead characters in *State of Play* and *Nothing But the Truth*, though flawed, serve as heroes, defending the basic rights of citizens or, as mentioned by Ehrlich and Zynda, serving in the role of a watchdog over government or corporate wrongdoing. These films tell compelling stories, but they were not as popular with audiences or critics as most of the films in the other categories. It could be that audiences do not find as much entertainment value in stories that explore struggles in the media industry, and any media professionals who watch journalism films may not want to be reminded of the current tensions they face at work when they watch movies. In the coming years, as these current issues within the industry develop, movies will likely start to feature trends like online journalism more prominently.

Other journalism films utilize a more nostalgic portrayal of the media, focusing on real-life events in media history and capturing the essence of the time period through costumes, hairstyles, set design, and the coloring of the film. Though the flaws of some of the characters in the film are shown, the protagonists are portrayed as heroes in pursuit of the truth and looking out for the public's best interest. These portrayals of the media are very positive overall and therefore likely more appealing to audiences than films portraying current struggles in journalism. Though those films portray journalists as heroes, many more questions are raised about their actions and a lot of emphasis is placed on negative tension. In more nostalgic films, particularly the three from this study focused on the time periods in which McCarthyism and Watergate were prominent, audiences are likely attracted to the role of the journalist as investigator and crusader in a time they recognize as a high point in journalism history.

The majority of the films in the study fall under the ethics category, which is not surprising given that films focused on ethical dilemmas have been continuously prominent since the earliest days of journalism films. The ethical questions raised in these films likely appeal to audiences because they present an exciting conflict. Though they often perpetuate negative stereotypes about the media, most of the films show the evolution of a character from practicing unethical reporting tactics or tackling ethical dilemmas between their personal and professional lives to finding themselves and finding a more honest personal and professional outlook. According to Ross, "in addition to entertaining people, films can often provide a mechanism for discussing some of the most important ideas of the day" (2002, p. 9). These films raise questions and incite discussion while simultaneously featuring stories audiences can find pure entertainment in, which is likely part of their appeal and part of the reason this category of journalism film has stayed strong through the years.

## VI. Conclusion

Although this study does not determine the cause and effect behind the portrayals of the media presented in these films, which could not be achieved without interviewing the filmmakers and audiences, it does paint a picture of the images of the media being presented to moviegoers today. A wealth of scholarship exists about journalism in film, but the last film to be subject to significant study was 2005's *Good Night and Good Luck*. This study fills in a hole in the scholarship by examining the journalism films from *Good Night and Good Luck* to today. Further studies could analyze the films individually and dig deeper into the media portrayals within each film rather than dealing with multiple films in broader categories. However, this study does present the overall image of common portrayals in modern journalism films and uses observations about the films and existing scholarship to draw comparisons between the films.

According to Ehrlich, however the movies choose to portray journalists, "Hollywood has reproduced myths in which the press is always at the heart of things and always makes a difference" (2004, p. 1). The

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media play the important role in society of communicating information to the masses. Journalism films communicate ideas to audiences about the industry that provides them with the information they receive every day. The ideas presented in journalism films reach a mass audience and likely affect viewers' thinking about the media to some degree. For this reason, it is important for media professionals to have an understanding of how the industry is being portrayed in popular culture. The media are constantly evolving, and as the industry continues to change, so too will the image of journalism in film.

## Acknowledgments

This author is thankful to Dr. David Copeland at Elon University for his supervision and advice, without which the article could not be published. The author also appreciates numerous reviewers who have helped revise this article.

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# Up in Smoke: How Antismoking Advertisements Have Changed Youth Smoking Habits

Katelynn Sachs\*

*Senior majoring in Corporate Communications  
Elon University*

## Abstract

*To examine whether youth antismoking commercials in the “truth” campaign launched in 2000 had a tendency to use more effective strategies to decrease youth smoking, this study selected five commercials and analyzed them according to a rating system based on the 1998 Goldman and Glantz study. The commercials used effective strategies and ignored less effective ones, but the most effective ones were not necessarily used most frequently. Since the youth do not respond in the same manner to each strategy in a commercial, it will be vital to use different strategies, even though they are not effective in general, and reach all the youth.*

## I. Introduction

In November 1998, the Master Settlement Agreement initiated a contract between the four largest tobacco manufacturing companies and the Attorneys General in 46 states and five territories to appease state lawsuits filed against these companies for their harmful tobacco products (Healton, 2001). For years, states filed lawsuits seeking “monetary, equitable and injunctive relief” for state-financed, medical treatments related to problems caused by these companies’ tobacco products (Master Settlement Agreement, 1998). Stemming from this flood of lawsuits came the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA), through which state governments pursued “equitable relief and damages under state laws, including consumer protection and/or antitrust laws in order to further the ... States’ policies regarding public health, including policies adopted to achieve a significant reduction in smoking by youth” (Master Settlement Agreement, 1998).

The contract required tobacco manufacturing companies to pay an annual sum to the states and territories totaling \$206 billion over the following 29 years (*Master Settlement Agreement*, 1998). With this contract, several changes occurred within the regiment of the tobacco industry. The MSA restricted tobacco companies’ direct marketing of tobacco products, allowed states to create “markedly expanded tobacco control programs” and provided for the creation of the American Legacy Foundation, a new organization to fight and reduce tobacco use in the U.S. (Healton, 2001).

The Surgeon General first warned the American public in 1964 of the harmful effects tobacco use had on health, later supporting this statement with reports that cigarette smoking was the number one preventable cause of death in the U.S. (*Smoking and health*, 1964). Exposing such information prompted a call to

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\* **Keywords:** Antismoking advertisement; Youth smoking; Truth antismoking campaign; American Legacy Foundation; Antismoking advertising strategies  
Email: ksachs@elon.edu

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action to improve American health in relation to tobacco use. In the years following this warning, researchers, antismoking groups, health organizations and federal laws took action to enhance public health by means of reducing tobacco use in the U.S. Antismoking campaigns were launched with a variety of designs, tactics and target audiences to meet this goal. Although these campaigns were found to be successful in decreasing overall smoking in the U.S., this achievement was more significant among adults than youth, for whom the success of antismoking campaigns was seen as “questionable” (Barton, Chassin, Presson, & Sherman, 1982). With about 80 percent of smokers starting the habit before age 18, it was important to target the nation’s youth tobacco use and address tobacco-related health concerns among this population (Truth Campaign Overview, 2009). This study will look at the effectiveness of antismoking strategies used in selected television advertisements in the Truth Campaign. The study will attempt to determine the factors that impact youth smoking trends.

In an attempt to better limit and prevent youth smoking, the MSA set new advertising limits on the ability of tobacco companies to promote tobacco-related products. Tobacco companies were prohibited from sponsoring events comprised mostly of youth, events where youth were paid participants, at athletic events and at concerts, from sponsoring athletic teams or leagues and from providing free samples where youth could easily gain access (*Master Settlement Agreement*, 1998). Limitations included brand name sponsoring only one event per every twelve months, a lesser ability to advertise tobacco products through sponsorships and prohibitions on using tobacco brand names in stadium or arena names (*Master Settlement Agreement*, 1998). The use of cartoon characters in tobacco advertisements was banned, companies were required to eliminate outdoor and transit advertisements and were required to replace all pro-tobacco billboard advertisements with “alternative advertising intended to discourage the use of Tobacco Products by Youth” (*Master Settlement Agreement*, 1998).

The American Legacy Foundation (ALF) was created mainly for the purposes of supporting the study and creation of programs to reduce youth tobacco usage and abuse in the U.S. and creating educational programs to prevent tobacco-related disease in the U.S. (*Master Settlement Agreement*, 1998). The ALF had four primary goals at the time it was created: to reduce youth tobacco use, to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke within all populations, to increase the successful quit rate of smoking within all ages and populations and to reduce disparities in access to prevention and cessation services and in exposure to secondhand smoke (Healton, 2001). Among the programs and activities implemented by the ALF was the nationwide 2000 *truth* campaign that was specifically aimed at 12- to 17-year-olds to prevent smoking among this at-risk youth population. The campaign worked to expose the tactics of the tobacco industry, the truth about tobacco addiction, and the health effects and social consequences of smoking by presenting youth with facts and information about such topics, allowing them to make their own informed decision about the use of tobacco (Truth Campaign Overview, 2009). The campaign relied on input from youth within the target age range, known as the “youth voice,” to formulate antismoking advertisements to counter those produced by tobacco manufacturing companies (Healton, 2001). *Truth* sought to replace the tobacco industry’s attractive image of smokers with a truthful alternate identity (Farrelly, Davis, Haviland, Messeri, & Healton, 2002). Such truthful knowledge put youth in control about the decision to smoke and portrayed those who chose not to smoke as rebellious, risky, intelligent, empowered, independent and tolerant in their decision not to smoke cigarettes (Arnold Worldwide, “Brand Truth”).

According to Arnold Worldwide, the marketing agency for ALF, youth who were open to learning about the truth about smoking were also open to other “sensation-seeking behaviors,” earning them the nickname, “sensation seekers,” for whom a “Just-Say-No” strategy would not work (“Brand Truth”). For this reason, *truth* advertisements avoided directly telling youth not to smoke, instead showing “graphic images depicting stark facts” about tobacco-related death and disease and the manipulative marketing practices of tobacco companies (Farrelly, Davis, Haviland, Messeri, & Healton, 2005).

The first wave of the national *truth* campaign in 2000 featured multiple print and television advertisements providing information to youth about the social costs, health effects, and addictiveness of tobacco (Healton, 2001). This “edgy” campaign adopted orange and white as its signature colors and marketed its message of “the truth about smoking” as a brand rather than a message, easily identifiable by the campaign’s logo (Farrelly, et al., 2002). ALF launched a subsequent campaign in 2001 called *Infect Truth* to run alongside the original *truth* campaign and educate youth about harmful ingredients found inside cigarettes and other tobacco products (Truth Campaign Overview, 2009). Each *Infect Truth* commercial showed how people became “infected” with the truth about smoking, denoted by a large white asterisk that appeared above these

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people's heads after they learned the truth. The campaign metaphorically compared the truth about smoking with a contagious disease that infects others, relying on the slogan, "knowledge is contagious" (Truth Campaign Overview, 2009).

*Truth* was the first nationwide antismoking campaign aimed at youth that was successful at preventing and stopping smoking among the youth population. The campaign design used data from previous state antismoking campaigns in Massachusetts, Maine, California, and most notably, Florida. The Florida campaign, also titled "truth," was successful in decreasing cigarette use among youth between 1998 and 2000. Bauer, Johnson, Hopkins, and Brooks performed a study in 2000 analyzing the success of the campaign by giving self-administered surveys to middle and high school students regarding cigarette use and intentions. Students were asked to categorize themselves as never users, experimenters, current users, frequent smokers, or former users of cigarettes for each of the four surveys given between 1998 and 2000. Over the two-year period of the campaign, current cigarette use decreased by 40 percent among middle school students and by 18 percent among high school students. The study's results also showed an increase of students who had never smoked and decreases in percentages of experimenters and frequent smokers for both middle and high school students.

The national *truth* campaign was a success among the youth antismoking trend, as shown in a 2005 study performed by Farrelly, Davis, Haviland, Messeri, and Heaton, "Evidence of a Dose-Response Relationship Between 'truth' Antismoking Ads and Youth Smoking Prevalence." It was the first to evaluate the behavioral outcomes of the national campaign by measuring how the "dose" of campaign exposure received affected youth smoking prevalence between 2000 and 2002 through self-administered surveys given to students in eighth, 10th, and 12th grades. The surveys were given in 2000, 2001 and 2002 and showed an overall decrease in smoking prevalence by 36 percent, with eight-grade students exhibiting the greatest decrease at 45 percent. Before the campaign, annual percentage decline for youth smoking rates in all grades was 3.2 percent, compared to 6.8 percent after the launch of the campaign. One of the most important results of the study showed that 22 percent of decline in national youth smoking prevalence was attributed to the success of the *truth* campaign and that overall smoking rates between 2000 and 2002 dropped by 1.5 percent, meaning about 300,000 youth chose to not smoke because of the *truth* campaign. This statistic is most emphasized in reports and reviews because it provided Americans with a definite figure of the number of youth that were prevented from smoking between 2000 and 2002 solely because of the *truth* campaign.

## II. Youth Antismoking Advertising Strategies

Before the launch of the truth campaign in 2000, many other youth antismoking advertising campaigns began to combat the problem of youth smoking using a variety of media and campaign designs. Many researchers conducted studies and discussed how to best target youth with antismoking messages in advertising. These studies identified media campaigns as the medium most effective in reaching youth audiences, determined that effective advertisements must specifically target the youth population and analyzed which characteristics of youth advertisements made them effective in promoting antismoking messages.

Much of the data collected from prior studies of antismoking advertisements served as evidence that until the late 1990s, media campaigns were an effective strategy to inform the public, especially youth, of the effects of smoking. They used a variety of mediums to target youth with antismoking campaigns, including television, radio, newspapers, magazines and billboards. A study analyzing California's statewide antismoking campaign from 1990 to 1992 demonstrated a change in overall smoking habits because of the campaign's influence. The results showed a 12.2 percent decrease in smoking consumption during the campaign, increased awareness of smoking advertisements, decreased tendencies of nonsmokers thinking about starting to smoke and increased health-enhancing attitudes about smoking (Goldman & Glantz, 1998). In addition, 6.6 percent of smokers who quit within that time frame reported having seen or heard an antismoking advertisement, which factored into their decision to quit smoking (Goldman and Glantz, 1998). Although this campaign did not specifically target youth, it demonstrated a media campaign's ability to effectively reach target audiences.

Another study measuring respondents' ability to recall advertisements four years after the start of a statewide antismoking media campaign in Massachusetts, found that youth exposed to advertisements, especially those on television, were more likely to have an accurate, rather than an "inflated perception," of

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youth smoking, and that television was the most powerful medium among those used in the study for reaching adolescents (Siegel & Biener, 2000). In addition, the results showed that youth had significantly more knowledge about tobacco use, were more likely to cite additional reasons other than health influencing them not to smoke, and had stronger antismoking attitudes than youth in other states because of the televised advertisements (Goldman and Glantz, 1998).

In order for antismoking messages to be effective among youth, it was important to specifically target youth with antismoking advertisements created solely for them rather than with advertisements created to address a broad audience. It was found that youth responded better to advertisements using environments and characters similar to those they were familiar with (Beaudoin, 2002). For example, adult antismoking advertisements often addressed the long-term health consequences of smoking, to which youth showed much less concern and interest because they associated such characteristics with adulthood and old age (Barton et al., 1982). Youth also showed more concern about the role of smoking in social settings, particularly because their age range puts them at the stages of development in which they are most aware and concerned of their appearance to others and are most susceptible to conforming to the social norms of their peers (Barton et al., 1982). Antismoking advertisements adopting similar social settings would be more appealing and familiar, and in turn, more effective in reaching youth.

Antismoking advertisement campaigns have implemented a variety of strategies over the years to better reach target audiences with antismoking messages. The most effective media campaigns used strategies in their advertisements specific to a target audience in hopes of better communicating antismoking messages, which was especially true regarding antismoking advertisements aimed at youth. Many ineffective youth antismoking campaigns did not take into account the fact that youth and adults respond differently to certain messages and strategies. Many studies analyzed a variety of strategies used in antismoking campaigns to determine some of the most and least effective when targeting youth with antismoking messages.

### **III. Evaluation of Antismoking Advertising Campaign by Goldman and Glantz**

The 1998 study performed by Goldman and Glantz identified eight major advertising strategies populating antismoking advertisements and analyzed them to determine which strategies were most effective in prevention of or cessation of smoking among youth. The strategies identified were industry manipulation, cessation, secondhand smoke, addiction, youth access, short-term effects, long-term health effects and romantic rejection.

#### ***Industry manipulation***

Industry manipulation in antismoking advertisements aimed to expose the tobacco industry as deceitful and manipulative in its attempts to attract new users and sell more tobacco products at the expense of Americans' health (Goldman & Glantz, 1998). The tobacco industry targets youth because "they need children and teens to replace their dead and disabled smokers" to keep tobacco sales successful (Associated Press, 2005). Early advertisements using this strategy were not as effective because they used a confusing tactic by referring to the tobacco industry as "they." In a youth campaign effort directed by the Center for Disease Control's Office of Smoking and Health that used "they" to refer to the tobacco industry, 38 percent of youth viewers thought the messages promoted smoking and more than half thought "they" referred to family and peers; only 10 percent perceived "they" as the tobacco industry (McKenna & Williams, 1993). Later advertisements clarified the use of "they" and were more successful in contradicting the glamorous image of smokers portrayed in tobacco advertisements.

Youth adopt certain delinquent behaviors to enhance self-esteem, which explains why they often turned to smoking as a form of rebellion (Barton et al., 1982). Focusing on industry manipulation showed youth that by using smoking as a rebellious tool, they were actually being manipulated by tobacco companies to conform and submit to smoking habits (Beaudoin, 2002). Youth did not like the idea of secretly being manipulated through a behavior they believed allowed them rebellion and independence. Industry manipulation advertisements portrayed the tobacco industry as "the bad guy," which made it a highly effective strategy in communicating antismoking messages to both youth and adults (Goldman & Glantz, 1998).

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## **Cessation**

Antismoking advertisements traditionally focused on conveying the message of cessation, which worked more effectively when targeting adults rather than youth. Most smokers become addicted as teenagers instead of as adults, so promoting smoking prevention was shown to be more effective among youth than promoting cessation (Beaudoin, 2002). Advertising smoking prevention before youth started smoking was a better way to reach them instead of telling them to quit something they already started. Pairing cessation with other more effective strategies also better promoted antismoking messages to youth (Beaudoin, 2002).

## **Secondhand smoke**

Secondhand smoke advertisements were found to be highly effective for both youth and adults because they portrayed children as the innocent bystanders affected by others' smoking habits (Goldman & Glantz, 1998). Neither youth nor adults wanted to see children as helpless victims of cigarette smokers and were made more aware of that fact through antismoking advertisements promoting awareness of secondhand smoke.

## **Addiction**

Showing the addictive quality of tobacco products was effective in targeting youth because it allowed them to realize how addiction would force them to give up control of their lives. Exposing tobacco as an addictive product that realistically attracted young, naive smokers and hooked them for life made youth realize the negative qualities of tobacco companies' deceiving ads promoting the positive qualities of cigarettes (Goldman & Glantz, 1998). The naturally rebellious streak within youth did not want to lose control through cigarette addiction. In addition, exposing to youth the addictive side of tobacco as a lifelong trap for those who used it worked with preventing new smokers from starting because more people began to smoke as youth rather than as adults (Beaudoin, 2002).

## **Youth access**

Antismoking advertisements focusing on ease of youth access to tobacco products were more effective among adults than youth, who were less concerned with the fact that they and their peers could easily acquire cigarettes and other tobacco products from vending machines, stores, family members and friends (Goldman & Glantz, 1998). Among youth, these advertisements were more effective with older adolescents, who showed more concern regarding youth access because to them, the term "youth" applied to younger adolescents who they viewed as children. Children having access to tobacco products was more concerning than older adolescents having access. Studies showed that restricting youth access would not prevent them from obtaining cigarettes because they would get them if they wanted to badly enough (Goldman & Glantz, 1998). The youth access strategy often redirected concern toward addressing a vending machine problem rather than a youth access problem to cigarettes as well (Goldman & Glantz, 2005).

## **Short-term effects**

Focusing on the short-term effects of smoking in youth antismoking advertisements included both health and social effects. Short-term health consequences, such as yellowed teeth, unpleasant body odor, bad breath, and stained fingers, reach youth through "a credible appeal to their vanity" (Wooster, 2000). Youth did not want to be seen or associated with such negative characteristics. Highlighting these health effects also contradicted the tobacco industry's portrayal of smokers as glamorous, sophisticated, and socially successful, an image which could influence youth to start smoking in order to achieve such characteristics (Barton et al., 1982).

The youth within the age range for the population targeted by antismoking advertisements was most concerned about "maximum conformity to peer norms" and therefore was more "susceptible to adopting a certain behavior as a form of impression management" (Barton et al., 1982). Starting to smoke was an example of such behavior. Antismoking advertisements focused on the short-term effects smoking would have on the social lives of these youth in an attempt to dissuade them from smoking. A study measuring sixth-grade and tenth-grade ratings of smoking and nonsmoking models' personality traits in antismoking advertisements rated smokers as less healthy, less wise, less good, less obedient, less likely to do well in school and less desirable as friends (Barton et al., 1982). Since youth would not want their peers to link them with any of

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these negative traits, associating such traits with smoking allowed youth to picture the social consequences of smoking.

Some advertisements emphasizing short-term consequences used emotional pulls to influence youth and better convey antismoking messages. Humor was proven to be an effective strategy for communicating antismoking messages because youth are attracted to humor and can often recall advertisements because of the humor used (Beaudoin, 2002). However, youth reported that using humor to convey these messages often “trivializes the seriousness of smoking,” which may instead downplay the seriousness of short-term health effects and convey this less serious message to youth (Goldman & Glantz, 1998).

### ***Long-term health effects***

Stressing long-term health effects in youth antismoking advertisements included sharing information about tobacco-related diseases, such as emphysema and cancer, as well as death. Youth tend to live in the present and believe themselves invulnerable, even to the long-term effects of smoking cigarettes (Beaudoin, 2002). Antismoking advertisements that instilled fear or threat of disease or death were ineffective because youth associated these consequences with adulthood and old age, thus violating the “time perspective” of youth (Beaudoin, 2002). They were also already aware of the potential for such consequences, which were printed on every pack of cigarettes, and on average did not feel threatened by them unless they had personal experience with someone with a smoking-related disease (Goldman & Glantz, 1998).

### ***Romantic rejection***

Romantic rejection was often portrayed in antismoking advertisements in relation to short-term consequences of youth smoking, focusing on the fact that youth are most aware of how they appear to peers at the target age range. Youth want to appear socially desirable by both the same and opposite sexes and may conform more easily to behaviors, such as smoking, that would allow them to appear this way (Beaudoin, 2002). These antismoking advertisements worked to persuade youth that smoking was an undesirable characteristic leading to romantic rejection. Studies showed, however, that a person’s desirability did not have a strong correlation with their smoking status; it was only related to whether the person was actually considered attractive and appealing (Barton et al., 1982). This showed that youth would be more concerned about whether they are physically attractive to others rather than if they are smokers or nonsmokers.

### ***Other strategies***

Aiming antismoking advertisements at youth meant researching carefully to determine exactly how to create advertisements they can understand and relate to. Some campaigns tried to achieve this by using what was thought to be the language of youth at the time the campaign was launched. Lorillard Tobacco’s youth antismoking campaign in 2000 connected with youth using the slogan, “Tobacco is whacko if you’re a teen.” Though the underlying idea was to deter youth from smoking, using words such as “whacko” did not prove to be most effective in communicating the message to youth. *Stay Free!* columnist Carrie McLaren tested the effectiveness of this campaign’s use of the word “whacko” and published her findings in summer 2000. She compared common words on the youth-populated site Geocities.com, finding that “whacko” only received 6,500 hits compared to “stupid” and “crap” having 383,500 and 168,600 hits, respectively. This lack of commonality associated with “whacko” shows how an antismoking campaign’s attempt at using youth language fell short of its goal of communicating effectively with youth. Constant research must be performed for campaign planners to stay in touch with youth, for whom “language, icons, and activities are a moving target” (McKenna & Williams, 1993).

The Phillip Morris tobacco company also launched an antismoking campaign for youth as a result of the MSA. The slogan of this campaign was “Think, Don’t Smoke,” which employed advertisements directly telling youth not to smoke. Farrelly et al. showed this campaign strategy to be very ineffective, instead encouraging youth to think about and possibly start smoking (2002). Because of this lack of success, Phillip Morris was criticized and suspected of creating the campaign to “buy respectability,” representing the common tendency of tobacco companies to spend hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars on antismoking campaigns while spending billions of dollars on promoting tobacco products (Farrelly et al., 2002; Associated Press, 2005).

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## IV. Method

The 1998 Goldman and Glantz study clearly identified what did or did not work when attempting to target youth with antismoking messages. Each of the eight strategies most populous in youth antismoking advertisements was determined to be effective at various levels, with industry manipulation and secondhand smoke to be the most effective when targeting youth with antismoking messages. This study provided breakthrough information for antismoking campaigns, allowing them to more effectively target youth with antismoking messages.

The *truth* campaign in 2000 was also extremely important in youth antismoking advertising because it generated the strongest levels of receptivity of antismoking advertisements among youth until that point.

So this study examined whether the truth campaign was effective because its advertisements embraced factors that were found by Goldman and Glantz to strongly affect the youth. The author hypothesized that:

The more effective a strategy in youth antismoking advertisements, the more often it will appear in each of the *truth* commercials.

The five commercials analyzed in this study were produced for the *truth* campaign from 2000 to 2002. Sources for the commercials include the website for Arnold Worldwide, the marketing company for the *truth* campaign, and Truthorange, the campaign's YouTube resource.

To measure the effectiveness of each commercial, the author developed a rating system based on the Goldman and Glantz study. The most effective strategy, such as industry manipulation or secondhand smoke, was given 4 points while a strategy with unknown effects, 0 point. Strategies with other levels of effectiveness were given corresponding numerical ratings in between as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Effectiveness ratings of the eight advertising strategies**

Advertising Strategy	Effectiveness of Strategy	Rating
Industry manipulation	High	4
Secondhand smoke	High	4
Addiction	Average	3
Short-term effects	Moderate	2
Youth access	Low	1
Long-term health effects	Low	1
Romantic rejection	Low	1
Cessation	Unknown	0

## V. Findings

Each of five selected commercials in the truth campaign was analyzed and assigned total scores based on the rating level in Table 1 above for effectiveness of strategies in each commercial. The total score for effectiveness as indicated below was determined by summing the rating scores for the strategies used in each commercial.

**Box of Poison** (7 points): industry manipulation, short-term, and long-term health effects

The commercial, "Box of Poison," was created as part of the *Infect Truth* campaign. This commercial shows two teenagers in a post office attempting to ship an "arsenic and cyanide spreading mechanism." They try to ease the postal workers' skepticism by explaining the materials are packed tightly and won't leak out of the packaging, but the workers tell them what they are trying to do is dangerous, hazardous, and illegal. The teens reply that they don't want to do anything illegal; they just want to ship a box of cigarettes. At this

point they flip open the lid on top of the box and expose the package of cigarettes with a message on the inside of the box saying, “There are over 4,000 chemicals in cigarette smoke.” The postal workers are speechless for a moment and the trademark white asterisk from the *Infect Truth* campaign appears over both their heads, signaling they have been “infected” with the truth (Truthorange, 2009, Box of Poison).

“Box of Poison” employs the strategies of industry manipulation, long-term health effects, and short-term (health) effects of smoking. Industry manipulation is shown because viewers can interpret that the industry does not reveal the caustic ingredients found in tobacco products and instead portraying those who use the products in a positive light. Such an image does not reflect the long-term health effects associated with ingesting such ingredients, which are too dangerous to be mailed at a post office. Viewers may not know the short-term or long-term health effects of these ingredients, but by portraying them as dangerous, hazardous, and illegal to ship, they can infer that the ingredients will have negative health and long-term effects on users.

**Baby Invasion** (8 points): industry manipulation and secondhand smoke

The commercial, “Baby Invasion,” was also created as part of the *Infect Truth* campaign. This commercial shows hundreds of mechanically crawling and crying baby dolls being placed arbitrarily in the middle of a busy urban plaza. The dolls are dressed in diapers and orange shirts, the signature color of the *truth* campaign. Passersby stop in their daily routine to watch the scene and many pick up the dolls to read the message printed on their shirts. The message reads:

“How do infants avoid secondhand smoke?

‘At some point they begin to crawl.’

-Tobacco Executive, 1996”

After the message is shown, a wide-angle shot of the baby doll-covered plaza shows people picking up the baby dolls to read the message and the trademark white asterisk from the *Infect Truth* campaign appears over their heads, signaling they have been “infected” with truth (Truthorange, 2009, Baby Invasion).

This commercial uses the strategies of secondhand smoke and industry manipulation. Secondhand smoke is the more obvious focus of the commercial with the idea that babies are helpless to avoid inhaling secondhand smoke until they are old enough to be able to crawl away from it. Industry manipulation is a less obvious strategy used but is highlighted by deglamorizing the positive image the tobacco industry portrays of smokers when their tobacco smoke negatively affects others. This is shown as an especially hard-hitting fact because babies are used to represent those affected by tobacco users’ smoke.

**1200** (4 points): addiction and long-term health effects

“1200” was one of the commercials produced as part of the original *truth* campaign. In the commercial, youth wearing t-shirts each with a number out of 1200 gather together in a street intersection in the city in front of the headquarters of a tobacco manufacturing company. All at once, the youth collapse on the ground and act as if they are completely lifeless, frozen in place and many with their eyes still open. One person remains standing, holding a sign that faces the tobacco company’s building that reads “Tobacco kills 1200 people a day” on one side, and “Ever thinking about taking a day off?” on the other side (Arnold Worldwide, 1200).

This commercial uses the strategies of long-term health effects and addiction. It uses a visual representation of what 1200 people looks like to emphasize the long-term health consequence of death from using tobacco. The fact such a great of a number of people die every day from using tobacco products shows the addictive quality tobacco has on its users.

**Ratman** (7 points): industry manipulation, short-term, and long-term health effects

“Ratman” was another commercial produced as part of the *Infect Truth* campaign. In the commercial, a human-sized rat walks past people down an urban street, breathing heavily and unevenly, and eventually collapses on the sidewalk. The rat holds up a sign saying, “There’s cyanide in cigarette smoke; same as in rat poison” (Arnold Worldwide, Ratman).

This commercial features the strategies of industry manipulation, short-term effects, and long-term health effects of smoking. The human-sized rat dying from ingesting rat poison is metaphorically equal to a person dying from smoking cigarettes. This is a stark contradiction to the glamorous smoking image portrayed by tobacco companies, as well as a useful metaphor for demonstrating the long-term consequence of death from smoking cigarettes. Viewers may not know the short-term or other long-term health effects of cyanide, but by labeling it as an ingredient in something that kills rats, viewers can imagine that the effects are

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negative on one's health. Average people in the commercial viewed the rat with disgust and shock, representing the short-term social effects smoking can have on how a smoker appears to his or her peers.

**Body Bags** ( 4points): addiction and long-term health effects

"Body Bags" was one of the commercials produced for the original *truth* campaign. It shows people unloading hundreds of body bags, each clearly labeled "BODY BAG," on the sidewalk outside a major tobacco company's headquarters. The amount of body bags covers a significant portion of the sidewalk outside the building, as shown from an overhead view from a helicopter. People staple flyers on nearby telephone poles and street signs that read, "Every day 1200 people die from tobacco" (Truthorange, 2009, Body Bags).

This commercial employs the techniques of both long-term health effects and addiction. Using hundreds of dead bodies is a clear demonstration of the long-term consequence of health issues leading to death because of addiction to cigarettes. Though viewers may not personally know how addictive cigarettes can be, the fact that people cannot quit because of the addictive qualities of the product and therefore could eventually suffer health consequences or die presents a strong message exposing such qualities and the long-term health effects of smoking.

## VI. Discussion

These *truth* commercials employed five of the eight strategies identified by Goldman and Glantz: industry manipulation, short-term effects, long-term health effects, secondhand smoke, and addiction, as shown in Table 2. The frequency (number of times the five selected commercials used a specific advertising strategy) is indicated in Table 2.

**Table 2: Relationship between effective rating and frequency**

Advertising Strategy	Effectiveness of Strategy	Rating	Frequency
Industry manipulation	High	4	3
Secondhand smoke	High	4	1
Addiction	Average	3	2
Short-term effects	Moderate	2	2
Youth access	Low	1	0
Long-term health effects	Low	1	4
Romantic rejection	Low	1	0
Cessation	Unknown	0	0

"Baby Invasion" scored eight points by incorporating secondhand smoke and industry manipulation strategies, the most effective *truth* commercial among the five. In terms of effectiveness, this commercial was followed by "Box of Poison" and "Ratman," each with a total score of seven points; and "1200" and "Body Bags," each with a total score of 4 points.

Industry manipulation and secondhand smoke were identified as the most effective strategies when targeting youth with antismoking messages, explaining the success of "Baby Invasion" in this study. Although "Box of Poison" and "Ratman" also addressed industry manipulation, they both used a combination of other strategies found to be less effective by Goldman and Glantz, attributing to their lower ratings. Because neither "1200" nor "Body Bags" used strategies identified as the most effective in targeting youth with antismoking messages, they were rated lowest and shown to be the least effective.

These findings do not seem to support the hypothesis that the more effective a strategy -- like industry manipulation and secondhand smoke -- the more prevalent it will be in the commercials analyzed. For example, the top two strategies were used less frequently than the strategy of longer-term health effects.

However, the commercials did not use ineffective strategies, such as youth access, romantic rejection and cessation.

This study shows that “Body Bags” was rated as one of the least effective commercials in comparison with the others. In contrast, this commercial was actually the most memorable and effective within the first two years of the *truth* and *Infect Truth* campaigns according to AFL statistics (Truth Campaign Overview, 2009). Many studies analyzing the *truth* campaign advertisements cited the “Body Bags” commercial while discussing the success of commercials in helping decrease youth smoking trends.

These alternative views on the “Body Bags” commercial suggests that the Goldman and Glantz study did not provide the best framework for analyzing advertisements within the *truth* campaign. Although the study was successful in identifying effective strategies for antismoking advertisements, the *truth* campaign began a new age of targeting youth with antismoking advertisements using a very different advertising approach from those advertisements analyzed in the Goldman and Glantz study. This study, therefore, explains the inconsistency between the most effective commercial identified by this study and that identified by statistical data from the *truth* campaign.

## VII. Conclusion

The *truth* commercials did use effective strategies and ignored less effective ones. However, they did not necessarily incorporate more effective strategies more frequently. Not all youth respond in the same manner to commercials implementing a certain strategy, so it is important to use several different strategies within each advertisement to ensure they will be effective in targeting all youth. The use of “youth voice” in *truth* commercials is an example of a different approach to creating and producing effective commercials, an approach requiring constant research to determine the most modern, and therefore most effective, strategies in communicating antismoking messages. The *truth* campaign stands out in the field of youth antismoking advertising as an example to show how a unique combination of various tactics and characteristics draws the attention of the target audience on a nationwide scale.

The major limitation of this study is that only a small portion of *truth* advertisements were analyzed, and they did not encompass all the advertisements created in the *truth* campaign because they were all commercials. The campaign included a variety of media to convey the advertisements, but this study focused solely on some of the video advertisements.

The reliability of the sources for the original *truth* and *Infect Truth* advertisements could have been better since they were all online. Most versions of the commercials were found online, allowing for them to be posted by anonymous and perhaps unreliable sources that could have altered the original content, leading to skewed results. The five commercials analyzed in this study were those acquired from sources directly connected to the *truth* campaign, so they are mostly likely to be genuine. The size of the sample for this study must have resulted in somewhat inaccurate findings, but a bigger sample including altered advertisements from unreliable sources could have compromised the results, too.

Further studies can be done with a larger sample, or a sample including commercials using a different medium, such as newspaper ads. Another study can be done whether the effectiveness of each strategy can be determined not only by its presence but also by how well it was implemented in each commercial, too.

## Acknowledgements

This author is thankful to Dr. Don Grady at Elon University for his supervision and advice, without which the article could not be published. The author also appreciates numerous reviewers who have helped revise this article.

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# The Evolution of Product Placement in Film

Alex Walton\*

Corporate Communications, Senior  
Elon University

## Abstract

*The current study examines product placements in Hollywood films over the last 90 years. After a presentation of how scholars have defined product placement and its effectiveness, a brief history of product placement in Hollywood cinema is given. A content analysis was performed on nine films, one from each decade starting with the 1920s, to determine the number and quality of product placements in each film as a representative of the decade. The findings were then analyzed and what they suggest about the evolution of product placement in Hollywood film is discussed.*

## I. Introduction

Balasubramanian (1994) used the term “benefit-mix” to describe organizational efforts to combine aspects of both advertising and publicity to utilize the advantages of each, while avoiding their respective shortcomings (1994, p. 29). While advertising allows organizations to have control over their message and its dissemination, it is often viewed as less credible with audiences. With publicity, organizations work through the media to transmit messages (or branding efforts). Although organizations give up some degree of control over the message (or brand representation), it is commonly believed that the message is viewed as more credible since it is being disseminated via the media rather than an organization (Guth & Marsh, 2003). Messages that achieve this benefit-mix are known as “hybrid messages” (p. 29-30).

One type of hybrid message is a product placement, or a paid product message aimed at influencing movie or television audiences via the planned and unobtrusive entry of a branded product into a movie or television program (Balasubramanian, 1994). While many cite Steven Spielberg’s film *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* as the beginning of product placement, closer examination shows that products were present in cinematic films from the creation of the medium (Newell, Salmon, & Chang, 2006; Lehu, 2007). Thus, the current study seeks to examine the evolution of the use of products in cinema.

## II. Literature Review

Scholarly research on the topic of product placement is largely limited in focus to films and television programming produced during the 1980s and after (Newell, Salmon, & Chang, 2006). Beyond histories of product placement written in recent years—such as Newell, Salmon, & Chang (2006), Lehu (2007), and

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\* **Keywords:** product placement, Hollywood, cinema, film, advertising, *Wings*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *The Best Years of Our Lives*, *The Greatest Show on Earth*, *The Graduate*, *Jaws*, *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*, *Independence Day*, *The Dark Knight*  
Email: gwalton@elon.edu

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Segrave (2004)—product placements prior to Reese's Pieces in *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982) have not been examined.

Following the use of Reese's Pieces in *E.T.*, scholarly research has focused on numerous topics surrounding product placement, such as defining product placement (Balasubramanian, 1994; Gupta & Gould, 1997a). The most popular topic is product placement effectiveness, which encompasses product placement practitioners' views (Karrh, McKee, & Pardun, 2003), audience views on product placement (DeLorme & Reid, 1999), specific characteristics of placements that make placements more effective (Gupta & Lord, 1998), and studies about how audiences remember product placements (D'Astous & Chartier, 2000; Law & Braun, 2000; Cowley & Barron, 2008; Roehm, Roehm, & Boone, 2004; Russell, 2002). There have also been content analyses of television programming and film to determine the number of product placements present in these popular entertainment forms (Ferraro & Avery, 2000; LaFerle & Edwards, 2006; DiSisto & Miller, 2008).

The seemingly overnight popularity of product placement among scholars in the 1980s raises the question of whether product placement was truly present before *E.T.* History suggests that it was present, and used from the beginning of cinema. The next question raised is how product placement changed in the 1980s to become the subject of academic scrutiny. First, a brief history of product placement will be presented to illustrate from where current beliefs about product placement arise.

Although the term "product placement" seemed to have been coined in the 1980s (Newell, Salmon, & Chang, 2006), the practice actually dates back to before the beginning of motion pictures. There are clear examples of product placements in stage performances and art that predate motion pictures (Lehu, 2007). In Edouard Manet's painting *Un bar aux Folies-Bergère*, for example, there is clear portrayal of Bass beer (Lehu, 2007). Charles Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers* also could be considered product placement as the name Pickwick comes from a carriage line that appears in the novel. On the stage, Sarah Bernhardt wore La Diaphane powder and also served as a spokesperson appearing on the brand's posters (Lehu, 2007). Likewise, cinema innovators the Lumière brothers worked with Lever as early as 1896 to showcase Sunlight Soap (Newell, Salmon, & Chang, 2006; Lehu, 2007). Other brands to create early advertising films include Admiral Cigarettes, Pabst's Milwaukee Beer, and Nestlé (Segrave, 2004). In an article titled "Camera! Action! Sales!" *Business Week* (1939) relates the story of an early commercial film for Dewar's Scotch:

It came to him, we assume, one bright Spring day when, walking down Broadway, he observed all the giddy menfolk standing in line to get into the peep shows that were the current rage of the town. Perhaps the gentleman had a peep himself. Anyway, the idea came: Why not run a peep show to advertise Dewar's Scotch whisky? And as a result a commercial motion picture was born.

The article goes on to mention examples of commercial films for Columbia bicycles and Piel's beer, stating that the practice of making films with real products happened as early as 1894. While many of these films were created for specific brands, they were also produced to be shown in mainstream theaters as entertainment pieces (Segrave, 2004). Thus, while they do not fit into modern definitions of product placement, it is clear that such films laid the groundwork for modern product placements.

Newell, Salmon, and Chang (2006) suggested that product placement began through the use of family ties and grew into a means of reducing the cost of producing motion pictures through the use of free products and giving those products exposure at no cost. The practice of using real products in a film was called many things prior to the term product placement, such as exploitation, tie-ups, tie-ins, plugs, and trade outs (Newell, Salmon, & Chang, 2006). While the Lumière brothers started product placement in films, Thomas Edison turned it into a viable part of the film business, using branded rail lines and cigarettes in his films (Newell, Salmon, & Chang, 2006).

By the 1920s, American films were selling products worldwide. For instance, a Brazilian lumber baron started using an American-made saw blade after seeing one used in an American film (Newell, Salmon, & Chang, 2006). Segrave (2004) quotes Will Hays, the head of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA), as saying, "[The motion picture] is the greatest agency for promoting the sales of American-made products throughout the world." Many early product placements were cross promotions in which the films would feature products and the product manufacturers would create advertisements promoting the film (Newell, Salmon, & Chang, 2006). The New York Times noted the trend of brands getting their products in films in a 1929 article. According to the Times (1929), "Automobile manufacturers graciously offer the free use of high-priced cars to studios. Expensive furnishings for a set are willingly supplied by the makers, and even donated as permanent studio property," and also "agents eager for publicity for jewelry or wearing apparel ap-

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proach movie stars directly.” The article also states that there were times when monetary compensation was offered.

Segrave (2004) suggests that in the early days of the studio system, the studios were not heavily involved in advertising because there was not very much money to be made. As the industry began to grow, however, members of the motion picture industry and the business world began to notice the impact of film to persuade audiences even without direct advertising attempts (Segrave, 2004). Film actors, who were contracted to the studios, were also sought out to become spokesmen for brands. While the MPPDA banned stars from endorsing products, this quickly became impossible, particularly with the branded radio programs such as General Motors radio time (Segrave, 2004). By the end of the 1920s, movies began using products in the production, and at times showing them. However, this practice was still largely barter agreements rather than paid placements.

President of the MPPDA, Will Hays, was a major lobbyist for the benefits of placing American-made products in films. In a 1930 radio address on a coast-to-coast network, Hays told Americans, “The motion picture carries to every American at home, and to millions of potential purchasers abroad, the visual, vivid perception of American manufactured products,” (New York Times, 1930).

In the 1930s, the Walter E. Kline agency had a list of products available for placement in movies that studio executives could use, such as Remington typewriters, IBM tabulating machines, and appliances from General Electric (Newell, Salmon, & Chang, 2006). These deals were called tie-ups and the products were free to use with the only stipulation being that the movie allow images of the product in the film to be used for advertising purposes (Newell, Salmon, & Chang, 2006).

By the 1940s product placement specialists at public relations firms and advertising agencies became known as exploitation agents (Newell, Salmon, & Chang, 2006). It was not until the end of the 1940s that product placements, or tie-ups as they were called, became profitable. Newell, Salmon and Chang (2006) cite documents that show the director of *Love Happy*, the Marx Brothers’ final film, sold signage in the climax of the movie to three companies (Cowan, 1949b; Lahan, 1949).

By the 1950s and 1960s, studios had lists of contacts for tie-up merchandise and by the 1970s, some production companies kept warehouses stocked with brand-name props ready for use (Newell, Salmon, & Chang, 2006). Finally, in 1982, the use of Reese’s Pieces in the film *E.T.* brought the practice of product placement to the forefront and inspired scholarly research on the practice (Newell, Salmon, & Chang, 2006). Thus, this study proposes to address this question in order fulfill Newell, Salmon, and Chang’s (2006) call for “understanding of the long-term development of product placement.” Specifically, this research will examine this through two research questions.

- RQ1: What is the extent of product placement in top-grossing films from each decade from the 1920s to the 2000s?

This first question serves two purposes. The first is to find concrete evidence that there were instances of product placement in mainstream Hollywood films from the 1920s on. The second is to examine changes in the number of instances of product placement from decade to decade. Presence of a quantitative change, particularly from the 1970s to the 1980s, will hopefully lend some insight to why product placement became such a hot topic in the 1980s. Qualitative changes will also be important, and so the second research question asks:

- RQ2: How did the characteristics of product placements in top-grossing films from the 1920s to the 2000s change from decade to decade?

This question seeks to assess the evolution of product placement over the last 90 years. Specifically, it will compare movies from the 1920s to the 1970s with movies from the 1980s to the 2000s to see if there are qualitative differences that suggest reasons for the increase in scrutiny by scholars in the latter period.

### III. Method

A content analysis was performed on one of the top grossing Hollywood movies from each decade from the 1920s to the 2000s as defined by box office gross. This information was obtained from the American Movie Classics’ Film Site and Lee’s Movie Info websites. Each film was chosen because it was one of the top ten grossing American films of its decade, it was not an animated film, it was not a film set in a time period other than the one during which it was filmed, and it was available to the coder for viewing. Table 1 shows the list of films selected.

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**Table 1. Top Grossing Hollywood Movies from each decade**

Year	Film	Gross
1927	Wings	Unlisted
1939	Mr. Smith Goes to Washington	\$9 million
1946	The Best Years of Our Lives	\$23.6 million
1952	The Greatest Show on Earth	\$36 million
1967	The Graduate	\$104.4 million
1975	Jaws	\$260 million
1982	E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial	\$435.1 million
1996	Independence Day	\$306.2 million
2008	Dark Knight	\$533.3 million

Coding was done using a method combining elements of Ferraro and Avery's (2000) study, LaFerle and Edwards's (2006) study and DiSisto and Miller's (2008) study (see Appendix A for the coding sheet). A total of 20.6 hours of film were analyzed for product placement. A placement occurred when a movie scene portrayed a brand or product either verbally, visually or both (Ferraro & Avery, 2000; DiSisto & Miller, 2008). The placement began when the product or brand was shown and ended when the scene changed (DiSisto & Miller, 2008). The brands fell into seven categories, including automotive, food & beverage, entertainment & news, hygiene, technology, clothing, and other. Coding categories included mode of appearance (visual, verbal, audiovisual), tone of placed product (positive, negative, neutral), prominence of placement (clear or unclear), other branded products in the scene (yes or no), relevance to the plot (high, some, low), and character interaction (yes or no). Then the data was analyzed.

## IV. Results

### *Findings from RQ1*

A total of 108 placements were coded and identified in 9 movies (20.6 hours of film). A product placement was only coded if the brand logo was visible or the brand name was stated. Table 1 illustrates the number and percentage of placements for each film as well as the number of brands in each film. Table 2 illustrates the number and percentage of placements in the movies made during three time periods (1920s-1940s, 1950s-1970s, 1980s-2000s), as well as the average number of placements per movie in the films made in those time periods.

As Table 2 illustrates, there are continual increases in the number of placements in each film, reaching a peak with E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial in 1982. The 19 placements, which include brands placed multiple times, present in The Greatest Show on Earth cause the film to be an outlier. Examining the unique brands, meaning the number of brands present in the film at least once, shows a more consistent trend of increase. There is a general trend of slight increase until E.T. where there is a large jump. Then there is a slight decrease following E.T. consistent with both number of placements and number of brands. Table 3 further emphasizes this trend with 58 percent of placements occurring in films produced after 1980. Thus, the extent of product placement is much greater in the most recent thirty-year period than in the previous thirty-year periods.

**Table 2. Number of product placements by film**

Film	Number of Placements	Percentage of Placements	Unique Brands
Wings	4	3.70%	3
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington	4	3.70%	2
The Best Years of Our Lives	4	3.70%	4
The Greatest Show on Earth	19	17.59%	3
The Graduate	5	4.63%	5
Jaws	9	8.33%	7
E.T.	29	26.85%	21
Independence Day	22	20.37%	15
Dark Knight	12	11.11%	11
Total	108	100.00%	66

**Table 3. Number of product placements by period**

Time Period	Number of Placements	Percent of Placements	Average # of Placements per Film
1920-1949	12	11.11%	4
1950-1979	33	30.56%	11
1980-2009	63	58.33%	21
Total	108	100.00%	

### ***Findings from RQ2***

The characteristics of each of the 108 placements noted were recorded and analyzed according to the six coding categories. The individual results of each placement in each film can be found in Appendix B. In order to better analyze the data, each of the films was grouped with two others to create three 30-year time periods. The placement characteristics for each period is illustrated in Table 4. Both the raw numbers of each type of placement and the percent that each of these numbers represents for its time period are given. The percents are more useful for comparisons between decades and so they will be referred to in reporting the results.

The first category examined was the mode of the placement. As Table 4 illustrates, the majority of all placements (85.19%) were visual-only placements. This means that the brand or product was only shown on screen, either in use by a character or as a part of the set, and never actually mentioned. This general trend held true for each of the three time periods, with 91.67 percent of placements from the 1920s-1940s being visual-only, 78.79 percent of placements from the 1950s-1970s being audio-only, and 87.30 percent of placements from the 1980s-2000s being visual-only.

The second category examined was the tone of the placement. As Table 4 illustrates, the majority of all placements (92.59%) were neutral. This means that the brand or product was portrayed in neither a positive or negative light. It was simply shown as a product or brand. The overall trend held true for all three time periods, with 75 percent of placements from the 1920s-1940s being neutral, 90.91 percent of placements from the 1950s-1970s being neutral, and 96.83 percent of placements from the 1980s-2000s being neutral.

The third category examined was the prominence of the placement. As Table 4 illustrates, the majority of all placements (97.22%) were shown clearly in the scene. This means that the brand name was clearly visible to the audience and was generally in the very center of the screen or was mentioned very obviously in dialogue. The overall trend held true for each of the three time periods, with 100 percent of placements from the 1920s-1940s being clear, 100 percent of placements from the 1950s-1970s being clear, and 95.24 percent of placements from the 1980s-2000s being clear.

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**Table 4. Characteristics of product placement**

Coding Category		1920s-1940s	1950s-1970s	1980s-2000s	Total
Mode	# of visual	11 (91.67%)	26 (78.79%)	55 (87.30%)	92 (85.19%)
	# of audio	1 (8.33%)	6 (18.18%)	5 (7.94%)	12 (11.11%)
	# of AV	0 (0.00%)	1 (3.03%)	3 (4.76%)	4 (3.70%)
Tone	# of positive	3 (25%)	2 (6.06%)	2 (3.17%)	7 (6.48%)
	# of neutral	9 (75%)	30 (90.91%)	61 (96.83%)	100 (92.59%)
	# of negative	0 (0.00%)	1 (3.03%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.93%)
Prominence	Clear	12 (100%)	33 (100%)	60 (95.24%)	105 (97.22%)
	Unclear	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (4.76%)	3 (2.78%)
	High	2 (16.67%)	13 (39.39%)	9 (14.29%)	24 (22.22%)
Relevance	Some	2 (16.67%)	9 (27.27%)	22 (34.92%)	33 (30.56%)
	Low	8 (66.67%)	11 (33.33%)	32 (50.79%)	51 (47.22%)
Character Use	Yes	5 (41.67%)	15 (45.45%)	39 (61.90%)	59 (54.63%)
	No	7 (58.33%)	18 (54.55%)	24 (38.10%)	49 (45.37%)
Other Brands	Yes	4 (33.33%)	0 (0.00%)	14 (22.22%)	18 (16.67%)
	No	8 (66.67%)	33 (100%)	49 (77.78%)	90 (83.33%)

The fourth category examined was the relevance of the placement. The majority of all placements (47.22%) had low relevance to the plot. This means that the product or brand placed did not serve an integral part of the plot. Brands and products with some relevance to the plot accounted for 30.56 percent of placements. This means that the product or brand served a minor purpose in the plot. For instance if a character needs to drive a car and the car turns out to be a Ford, the Ford car has some relevance to the plot. Brands and products with high relevance to the plot accounted for 22.22 percent of placements. This means that the product or brand served a major part in the plot. For instance, in *The Greatest Show on Earth* (Demille, 1952) the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's circus was the setting of the movie and so it had high relevance to the plot.

The overall trends varied slightly in the three time periods. In the films produced during the 1920s-1940s, 66.67 percent of placements were of low relevance, 16.67 percent of placements were of some relevance, and 16.67 percent of placements were of high relevance. In the films produced during the 1950s-1970s, 33.33 percent of placements were of low relevance, 27.27 percent of placements were of some relevance, and 39.39 percent of placements were of high relevance. In the films produced during the 1980s-2000s, 50.79 percent of placements were of low relevance, 34.92 percent of placements were of some relevance, and 14.29 percent of placements were of high relevance.

The fifth category examined was character use of the product or brand. The majority of placements (54.63%) of placements involved a character using the brand or product. This means that a character either uses the product or brand physically or mentions it verbally, or both. This varied in the three time periods. In the films produced during the 1920s-1940s, only 41.67 percent of placements involved character use while 58.33 percent of placements did not involve character use. In the films produced during the 1950s-1970s, only 45.45 percent of placements involve character use while 54.55 percent of placements did not involve character use. In the films produced during the 1980s-2000s, 61.90 percent of placements involved character use, thus following the overall trend, while only 38.10 percent of placements did not involve character use.

The sixth category examined was the presence of other brands. The majority of placements (83.33%) did not show the placed brand with other brands. This means that the placed product or brand appears in the scene by itself with no other competing products. This overall trend held true for each of the three time periods with 66.67 percent of placements from the 1920s-1940s occurring with no competing brands, 100 percent of placements from the 1950s-1970s occurring with no competing brands, and 77.78 percent of placements from the 1980s-2000s occurring without competing brands.

## V. Discussion

The results suggest that the characteristics surrounding product placements in Hollywood films have not changed. In fact, the characteristics have remained largely consistent. The mode and prominence of placements over the 90 year span examined exemplify what Gupta and Lord (1998) found to be the most effective product placements: visual and clear. As the content analysis results showed, 85.19 percent of the placements recorded were visual and 97.22 percent of the placements recorded were clear. The placements also followed the guidelines that product placement practitioners set out in Karrh, McKee, and Pardun's (2003) study, specifically that the placement should show the product in use and omit competing brands. The content analysis revealed that 54.63 percent of the placements showed the product in use by a character and that 83.33 percent of placements omitted competing brands. The majority (47.22%) of placements were of low relevance to the plot, however, departing from DeLorme and Reid's (1999) suggestion that placements that are relevant to the plot are more effective. Thus, the results suggest that while scholarly research only recently revealed specific characteristics that make a placement successful, placement practitioners have been employing these techniques, for the most part, since at least the 1920s.

Instead of suggesting that the characteristics of product placement have changed over the last 90 years to spark the increase of scholarly research surrounding the practice, the results of the content analysis suggest that the number of placements has increased. While it seems a natural conclusion that the increase in product placement was the catalyst for the increase in research, the opposite could as easily be true. *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* had the highest instance of product placement (29). This is frequently cited as the first major use of product placement in film. It is possible, however, that the sudden notice of product placement following *E.T.* brought a wider knowledge of the practice to filmmakers. It is possible that these filmmakers saw the practice as more acceptable since it became the subject of public scrutiny. Thus, this research has raised the question of whether the increase in product placement sparked the increase in research or if the scholarly research sparked the increase of product placement. This merits further study.

Another interesting finding of this study was the extent of product placement in Cecil B. DeMille's 1952 Best Picture winner, *The Greatest Show on Earth*. This film follows a fictional cast of the world-famous Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's Circus. While the plot and characters are fictional, the circus is not. The entire movie plugs the circus with numerous instances of the circus's name being on display. The name of the film is the circus's slogan. Thus, this film is an example of major product placement, and it was filmed 30 years before *E.T.* It follows the television advertising model of the day by having one major sponsor present throughout the entirety of the program. Instead of the Texaco Star Theater or Colgate Comedy Hour, it is the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's film. It would be useful to examine the terms that the circus and Paramount worked out for the film.

A final interesting finding from the research is that there was an instance of product placement in each of the films, which were not chosen for their use of product placement. This means that products have been placed in films since the early days of Hollywood, and these placements have been very similar in their portrayal. It would be useful to expand the current study to examine all of the top grossing films of each decade. It would also be useful to examine the top grossing films from each year in a similar study to get a more accurate picture of the product placement landscape of the last ninety years.

## VI. Conclusion

Product placement has been present in Hollywood films since at least the 1920s. While the number of placements in films has increased, the placements themselves have not. Thus, the characteristics of placements cannot be the cause of the academic scrutiny of product placement that has become so prevalent since the 1980s. Rather, this scrutiny must stem from the increase in product placement in recent years starting with *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*.

This study faced several limitations, the first of which was time constraints. Because the study was limited to a two and a half month period, only nine films could be analyzed. While the nine films presented interesting results that suggest the use of product placements over the last ninety years, one or several of the films could be outliers, meaning that they contained an unusual number of placements. The current study also does not consider multiple genres of film, and thus could miss certain genres that use many product place-

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ments or other genres that use none.

Another limitation of the current study is that only one coder was used, again due to time constraints. While many placements were coded, the use of a second coder would have been useful to gain a more unbiased opinion of the number and characteristics of placements in the nine films. A second coder could have noticed placements that the one coder did not, and could perceive a placement as having different characteristics.

A third limitation is the coder's knowledge of products from the past. There were certain instances when branded products could have been shown or mentioned and the coder did not notice them simply because he was unfamiliar with the product or brand, particularly in films from the earliest time period. This could potentially affect the number of placements in the earlier films and thus change the results.

One final limitation is the number of product placements in the early years. Because the number of product placements in the early decades was so limited, it prevents statistical analysis from being accurately used. It would be helpful for a future study to include more films from each period so that statistical analysis would be useful and accurate to help show the evolution of product placement use over time. While statistical proof is a limitation, the trends illustrated seem accurate and clear.

With all these limitations, the current study should serve as a pilot study. While valuable results were discovered, the limitations make further research necessary to draw definite conclusions. The trends discovered in this study should lay the foundation for further research by providing a hypothesis to test, namely that product placements have not changed in characteristics drastically but have increased over the years.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Copeland for his help in developing this study and mentorship during the research and writing process. I would also like to thank my classmates in my communications capstone class for their helpful feedback in developing this study.

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## Appendix A

### Coding Sheet

Wings (1927) 4 total placements								
Brand	Vis/ Verb	Pos/ Neg	Clear&Center	Other brands	Rele- vance	Character Use	Timecode	Category
Ford	vis	posi- tive	clear & center	none	high	some	0:26:21	Auto
Hersheys	vis	neu	clear & center	none	some	yes	0:28:41	Food/Bev
Harley Davidson	vis	neu	center	none	some	yes	0:29:33	Auto
Hersheys	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	no	0:32:59	Food/Bev
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (1939) 4 total placements								
Brand	Vis/ Verb	Pos/ Neg	Clear&Center	Other brands	Rele- vance	Character Use	Timecode	Category
CBS	vis	neu	clear & center	NBC	low	yes	1:50:17	Ent/News
NBC	vis	neu	clear	CBS	low	no	1:50:17	Ent/News
CBS	vis	neu	clear & center	NBC	low	yes	2:01:10	Ent/News
NBC	vis	neu	clear	CBS	low	no	2:01:10	Ent/News
The Best Years of Our Lives (1946) 4 total placements								
Brand	Vis/ Verb	Pos/ Neg	Clear&Center	Other brands	Rele- vance	Character Use	Timecode	Category
American Airlines	verb	neu	clear	none	low	no	0:01:13	Other
Western Airlines	vis	neu	somewhat clear	none	low	no	0:02:14	Other
Coca-Cola	vis	slight pos	clear	none	low	no	0:13:44	Food/Bev
Woolworths	vis	slight pos	clear	none	low	no	0:13:48	Other
The Greatest Show on Earth (1952) 19 total placements								
Brand	Vis/ Verb	Pos/ Neg	Clear&Center	Other brands	Rele- vance	Character Use	Timecode	Category
Ringling Bros	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	no	0:03:01	Ent/News
Ringling Bros	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	no	0:03:05	Ent/News
Ringling Bros	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	no	0:03:38	Ent/News
Ringling Bros	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	no	0:03:47	Ent/News
Ringling Bros	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	no	0:15:17	Ent/News
Ringling Bros	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	no	0:19:53	Ent/News
Ringling Bros	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	no	0:28:28	Ent/News
Ringling Bros	verb	neu	clear & center	none	high	no	0:41:46	Ent/News
Disney (Characters)	vis	neu	clear & center	none	some	yes	0:44:27	Ent/News
Ringling Bros	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	no	0:44:34	Ent/News
Disney	both	pos	clear & center	none	high	yes	0:45:10	Ent/News

Ringling Bros	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	some	0:52:34	Ent/News
Coca-Cola	vis	neu	center	none	low	no	1:10:52	Food/Bev
Ringling Bros	vis	neu	center	none	high	no	1:13:26	Ent/News
Ringling Bros	vis	neu	center	none	high	no	1:43:04	Ent/News
Ringling Bros	vis	neu	clear	none	low	yes	1:43:55	Ent/News
Minnie Mouse	verb	neu	clear	none	low	yes	1:52:17	Ent/News
Ringling Bros	vis	neu	clear	none	low	yes	2:00:50	Ent/News
Ringling Bros	vis	neu	clear	none	low	yes	2:07:09	Ent/News

### The Graduate (1967) 5 total placements

Brand	Vis/ Verb	Pos/ Neg	Clear&Center	Other brands	Rele- vance	Character Use	Timecode	Category
Alpha Romeo	verb	pos	semi-clear	none	some	no	0:04:51	Auto
Olympia Beer	vis	neu	semi-clear	none	low	yes	0:41:03	Food/Bev
Ford	verb	slight neg	clear	none	some	no	0:49:50	Auto
Total	vis	neu	clear	none	low	yes	1:37:24	Food/Bev
Chevron	vis	neu	semi-clear	none	low	no	1:40:08	Auto

### Jaws (1975) 9 total placements

Brand	Vis/ Verb	Pos/ Neg	Clear&Center	Other brands	Rele- vance	Character Use	Timecode	Category
Chevrolet	vis	neu	clear	none	some	yes	0:07:14	Auto
Chevy	vis	neu	clear	none	some	yes	0:10:56	Auto
Cadillac	vis	neu	clear	none	some	yes	0:12:05	Auto
Mustang (Ford)	vis	neu	semi-clear	none	low	no	0:27:51	Auto
Coca-Cola	vis	neu	clear & center	none	low	no	0:57:46	Auto
Beer	vis	neu	clear & center	none	low	no	1:06:15	Food/Bev
Blistex	verb	neu	clear	none	some	yes	1:10:47	Hygiene
Old Spice	verb	neu	clear	none	some	yes	1:12:49	Hygiene
Beer	vis	neu	clear	none	some	yes	1:13:27	Food/Bev

### E.T. (1982) 29 total placements

Brand	Vis/ Verb	Pos/ Neg	Clear&Center	Other brands	Rele- vance	Character Use	Timecode	Category
Chevy	vis	neu	clear & center	none	low	yes	0:05:01	Auto
Coke	vis	neu	clear	yes (Fr- esca)	low	no	0:08:10	Food/Bev
Fresca	vis	neu	clear	yes (Coke)	low	yes	0:08:10	Food/Bev
Raid	vis	neu	clear	yes (Coke, Fresca, Tab)	low	no	0:08:21	Other
Tab	vis	neu	clear	yes (Raid, Coke, Fresca)	low	no	0:08:35	Food/Bev
Reese's Pieces	vis	neu	clear & center	none	some	yes	0:15:27	Food/Bev
Lowry's	vis	neu	clear	none	some	no	0:18:46	Food/Bev

Reese's Pieces	vis	neu	clear	none	high	yes	0:18:46	Food/Bev
Coke	vis	neu	yes	yes (Reese's Pieces)	low	no	0:22:04	Food/Bev
Reese's Pieces	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	yes	0:25:24	Food/Bev
Audi	vis	neu	clear & center	none	some	yes	0:26:14	Auto
Pez	both	neu	clear & center	none	some	yes	0:29:17	Food/Bev
Coke	vis	neu	clear	yes(yoplait, V8)	some	no	0:30:51	Food/Bev
Yoplait	vis	neu	clear	yes(V8, Coke)	some	no	0:30:51	Food/Bev
V8	vis	neu	clear	yes(Coke, Yoplait)	some	no	0:30:51	Food/Bev
Coke	verb	neu	clear	none	some	yes	0:31:28	Food/Bev
Wilson	vis	neu	clear & center	none	low	yes	0:32:59	Clothing
Reese's Pieces	vis	neu	clear & center	none	some	no	0:37:44	Food/Bev
V8	vis	neu	clear & center	yes (Del Monte)	low	no	0:44:29	Food/Bev
Del Monte	vis	neu	clear & center	yes (V8)	low	no	0:44:29	Food/Bev
Coors	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	yes	0:45:19	Food/Bev
Speak&Spell	vis	neu	clear & center	none	some	yes	0:48:00	Other
Reynold's Wrap	vis	neu	clear & center	none	low	no	0:50:38	Other
Seasame Street	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	yes	0:53:00	Ent/News
Old Spice	verb	pos	clear	none	some	yes	0:57:30	Hygiene
Polaroid	vis	neu	clear & center	none	some	yes	1:02:14	Tech
Nike	vis	neu	clear	none	low	yes	1:03:12	Clothing
Audi	vis	neu	clear	none	some	yes	1:07:12	Auto
Nike	vis	neu	clear	none	some	yes	1:11:41	Clothing

### Independence Day (1996) 22 total placements

Brand	Vis/ Verb	Pos/ Neg	Clear&Center	Other brands	Rele- vance	Character Use	Timecode	Category
Letterman	verb	neu	clear	none	low	yes	0:06:02	Ent/News
USA Today	vis	neu	not very clear	none	high	yes	0:06:09	Ent/News
X-Files	verb	slight pos	clear	none	low	yes	0:08:58	Ent/News
Cherry Coke	vis	neu	semi-clear	none	low	yes	0:09:07	Food/Bev
Coke	vis	neu	semi-clear	none	low	yes	0:09:22	Food/Bev
Sky News	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	yes	0:14:52	Ent/News
AT&T	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	yes	0:15:47	Tech
Coca-Cola	vis	neu	clear	yes (Coors)	low	no	0:19:10	Food/Bev
Coors	vis	neu	clear	yes (Coca-Cola)	low	no	0:19:10	Food/Bev
Reebok	vis	neu	clear	none	low	yes	0:24:09	Clothing
Coke	vis	neu	clear & center	yes (Minute Maid)	low	no	0:26:35	Food/Bev
Minute Maid	vis	neu	clear & center	yes (Coke)	low	no	0:26:35	Food/Bev
HBO	verb	neu	clear	none	low	yes	0:32:23	Ent/News
Quaker	vis	neu	clear	none	low	no	0:32:50	Food/Bev
Fox	vis	neu	clear & center	none	some	yes	0:36:22	Ent/News
Mac	vis	neu	clear & center	none	some	yes	0:37:20	Tech
Mac	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	yes	0:41:25	Tech
Mac	vis	neu	clear & center	none	some	yes	0:46:06	Tech
Coke	both	neu	clear & center	none	some	yes	1:37:03	Food/Bev
Reebok	vis	neu	clear & center	none	low	yes	1:45:49	Clothing



Reebok	vis	neu	clear & center	none	low	yes	1:49:57	Clothing
Reebok	vis	neu	clear & center	none	low	yes	2:14:34	Clothing
<b>Dark Knight (2008) 12 total placements</b>								
Brand	Vis/ Verb	Pos/ Neg	Clear&Center	Other brands	Rele- vance	Character Use	Timecode	Category
Ford	vis	neu	clear	none	some	yes	0:07:33	Auto
Canon	vis	neu	clear	none	low	no	0:31:53	Tech
Nokia	vis	neu	clear & center	none	high	yes	0:33:47	Tech
Mercedes	vis	neu	semi clear	none	low	yes	0:48:30	Auto
Chase	vis	neu	not too clear	none	low	no	0:55:28	Other
Caribou Coffee	vis	neu	not too clear	none	low	no	1:14:41	Food/Bev
ScottTrade	vis	neu	semi clear	none	low	no	1:23:22	Other
Purell	vis	neu	semi clear	none	some	no	1:41:55	Hygiene
Lamborghini	both	neu	clear & center	none	some	yes	1:45:09	Auto
Ford	vis	neu	semi clear	none	low	no	1:49:26	Auto
Dodge	vis	neu	semi clear	none	low	no	1:49:32	Auto
Purell	vis	neu	clear	none	some	yes	1:51:24	Hygiene

**Total Placements: 108**

Automobile	Food & Beverage	Entertainment & News	Hygiene	Tech	Clothing	Other
18	34	29	5	7	7	8

## Appendix B

### Characteristics by Film

Film	# of visual	# of verbal	# of AV
Wings	4	0	0
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington	4	0	0
The Best Years of Our Lives	3	1	0
The Greatest Show on Earth	16	2	1
The Graduate	3	2	0
Jaws	7	2	0
E.T.	26	2	1
Independence Day	18	3	1
Dark Knight	11	0	1
Total	92 (85.19%)	12 (11.11%)	4 (3.70%)
Film	# of positive	# of neutral	# of negative
Wings	1	3	0
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington	0	4	0
The Best Years of Our Lives	2	2	0
The Greatest Show on Earth	1	18	0
The Graduate	1	3	1
Jaws	0	9	0
E.T.	1	28	0
Independence Day	1	21	0
Dark Knight	0	12	0
Total	7 (6.48%)	100 (92.59%)	1 (0.93%)

Film	# of Clear	% clear	# of unclear	% unclear
Wings	4	100.00%	0	0.00%
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington	4	100.00%	0	0.00%
The Best Years of Our Lives	4	100.00%	0	0.00%
The Greatest Show on Earth	19	100.00%	0	0.00%
The Graduate	5	100.00%	0	0.00%
Jaws	9	100.00%	0	0.00%
E.T.	29	100.00%	0	0.00%
Independence Day	21	95.45%	1	4.55%
Dark Knight	10	83.33%	2	16.67%
Total	105	97.22%	3	2.78%

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Film	High Relevance	Some Relevance	Low Relevance
Wings	2	2	0
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington	0	0	4
The Best Years of Our Lives	0	0	4
The Greatest Show on Earth	13	1	5
The Graduate	0	2	3
Jaws	0	6	3
E.T.	4	14	11
Independence Day	4	4	14
Dark Knight	1	4	7
Total	24 (22.22%)	33 (30.56%)	51 (47.22%)

Film	Character Use	Percent Character Use	No Character Use	Percent No Character Use
Wings	3	75.00%	1	25.00%
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington	2	50.00%	2	50.00%
The Best Years of Our Lives	0	0.00%	4	100.00%
The Greatest Show on Earth	7	36.84%	12	63.16%
The Graduate	2	40.00%	3	60.00%
Jaws	6	66.67%	3	33.33%
E.T.	17	58.62%	12	41.38%
Independence Day	17	77.27%	5	22.73%
Dark Knight	5	41.67%	7	58.33%
Total	59	54.63%	49	45.37%

Film	Other Brands	Percent	No Other Brands	Percent
Wings	0	0.00%	4	100.00%
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington	4	100.00%	0	0.00%
The Best Years of Our Lives	0	0.00%	4	100.00%
The Greatest Show on Earth	0	0.00%	19	100.00%
The Graduate	0	0.00%	5	100.00%
Jaws	0	0.00%	9	100.00%
E.T.	10	34.48%	19	65.52%
Independence Day	4	18.18%	18	81.82%
Dark Knight	0	0.00%	12	100.00%
Total	18	16.67%	90	83.33%

# Translating Success in Sports to Children's Non-Profit Organizations: A Content Analysis of Organizations' Web Sites

Kyle Johnson \*

Elon University

## Abstract

*This study attempted to find the correlation between the success of a non-profit children's organization that was founded by a professional athlete and the web site features available in the online representation of the organization. Measured variables included the number of features displayed on the web site, which were previously identified as having an impact on Internet success in other studies, and also the level of interactivity that the web sites displayed for the purpose of communicating with their online visitors. The findings of this study suggest that the success of a non-profit organization and the comprehensiveness of its web site in terms of features displayed are connected and work together to secure a solid position for the organization as it works toward its mission. The more developed an organization's web site in both number of features and level of interactivity, the greater the chance that the organization successfully works toward accomplishing its mission of helping children.*

## I. Introduction

Non-profit organizations have a common element to their missions: awareness. To get this in this day in age, a useful and efficient web site is just as important as the individual who is leading the organization to its mission. Without the public being aware of a non-profit organization, there is little chance that it will be able to sustain itself financially because the only source of income for these foundations is private fundraising. The way fundraising is accomplished most successfully today is through online collection methods and special events that are usually promoted through tools on the web site.

There is a specific type of non-profit organization that has received very little attention from past research reports. This type includes organizations that were founded by professional athletes primarily to reach and help children through their mission. The presence and involvement of one or multiple professional athletes is what sets this category apart from others. With the amount of money these athletes have to invest in the initial set-up of the organization, there is a distinct advantage that is given to the organization. Along with this financial edge, the high profile nature of the founders makes the possibility for success even higher. In many cases, having a professional athlete found an organization is even better than having a celebrity spokesperson, especially a youth organization, because these figures have already achieved iconic status among their target audiences. They can receive media attention more easily than other organizations. Their events and causes, if promoted the right way, are more likely to be supported by the community in which they

\* **Keywords:** professional athletes, website features, successful foundations, interactive features, non-profit children's organization.

Email: kjohnson30@elon.edu

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work.

This study tried to identify the common web elements that are connected to the success of the foundations belonging to these types of non-profit organizations. It also examined whether the level of interactivity of the web site is correlated to the success of the organization. With this study's findings, a better understanding of the necessary elements for success will be available for future founders of non-profit organizations. This benefit is not exclusive to just professional athletes.

## **II. Literature Review**

The advent and subsequent support of the Internet has changed the world in countless ways. Tasks that once took hours to accomplish can now be completed in seconds. In addition, goals for raising money can be multiplied two or even three times with an online presence. The effects of the Internet can be seen in the functionality of both professional and personal daily projects by looking at the changes in how conversations are had (Olsen, Keevers, Paul and Covington 365).

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, provide an ideal example. Before the attacks, "the record for annual online donations was the American Red Cross's \$2.7 million in 1999" (Waters 60). After watching the events of that day unfold, Americans have "turned to the Internet to send donations to the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and other relief agencies" (Waters 60). That year alone, about \$110 million was collected online and the number of non-profit organizations with online giving capabilities soared from about 50 percent to about 80 percent (Waters 60).

Some would argue that the Internet, as a form of communication, has grown "redundant" and now lacks the faith or interest of the people who use it (Kenix 422). Despite this, its use and popularity has continued to soar.

Corporations have taken advantage of the Internet for their social responsibility projects, but non-profits seem to excel in providing more convenient ways of giving. Since corporations operate on a for-profit basis, they often have to justify their good deeds and online giving capabilities. This presents a major obstacle to the overall goal of the corporate social responsibility idea (Coupland 356). This has not gone unnoticed by the Federal Communications Agency (FCA), which has begun to worry about some of the similarities between non-profit organization and commercial web sites. Ideas have been proposed that many non-profit organizations should operate under the same government scrutiny as commercial sites (Hoy and Phelps 58).

Despite this attention from the FCA, non-profits continue to have one major advantage over most commercial sites, which is that "people give to people in foundations, and that simply means that there are unique personalities behind each foundations funding decisions" (Adams 82). In other words, more intimate relationships are able to be developed through the interactions between a non-profit organization and its donors. Corporations have stockholders to worry about while non-profits can have "an issue, constituency, and donor-investor focus" (Grace 11). For a philanthropy cause in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, expectations are extremely high. So in order to meet them, all three partners (the community, the non-profit and the donor-investors) must be involved (Grace 11).

There have been three different types of giving identified that involve philanthropy projects and the change their mission moves towards:

- Amelioration—lessening suffering within existing systems;
- Adaptation—adjusting current system
- Restoration—returning things to their "original condition" (Karoff 27).

However, there are still some philanthropy projects operating through non-profit organizations which are not focused on giving, but rather disseminating information. Many of these non-profits focus around children (Cai 73).

Non-profit organizations that are open to new ideas have generated the most successful charity missions and tactics (Atlas 25). For example, celebrity golf tournaments and dinners used to be considered cutting edge but are no longer "the cash cows for which [non-profit organizations] hoped" (Atlas 25). The Internet drove many of these ideas, including the "shop for a cause" idea. These operate by donating a portion

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of profit from an online purchase to a charity through designated commercial web sites. Instead of going to Ebay, for example, a customer would go to a “shop for a cause” site to purchase their needed item and have part of the order go to charity. While not always the best option for every non-profit charity, it “can be a great first step to establishing an e-commerce presence” (Frenza and Hoffman 10).

Some studies are finding that while non-profit organizations are dealing with increased demand for their services and monetary support, there is a decreased public support of their causes, which is manifesting itself in a decreased willingness to donate money (Marx 137-138). A possible reason for this decline in donor-investor attention could be that there are more dual income families with less time available for outside concerns (Marx 138).

Numerous studies have shown that both commercial for-profit and philanthropic non-profit organizations can benefit from having strong interactivity incorporated into their web presence (Coyle and Thorson 75; McMillan and Hwang 30). The more interactivity and vividness of a web site's interface, including the presence of warm colors and numerous pictures, have been shown to generate more positive attitudes toward the site (Coyle and Thorson 75). This is paramount when using the site to persuade visitors to give money to the cause for which the organization is advocating. Newsweek predicted this importance and emphasis that is now being placed on user interaction on the Internet in May of 1993. This issue declared that all aspects of our lives would be transformed by an “interactive revolution,” and has since been continually proven correct.

“Interactivity has been defined using multiple processes, functions, and perceptions” (McMillan and Hwang 30). There is no one definition of interactivity because it encompasses so many different elements that are constantly evolving. Just when we get used to blogs, Twitter is introduced, creating an all new learning curve. Despite the many different definitions, there are three elements that can be considered an “umbrella” for all of the possible features displayed by interactive capabilities: direction of communication, user control, and time (McMillan and Hwang 30).

At least one study has found that interactive capabilities are not always suitable or preferred for all situations or people. This study found that there are certain personal and situational factors that decrease user satisfaction with interactivity (Liu and Shrum 62-63). Reasons are that some people may not necessarily seek to be in control of their online experience. They may be on the Internet for a purpose that does not call for user control. A lack in user satisfaction may result in a loss of credibility, which could be significant for a non-profit organization seeking to use online interaction as a method of collecting donations.

A proven factor in credibility is the web site interface design. This testing suggests that the site's overall purpose should influence how the site is designed. For example, “the symmetrical site was chosen as most credible for death penalty non-profits but the organic site was chosen as most credible for abortion non-profits” (Kensicki 156). This finding was explained by the possibility of having the site's primary issues dictate how serious or symmetrical the site should be. In other words, a good designer understands that content is “integral in dictating design” (Kensicki 156). This study also found that warm colors and pictures increase the credibility of a web site.

In a recent study, 83.7 percent of analyzed non-profit web sites were found to contain a “press room” of sorts that was designed to enhance the media exposure of the organization. In fact, 75.6 percent of press rooms on these pages were located on the front pages of the web sites. However, only 48.8 percent of the sites that had a press room were clearly labeled as “press room” or “news room” (Yeon, Choi and Kioussis 77). These web site invitations for media are just another way that these non-profit organizations are looking to create relationships with those parties that can help them with their mission, which is why it is crucial to have them clearly labeled.

The media is a primary target of these invitations, but donors are even bigger targets. The lifetime value of a donor “is based on their average gift level, gift frequency, and expected retention rate” (Austin 24). “Connecting with donors and involving them in additional activities—such as advocacy, volunteering, and sending messages to friends—will help develop strong donor relationships” (Austin 24). Donor relationships are a common theme in articles that talk about online fundraisers. Another suggestion is to create profiles of the donors' interests and then encourage and invite them to interact online with the organization (Austin (2) 23).

It is important to have tracking tools available to the organization that can measure the success of any particular aspect of the mission, whether it is counting supporting members, funds raised, or daily online visitors. “Tracking key metrics during a fundraising campaign will help you later determine the campaign's success” (Austin (2) 24). When the metrics show that the goal of the organization has been achieved, less

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emphasis can be placed on collecting money and the organization can focus on the development of the relationships it created, which will only further enhance the organization's future goals (Sargeant, West and Jay 142).

The research of online interactivity, design and fundraising for non-profit organizations is extensive. Limited attention has been given to non-profit organizations founded by high-profile professional athletes who have relationships they can leverage, media exposure, visibility and money to make an immediate difference toward their cause. Children's missions are usually the most popular organizations and tend to garner the most support from the city in which these athletes play their sport.

With these separating factors between children's non-profit organizations founded by professional athletes from children's non-profits that were founded by non-athletes, there is a channel of research available to find out what online features and level of interactivity are associated with or needed for the success of the organization's mission.

### III. Method

For this study, children's organizations founded by professional athletes were chosen using multiple methods. In search for organizations that have been around for over 10 years, a sports charities article that appeared in USA Today was used. The article itself was 10 years old but had a very impressive list of all types of organizations and charities that were started by professional sports figures. The list was divided up into seven equal sections and one children's organization was chosen out of each section in order to create a random sample. In some cases, a section did not contain a children's organization or had one that either did not operate a web site or even exist anymore. In the end, five organizations were identified all of which have existed for over 10 years.

To match this set of older organizations, five more organizations were found that have been in operation for less than 10 years. This sampling was much more difficult because databases like the USA Today article all seemed to be outdated. To combat this trend, a manual search was performed to see which of the prominent athletes of recent years have built a children's organization. This research turned up five more children's organizations that were started by popular sports figures that have not been in the lime light for quite as long as the first group of athletes. Each of the 10 organizations selected had children as a central focal point in their mission statement.

The most important task that needed to be completed before beginning this study was how to operationalize the variable of success when it came to a web site that represents a professional athlete's children's non-profit. This measurement needed to be able to reflect the organization's accomplishment of its mission statement while allowing it to be compared with the other organizations. One point was given to organizations for each of the events or newsworthy actions hosted by the organization that were in line with their mission statement since 2008. These newsworthy actions were found from announcements, logos of annual events and calendar reservations on the organizations' web sites. This point system reflects a current reading of success that was as independent from the web site features as possible. When the score reached more than 5 points, "5+" was assigned. So the possible score for each foundation was 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 5+. The organization that scored 4 points or more was classified as a *more successful* one, while the others, a *less successful* one.

A total of 10 web site features were checked for this study: 1) Clearly labeled mission statement; 2) presence of news room or press room; 3) Newsletter sign-up or direct download; 4) Online donation capability (Measure of Interactivity); 5) Direct Message capacity (Measure of Interactivity); 6) List of programs and events; 7) Pictures of athlete with children; 8) Annual Report Available Online; 9) Interaction between athlete and online visitors (Measurement of Interactivity); and 10) Foundation merchandise available online. (See *Appendix for code used*.)

Each organization was checked to see whether its web site had each of the ten features of interest. The selection of these features was largely influenced by a 2007 study performed by Richard D. Waters, entitled "*Nonprofit Organizations' Use of the Internet: A Content Analysis of Communication Trends on the Internet Sites of the Philanthropy 400.*"

From the development of the rating system, two hypotheses were formed:

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- Hypothesis 1: If organizations are more successful, they will have a more complete representation of the mission statement, online donation and other programs on its web site.
- Hypothesis 2: The level of interactivity (features 4, 5 and 9) of the organizational web sites will have an effect on the success of the organization measured by their points scored.

## IV. Results

### ***Level of Success***

The children's non-profit organizations scored various points as shown below. Six organizations belonged to a successful group by scoring 4 points or more while the other four, a less successful group.

Organizations founded at least 10 years ago:

- Jerome Bettis (NFL, retired), "The Bus Stops Here" (4 points)
- Vince Carter (NBA), "Embassy of Hope" (5 points)
- Peyton Manning (NFL), "PeyBack Foundation" (4 points)
- Gary Player (PGA), "The Player Foundation" (2 points)
- Tiger Woods (PGA), "The Tiger Woods Foundation" (5+ points)

Organizations founded less than 10 years ago:

- David Wright (MLB), "The David Wright Foundation" (5 points)
- Dwight Howard (NBA), "The Dwight Howard Foundation, Inc." (0 points)
- Dwyane Wade (NBA), "Wade's World Foundation" (5+ points)
- Adrian Peterson (NFL), "All Day Foundation" (3 points)
- Ryan Howard (MLB), "The Ryan Howard Family Foundation" (1 point)

### **Test of Hypothesis 1**

Out of the six more successful organizations, only three (50%) had their mission statement clearly labeled in a manner that made it easy to find and read. On the other hand, three (75%) out of the less successful four organizations displayed their mission statement. The less successful group is more likely to have this feature than its counterpart.

When it comes to the capability of collecting donations through the web site directly, only three (50%) in the more successful group had this feature, while only one (25%) in the other group.

When all 10 features were considered, the more successful organizations displayed 5.7 features on average, while the less successful ones, 4.0 features. As a result, Hypothesis 1 was supported overall, even though not on each of all features. To check whether this difference was big enough to be statistically significant, the sample size should be enlarged.

### **Test of Hypothesis 2**

Unlike Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2 (regarding Feature Nos. 4, 5, and 9) was strongly supported. As mentioned above, a half of the more successful organizations displayed Feature No. 4, while only a quarter of the organizations identified as less successful included it on their web sites.

When it comes to Feature 5, direct message capability, two-thirds of the more successful group had this feature while only a quarter of the other group had it.

Regarding Feature 9, interaction of athlete and online visitors, a third of the more successful group had it, in comparison with only a quarter of the less successful group.

Overall, all but one of the six organizations in the "more successful" category displayed at least one of the three interactive features, showing a display rate of 83 percent. On the other hand, the less successful

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category included only two organizations, 50 percent.

The following chart shows more details. The organizations are broken down into two groups: those formed before the year 2000 and thereafter. They are divided into another two groups by color. The green rows represent the more successful group, while the red rows, the less successful group.

## V. Discussion

There was not a strong correlation between the success of a children's foundation started by a professional athlete and the spectra and capabilities of its web site features, so only limited conclusion can be drawn from the findings. The organizations that scored high on the success scale did so probably because they were very active in working in line with their mission. With more activity occurring within the organization, more attention was likely to be given to the web site, which would result in the capability of more features being displayed. Similarly, the organizations that scored low on the success scale did so because they were not as active in accomplishing their mission in terms of events and contact with the group of children they were concerned with. With less activity, there would likely be much less attention given to what the organization did internally, such as the web site and its capabilities.

There were some exceptions to this idea that were revealed throughout the study. The Gary Player Foundation was one exception. This organization had six out of the 10 features and only scored a two on the success scale. The Player Foundation's web site was just a small part of the Gary Player Enterprise site, though. Golf course design, real estate, media, a golf pro shop and a magazine all helped to bury the Player Foundation under a pile of parts that make up the Gary Player Enterprise. The enterprise itself was very active, but the foundation was only a small part of that and did not receive the amount of attention it needed in order to become a successful organization that could stand by itself. Because its web site, while well-designed, was distracted with so many other initiatives, its web capabilities did not properly indicate how successful the foundation was.

Another exception to the correlation was Adrian Peterson's "All Day Foundation." Likely not the only one out of the 10 organizations to have outsourced the web designing task for the construction of the organization, it was certainly the most obvious. The web site was very well designed and extremely interactive with online visitors but there was simply not enough content and news about what the organization was accomplishing to make it successful.

One of the benefits that professional athletes have for creating their own non-profit foundation is the financial ability to gather what is needed to start the organization. Web sites, in this day in age, are an essential component to any successful organization and must be given not just money, but considerable attention so that the image of the organization can be passed along to potential donors. Another benefit that professional athletes have is that people are automatically drawn to them and what they are doing. They often have the connections, or at least the status, to make things happen if they want them badly enough. So if a professional athlete finds a cause great enough to start an organization around, it is usually not an issue of "How?" for them. The issue comes up when the maintenance work begins. Many of the organizations in this study operate with minimal staff members, which can limit how much attention is given to the mission of the organization.

Take Peyton Manning's "Payback Foundation" for example. Manning's own father, Archie Manning, is listed as the secretary of the organization, with Peyton's wife as the vice president. These are small operations at heart that rely completely on the dedication of only a few staff members and mostly volunteers.

With the rise in social responsibility arguments, many athletes may feel pressured to create a non-profit organization. It may be that they think having such an organization will help their popularity among the fans and increase their value with their current team if they help the community in which they play. While there is nothing seriously wrong with this possibility, simply having an organization that bears their name is not enough, it must be active and able to show fruits for their labors in order to truly be a success.

As for interactivity, there was a clear advantage to having a web site that offered visitors everything they would need to do in one place. This is important, especially when asking for visitors to donate their money to the cause. Interactivity gives visitors the freedom to contact the organization freely without the added work of sending a letter through the mail. The Tiger Woods Foundation was a great example of how

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an interactive site can be used to offer everything that a visitor may want or need in one place. This site used a video of Tiger Woods welcoming each visitor to the site and had a simple contact and donation method that could all be done without ever lifting a pen, printing out a piece of paper or even navigating to another web site.

Simply having an online donation capability can greatly increase the amount of funds that come in to support the organization, so long as the web site that is inviting them to do so is legitimate and professional enough to earn their trust before they decide to donate. The widespread use of PayPal in today's Internet society is an automatic signal of security and simplicity that is important for any non-profit organization to take advantage of. Adversely, to have a physical address in the description of how to donate denotes a lack of (what has become) basic technology that can hurt the credibility of the organization.

## **VI. Conclusion**

A non-profit organization founded by a professional athlete would do well to take advantage of a thoughtfully designed web site that can successfully display features to attract and entice visitors to become an interactive part of the organization. Visitors should be able to find answers to questions they may have as well as act out what they wish to do, whether it is to donate money or volunteer their time, without ever having to leave the web site. While these factors do not individually guarantee the success of the organization, as this study has shown, they will help offer a more solid foundation to any non-profit organization, not just children's organizations. Foundation's web sites can be used as mountain tops to share and display messages to relevant publics and can legitimize the business aspect of each organization. First and foremost, though, the organization needs to have the commitment from the staff so that strides are commonly and systematically taken to accomplish the mission set forth by the children's organization.

As is the nature of professional sports, athletes can be traded at virtually any time, which would impede the progression of their non-profit organization. Also, negative media attention, even on the athlete as an individual, can quickly shut down a non-profit organization that must be built on trust and character. This was the case with Kobe Bryant's organization, which was shut down while there were still only rumors of adultery being discussed by the media. This research was conducted before the controversy around Tiger Woods emerged. The effects of this controversy may not be seen on the foundation for some time as more details and truths leak out.

It is acknowledged that this study had a small sample of organizations to draw conclusions from. This drawback was inevitable because only a limited number of athletes were both still active in their sport and founders of a children's non-profit organization that was still functioning. Also, the success scale that measured the success of these non-profit children's foundations was new and unproven.

The reason that the operational measurement of the success of these organizations did not include the amount of money raised or number of children helped is that these numbers were not readily available for the entire sample. Taking these numbers straight from the organization, especially the number of children helped would not be a reliable source since these numbers could easily be padded to add the illusion of success. Measuring success with the number of events and newsworthy actions hosted by the organization is a measurement of the dedication that is present at the operational level of the organization, including volunteers, funds available and management, and is thus more representative of success.

## **Acknowledgments**

This author is thankful to Dr. Haygood at Elon University for his supervision and guidance, without which the article could not be published. The author also appreciates numerous reviewers who have helped revise this article.

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## Appendix

### Web Features and Code

#### **1. Clearly labeled mission statement (Waters, 66)**

Code: The mission statement must have an eye-catching element to it, whether it is titled in the body of one of the pages or given a link in the menu. It does not include statements in plain text that are hidden in the middle of a sentence. Plain text statements of the mission can only be counted if there is no other plain text on the page (for example, the home page), with nothing around it to distract the eye. The term “mission” must be used in the labeling of the statement.

#### **2. News room or press room (Waters, 66)**

Code: The news or press room can be included in a section of the web site other than the foundation itself if it is featured on the athlete’s personal web site. It must be clearly labeled with “news,” “press” or “media” appearing somewhere in the heading. RSS feed or E-News sign-up links do not constitute as a news room.

#### **3. Newsletter sign-up or direct download**

Code: There must be a link or online sign-up capability that will lead directly to the newsletter, either as an email or direct download. Newsletters for the athlete’s entire web site count as long they are for the foundation as well since they would likely include news about the children’s foundation.

#### **4. Online donation capability (Waters, 67) (Measure of Interactivity)**

Code: Within the foundation web site, there must be a way available to donate money to the organization without ever leaving the web site itself. The site must offer a method that does not include the use of regular mail. The use of Paypal is acceptable.

#### **5. Direct Message capacity (Measure of Interactivity)**

Code: Direct Message means that you can write the email within the context of the web page and send it directly to the organization. Email addresses (linked or not) and street addresses do not constitute as direct message capability.

#### **6. List of programs and events (Waters, 66)**

Code: The events listed must occur within the context of the foundation section of the web site. They can be in plain text and do not require a separate web page. Past events are acceptable, along with future and annual events.

#### **7. Pictures of athlete with children (Coyle and Thorson, 75)**

Code: Any picture within the foundation web site that includes both the athlete and children together is acceptable. Side-by-side pictures of a group of children in one and the athlete in another should not be counted. Videos that are embedded within the foundation site, as long as they include the athlete with children, can be counted.

#### **8. Annual Report Available Online**

Code: There must be a link provided that leads directly to the retrieval of the most recent annual report. It must be included on the foundation site and not somewhere within the rest of the web site if the main web site is the athlete’s personal site.

#### **9. Interaction between athlete and online visitors (Measurement of Interactivity)**

Code: This can include a short letter, video or any other message in which the athlete is speaking directly to the online visitors. Blogs constitute as interaction as long as visitors can comment on the posts. Also, if the site advertises that the athlete has or is answering questions originally posed by visitor email, this constitutes as interaction.

#### **10. Foundation merchandise available online (Waters, 67)**

Code: Merchandise for the individual athlete is not included in this category. The online store must be set up so that foundation-branded merchandise is being sold, or that the proceeds of the purchase go directly to the foundation.

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# Image Reparation Strategies in Sports: Media Analysis of Kobe Bryant and Barry Bonds

Jennifer Kennedy\*

Senior majoring in Corporate Communications  
Elon University

## Abstract

*The professional sports world is plagued with scandal. Two such scandals with important implications were sexual assault charges brought against NBA star Kobe Bryant and the charges brought against BALCO Laboratories in a process that implicated MLB star Barry Bonds. By examining media coverage of these two athletes surrounding the scandals, one can discern what image reparation strategies work in the athlete's favor and which work against the athlete. This gives public relations professionals in the sport industry guidelines to follow in establishing and maintaining an athlete's positive image throughout a scandal.*

## I. Introduction

Fans expect a lot from sporting celebrities, and though they constantly want to know more about them, fans are quick to judge any problems or imperfect qualities (Summers and Johnson Morgan, 2008). However, fans seem to forgive some athletes faster than they forgive others, if they forgive at all, when indiscretions occur. Why do we forgive some athletes and not others? From what types of scandals is it easier for an athlete to recover? What mitigating circumstances must exist for an athlete to be forgiven? How should athletes respond when involved in a negative situation?

A review of literature demonstrates that little research has been published in the realm of image repair strategies of Major League Baseball (MLB), National Basketball Association (NBA), and National Football League (NFL) players. This paper serves to inform sports public relations professionals of appropriate strategies to use in the image repair and restoration process following a scandal.

## II. Literature Review

Few studies have analyzed image repair strategies utilized by athletes after a scandal, and even fewer have done so in the last ten years. Benoit and Hanczor (1994) examined Tonya Harding's strategy to deny charges that she was involved in Nancy Kerrigan's attack. Nelson (1984) discussed the image reparation of Billie Jean King after her affair with a former secretary was exposed. These studies provide some foundation, but much has changed in recent years in terms of athlete scrutiny by the media and the public.

In addition, players in the three major American sports leagues – the NFL, NBA, and MLB – have been excluded from most studies. However, there are a few that provide a foundation for further study of the

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\* **Keywords:** Image reparation; Professional athlete; Kobe Bryant; Barry Bonds; and Sport scandal  
Email: jkennedy7@elon.edu

topic.

Brazeal (2008) explored the statements made by Terrell Owens after he was deactivated from the Philadelphia Eagles team for being belligerent and publicly insulting toward his team and coaching staff. This study concluded that the way Owens and his agent handled the situation was the reason he was not forgiven. Owens is a player whose on- and off-field transgressions are constantly overlooked because of his talent. However, in this situation, Owens took that too far. He and his agent employed many commonly successful image repair strategies but never admitted fault or cited corrective action to eliminate the problem in the future. Brazeal attributed the image repair strategy's failure to Owens' inability to acknowledge these two things. This study suggests that winning and talent are so important to sports fans that they are likely to forgive if the player makes an honest and sincere apology, admitting fault and citing corrective action.

In a study on a successful image restoration strategy, Jerome (2008) explored the approach of NASCAR driver Tony Stewart through apologia. The study found that apologia seems to be an appropriate and effective method to employ in incidents and scandals related to sport celebrities, although it did not provide conclusive evidence. However, Jerome cited a confounding variable: the athlete's success. Although not a player in the NFL, NBA, or MLB, it can be argued that NASCAR, as a commercially driven sport continuously growing in popularity, receives a level of scrutiny similar to those leagues. Thus, this study can be used as a foundation for analysis of image repair strategies in this category.

These studies, in addition to being few in number, also only examine the statements made by the players themselves and surrogate speakers. They do not attempt to explore the media's role in the effect the strategy has, nor do they explore many image reparation techniques other than apologia. However, they do provide two important conclusions that apply to this study. First, they demonstrate that a sincere apology from the athlete can go a long way. Second, they imply that success in their respective sport may have influence over whether or not the public will forgive an athlete.

Carstairs (2003) discusses four doping scandals in sports history, one of which was MLB player Mark McGwire's use of androstenedione. The study cites several reasons McGwire's use of this substance was forgiven. First, the substance was not banned in MLB and was available over the counter, meaning that it enhanced performance but was legal and safe. Second, doping in team sports does not receive as much publicity or scrutiny because individuals on a team do not make that big of a difference compared to athletes in individual sports. Third, national pride was not at stake because it was strictly a domestic matter. Fourth, this incident occurred at a unique time: MLB had just come off a player's strike, and fans were disillusioned by it. The home-run record race between McGwire and Sammy Sosa was infusing enthusiasm into the sport again, and no doping scandal was going to interfere with that. This study shows that a combination of factors may often be present that will result in little need for an elaborate reparation strategy.

It is also important to note the definition of a scandal. In-depth interviews of sports sponsors and sports media representatives revealed behavior deemed scandalous is primarily characterized as illegal or unethical. Sponsors thought that legality was the biggest issue in defining a scandal, while media personalities felt the actions were scandalous primarily because they challenged the integrity of the game (Hughes & Shank, 2005).

There is a need for more examination of recent incidents in the most scrutinized and valued sport leagues in America. This study uses media analysis to discern image reparation tactics as presented to the public and to gauge public perception of two athletes involved in scandal, Kobe Bryant and Barry Bonds. Therefore, this study aims to determine appropriate and successful responses to scandals and transgressions in sport.

### **III. Case Studies**

#### ***Case Study 1: Kobe Bryant***

In 2003, NBA star Kobe Bryant was charged with sexual assault. The criminal charges were dropped because the alleged victim refused to testify, and a civil suit was settled out of court. Without a conviction, neither side was ever proven. However, Bryant's transgression no longer seems exceptionally significant to the public.

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Before the incident, Bryant was often characterized as a good citizen, husband, and father with a squeaky clean image (Cooper, Tuchman, Buckley, and Hinojosa, 2003; Buckley, Toobin, Choi, 2003; Gibson, Napolitano, Acuna, La Jeunesse, Nauert, and Estrich, 2003). He was also described as polite, courteous, gracious, and philanthropic (Grace, 2003). According to Fox News correspondent William La Jeunesse, Bryant and his publicists had always promoted the star as different from other NBA players, someone with a clean lifestyle. This is also seen in his endorsements, as he was the third most sought-after sports figure for endorsements after Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods; he had deals with Sprite, Spaulding, McDonald's, and Nike totaling \$10 million to \$12 million per year (Gibson et al., 2003).

When the incident was first revealed, Bryant spoke to the *Los Angeles Times*, saying he would not do something like this. It is ambiguous whether or not he meant he would not have an affair or would not rape anyone. However, when the district attorney filed charges and cited DNA proof that Bryant had sex with the alleged victim, Bryant immediately set up a press conference declaring he was guilty of adultery, but not of rape (Cooper et al., 2003). It was clear that Bryant did not want to tarnish his image and his family if charges were not going to be filed, but when the D.A. made it clear that they would be, Bryant felt it was necessary for his defense to admit that he engaged in sex with this woman.

Bryant's statement included many important elements. First, his wife sat by his side, showing her support. Second, he apologized and repented for committing adultery. Third, he publicly apologized to his wife. Fourth, he vehemently denied committing a crime. In addition to all of these, he chose a female defense attorney to represent him, which limited his image as a sexual predator (Grace, 2003). All of these elements combined to give a fairly convincing, heartfelt statement to the press that said Bryant was sorry for not being perfect but that he did not commit a crime.

After the initial arrest, Los Angeles Lakers general manager Mitch Kupchak said the allegations against Bryant were out of character and that Bryant was one of the finest young men the team has known (Cooper et al., 2003). Bryant's wife also issued a statement when charges were filed, saying that her husband made a mistake but did not commit a crime and that she intended to stand by him as he fought the charges (Gibson, Napolitano, Acuna, La Jeunesse, Nauert, and Estrich, 2003). These statements lent credibility to Bryant's case by illustrating his strong relationship with his wife and past precedent of good conduct.

Throughout the process, Bryant cooperated with authorities, showing he was a good citizen and had nothing to hide (Grace, 2003). The timing of his defense strategy also worked to his benefit. As soon as the district attorney announced that charges would be filed, Bryant and his wife both issued statements (Whitfield & Tuchman, 2003). This was important because it didn't seem as if they were devising a story or plan. The truth does not take long to formulate compared to a cover-up, and the rapid release of statements helped to solidify the idea that what Bryant was saying was the truth.

After his press conference, Bryant pretty much stayed quiet. According to sports agent Drew Rosenhaus, this was the right move. Rosenhaus believed that Bryant did the right thing in admitting he made a mistake in committing adultery and defending himself vehemently against the charges but also recommended that Bryant maintain a low profile to limit the media coverage of the situation (Buckley, Toobin, Choi, 2003). Bryant did this, and in general, the media coverage garnered by Bryant's actions covered his talent on the basketball court, not anything he said or did regarding the trial. The exception to this, which will be discussed later, was the coverage of mistakes and controversies encountered throughout the trial process. However, these were not under Bryant's control.

When the criminal charges were dropped, Bryant issued a letter of apology to his accuser. It stated that while he believed the encounter was consensual, he realized after the course of the trial that she did not feel the same way (Adams, 2004). Overall, this statement did not seem to harm to the athlete's image. Many believe that this apology was part of a deal the woman's attorneys were planning to settle the civil suit (Knott, "Victim", 2004). Others even think it helped him to come across as the good guy, apologizing and offering her some sort of consolation (Inskeep, 2004). However, something agreed upon is that he did not admit to sexually assaulting the woman (Adams, 2004). Maintaining a consistent position throughout the court proceedings proved successful for Bryant, as he was never caught in a lie after his initial press conference, eliminating some doubt whether he was telling the truth.

There were a few outside factors that also negatively influenced the credibility of Bryant's accuser, which in turn increased Bryant's credibility. Many pieces of evidence that would damage the accuser's credibility were highly publicized. Even when pieces of evidence were ruled inadmissible in court, the public heard about them. This called Bryant's accuser's credibility into question and therefore limited extra damage done

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to Bryant's image. This, along with the prosecution dropping the case against Bryant, made fans question the charges against Bryant, causing less damage to his image. Also, Bryant's accuser filed a civil suit before the criminal trial was over, which still remained when she told prosecutors she could not testify in the criminal trial. This would call her motives into question, giving the appearance that the woman was after money more than anything else. If these were her motives, the incident may or may not have actually occurred. With this, the popular inclination would be to believe that the woman made everything up, which would mean that the only damage to Bryant's reputation would be due to his adultery, not because he sexually assaulted someone.

When the allegations were initially revealed, media personnel around the country were shocked. Bryant was always available to the press after games to answer questions, always being forthcoming and helpful. Jim Gray, an ESPN correspondent, said he had never seen Bryant have a bad moment in public or in private, and many media representatives thought these allegations were completely out of character (Grace, 2003).

There was a media frenzy surrounding Bryant's case. Web sites dedicated to the case filled the Internet, and it was a popular topic for talk radio and talk TV (Henninger, 2003, p. A8). International newspapers updated readers around the world on the trial against Bryant. There were more stories written about Bryant's situation than anything else in the NBA (Sandoval, 2004).

There were many reasons for this extensive coverage, but three were much more prevalent than the rest. First, Kobe Bryant is a heavily followed sport celebrity with international reach (Smith, 2009; Paul, 2009). Second, the case involved many controversial issues, including the defendant's right to privacy and the admittance of the defendant's psychiatric and sexual history. There were also many missteps by the court throughout the trial that garnered a great deal of media attention because they threatened the likelihood of a fair trial. Bryant's lawyers also challenged and found loopholes in rape shield laws, inspiring debate and political reform around the country (Kenworthy, 2005; Johnson, 2004). Third, Bryant's sexual assault accusation had not yet been settled in civil court when a rift between Bryant and teammate Shaquille O'Neal sent O'Neal to another team, caused coach Phil Jackson to retire, and caused a great divide among the organization as well as the fans (Knott, "Lakers Soap Opera", 2004). This brawl garnered a great deal of media attention in its own right, but most did not end without the mention of Bryant's impending legal battle. Because of this, the case was also often mentioned in any summary of recent Lakers' history in media coverage (Leon Moore, 2005).

Bryant was eligible for free agency while the criminal proceedings were happening, and many different teams around the league were pursuing him, despite the possibility that he would be found guilty and jailed (Wilbon, 2004). It seems from this that Bryant's talent on the court was such that transgressions off the court could be forgiven, or at least this one. Teams seemed to think that Bryant was worth the risk. They trusted him personally, athletically, or both.

Media coverage reported that many people, although disillusioned by the accusation against Bryant and his admitted adultery, planned to wait until the case was completely resolved before drawing any conclusions (Cooper et al., 2003; Grace, 2003). Media coverage also reported many accounts of people saying that Bryant's press conference was genuine and compelling, including an account describing Bryant as showing a full range of emotions, including anger, frustration, and remorse (Abrams & Scarborough, 2003). This would indicate that many people believed that Bryant was genuine in his remorse, which is important in the process of forgiveness. However, Bryant's jersey sales dropped to number 90 in 2005, much lower than his normal top spot, indicating that fans were not willing to accept all of his legal problems right away (Simon, 2005).

Simplified, Bryant's image repair strategy was to stay out of the headlines on personal issues and in the headlines for what he did on the court. With O'Neal gone from Los Angeles, Bryant quieted down. He was not involved in any major personal incidents. Once again, he demonstrated to America that he is a good person and an upstanding citizen, in addition to being a fantastic basketball player. This is why he has made a fairly strong comeback.

When charges were first filed, Nike stripped a shoe of Bryant's name. They did not publicly associate themselves with the athlete, but tested the waters of public opinion through back channels and underground methods. Two years after charges were filed, Nike decided to fully and publicly stand behind Bryant by launching a new shoe bearing his name (Kang, 2005).

Since the incident, Bryant has seemed to significantly recover from the demolition of his public stature. Nike and Coca-Cola have resumed Bryant's endorsement deals (Smith, 2009). In addition, Bryant was featured in commercials for TNT as well as a public service announcement for the Make-A-Wish Foundation (Kang, 2005). Bryant appeared on the cover of the "NBA '07" video game and in a commercial for the

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"Guitar Hero World Tour" video game alongside other beloved American athletes (Price, 2009). His jersey is also the highest selling in the NBA (Miller, 2009).

Bryant's international reputation seems fully intact, at least in China. When Bryant traveled to the 2008 Olympics in Beijing with the United States basketball team, he was extremely well received. In China, he has appeared in commercials and a reality show as well as on billboards and websites. His jersey sales there are also higher than those of Yao Ming. Much of this has to do with his basketball talent. However, this high reputation is also due to his philanthropic involvement in the country: He is establishing the Kobe Bryant China Fund to raise money for education and health programs as well as stimulate philanthropy within the country. The fund also serves to encourage cultural education in schools in both the United States and China (Paul, 2009). It is important to notice three factors driving Bryant's popularity in China: his on-court talent, his philanthropic actions, and his appreciation of the country's culture. The first two are factors that may influence any athlete's popularity in the United States.

However, Bryant has not made a full recovery in the realm of American public opinion. His feuds with teammate Shaquille O'Neal and coach Phil Jackson worked against him in this realm, making him one of the least liked players in the NBA (Kang, 2005). He has since made up ground with both men. However, he is still often viewed as an "arrogant, coddled, selfish, disconnected, joyless, ungrateful phony who also very publicly committed adultery" (Miller, 2009, para 7). It is important to note, however, that some of this stems from Bryant being a great athlete who plays for one team and not for the 29 others.

Despite Bryant's lack of a full image recovery in the public sector, he seems to be on the right track. He often spends time with less fortunate children, which shows that he uses his fame, influence, and money in a positive manner, something that seems to be well-received by the public (Miller, 2009). He also continues to excel on the court. With another NBA Championship recently under his belt, it is likely that fans will forgive and forget in order to resume worshipping an NBA legend who often seems to defy the rules of team identification.

## **Case Study 2: Barry Bonds**

Hughes and Shank (2005) found that the most prominent of recent scandals was the steroid abuse scandal involving BALCO Laboratories, generally because of the "chronic cheating and large-scale cover-up" (p. 212). One of the athletes most broadly associated with this scandal is MLB's Barry Bonds.

Bonds and his trainer both had an ongoing relationship with BALCO Laboratories. A government task force designed to expose and charge those dealing steroids investigated many high-profile athletes, including Bonds. While many athletes confessed to knowingly using steroids provided by BALCO management, Bonds testified that he did not know that the substances he was using were steroids. However, in the time period in which Bonds was accused of using steroids, his statistics improved drastically. In Bonds' first 13 seasons in MLB, Bonds' batting line averaged .290, 32 home runs, and 93 RBI per season. In the six seasons after he started using steroids, those numbers increased to .328, 49, and 105 (Fainaru-Wada & Williams, 2006, p. 145). These numbers represent a drastic increase that most agree could not have been achieved naturally.

Bonds was never well liked by fans, the media, or his teammates. When in the minor leagues, spectators said he refused to run out ground balls or sign autographs (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006, p. 29). He was often involved in squabbles with the Pirates over money, beginning by taking them to salary arbitration in 1989 (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006, p. 29). This did not help his image because he appeared to just be after money and think he was worth more than others thought. These squabbles also inspired several on-field tirades with coaches and media in 1991 (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006, pp. 30-31). In 1993, Bonds signed with the San Francisco Giants, where his reputation continued.

A *Sports Illustrated* column and a fight in a game against the Padres exposed the public to Bonds' poor relationship with Jeff Kent, another key Giants player (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006, p. 122). Major moments in Bonds' career also highlighted his teammates' negative feelings towards Bonds. When Bonds hit his 500<sup>th</sup> career home run, most of his team stayed in the dugout, refusing to celebrate with their teammate (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006, p. 112). When the player's teammates distaste for Bonds is that public, the fans are likely to inherit the feeling.

Bonds became more media- and fan-friendly in 2000 because his advisors thought his rudeness would jeopardize his ability to financially capitalize on free agency when it became available after the 2001 season (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006, p. 78). However, after he secured a new contract, he returned to his old

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behavior (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006, p. 147). It is likely that fans saw through this sudden and temporary change in Bonds' behavior that directly correlated with contract negotiations. This would prove to fans that Bonds was motivated by money and his actions were a part of that greed, which would decrease his popularity.

It also did not help his reputation that Bonds made it well known that he thought he was being discriminated against because he is African-American. He discounted the talent of other players, attributing fans' obsessions with Mark McGwire and other white players rather than himself to a "black man in a white man's game" (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006, p. 111). Basically calling fans racist, Bonds may have alienated himself even more from the people from whom he wanted love and respect.

Bonds did not seem to think it was important for him to be popular. When the public was angry at Bonds, his game improved. Because of this, people close to Bonds thought he would actually make horrible remarks to "inspire outrage" so that his game would get better (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006, p. 30).

When the BALCO scandal was made public, Bonds categorically denied using steroids in public and in government interrogations. Even though the government offered immunity to those who cooperated with their investigation, Bonds did not do so. While he had his reputation to worry about, these proceedings were secret, and most athletes involved were confident that their confessions would never be revealed to the public (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006, p. 197).

However, by saying he did not use steroids, Bonds was adamantly denying something that was the most plausible explanation for his physical size and dominance. According to Fainaru-Wada et al. (2006, p. 75), 162 games limit the workout opportunities during a baseball season, and Bonds' trainer did not travel with the team, meaning he only supervised Bonds' workouts when they were home. With little opportunity to work out, especially with limited trainer supervision, it is unlikely Bonds would have been able to naturally build and maintain that amount of muscle on his body during the season. Bonds' appearance also changed dramatically. Many fans found it unsettling that he had changed so much and that he now resembled a WWE wrestler more than a baseball player (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006, p. 111).

Bonds' story was also over the top. For example, in his grand jury testimony, he said, "I didn't think the stuff worked" (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006, p. 202). In that same testimony, Bonds later said, "If it's a steroid, it's not working" (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006, p. 203). This does not seem believable because Bonds had the best seasons of his career while taking these substances. Such a statement makes it seem as if he is hiding something.

When BALCO was exposed, it was also implausible that Bonds was not involved and did not know he was using steroids. BALCO had run tests on Bonds' blood and urine samples that would only be used to test for steroids (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006, p. 115). Also, Bonds' name and photograph were used on a website promoting BALCO products alongside athletes who tested positive for steroids and those who eventually admitted using steroids (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006, p. 215). Overall, it was highly unlikely that Bonds was not using steroids, and his defense that he did not know he was using steroids also seemed unlikely when the public learned of other athletes who knowingly took steroids provided by BALCO.

Government investigations and raids of BALCO gave way to a media frenzy. Everyone wanted to be the first to break the story, but information was difficult to get. This created a continuous media cycle in which a reporter would find a piece of information and break it. Then, that information would trickle down into all of the other interested media outlets (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006, p. 216). This constantly made the BALCO scandal a top news story, encouraging debate and speculation for months. It also made every piece of information important, rather than making media sort through to find the important details when all are released at once.

*Game of Shadows: Barry Bonds, BALCO, and the Steroids Scandal that Rocked Professional Sports* was published in 2006 by two *San Francisco Chronicle* reporters who compiled information; including court documents, affidavits, confidential memoranda, grand jury testimony, audiotapes, and interviews with over 200 sources; from an investigation spanning two years ("Bonds Exposed," 2006). The book had a wide reach, selling 124,000 hardcover copies, and excerpts of it appeared in many different media, including the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Sports Illustrated* (Rich, 2009).

*Game of Shadows* portrays Bonds as self-worshipping, narcissistic, rude, inconsiderate, promiscuous, and abusive (Fainaru-Wada et al., 2006). Above all, it pieces together elements to demonstrate that Bonds lied about many things, namely his steroid usage, but also significantly, his relationships with those around

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him. As a popular and commonly referenced book, this meant that Americans were exposed to all of this information and this portrayal of Bonds.

When Bonds hit his record-tying 755<sup>th</sup> home run, MLB commissioner Bud Selig did not applaud. For the same event, only 1.7 million households viewed the momentous occasion (Albiniak, 2007). While this was an occasion of enormous proportions for the sport considered America's pastime, America virtually ignored it. This shows that the public perception of Bonds was extremely low.

Bonds's struggle continues, as he was indicted on perjury and obstruction of justice charges (Williams & Van Derbeken, 2007). This is an ongoing scandal. However, we can learn a great deal from the course of events up until now, and Bonds' past precedent, along with Bryant's proof that past precedent can play a large role in image reparation, show that the course of events to follow will most likely not differ much from what has already occurred.

## **IV. Conclusion: Prescription for Action**

From this information, four main guidelines for image reparation can be concluded. First, athletes must maintain a positive relationship with fans and media throughout their careers. When the public already has good will towards an athlete, a scandal may come as more of a shock, but the public will generally be more receptive of the athlete's position and apology or give the athlete a chance to prove him- or herself before jumping to conclusions. It may also help the athlete's image rebound more quickly. A positive relationship with the media and fans can help mitigate a serious scandal.

Second, the public will respond better to a quick, truthful, and heartfelt response to an accusation than a cover-up. Similar to the findings of Jerome (2008) and Brazeal (2008), Bryant's quick admission of adultery and proclamation of legal innocence was more believable than Bonds' denial of an obvious truth. If an athlete is innocent, he or she needs to come forward quickly and vehemently defend him- or herself. If an athlete is guilty and there is really no doubt in the public mind, it is better just to come out and say it than to try to deny it to those who do not believe the story. People don't like to be lied to. They seem to want the truth and a sincere apology.

Third, positive athletic performance of a sport celebrity should be emphasized after a scandal as long as the incident itself does not damage the integrity of the game. Bryant's on-court excellence post-scandal seemed to help the athlete recuperate his image. Brazeal (2008) and Jerome (2008) support this notion. Bonds' case is different because many people believe that his performance is directly linked to the scandal in question. However, when positive athletic performance is independent of personal incidents, this performance often forces fans, media, and companies to set aside their opinions of the athlete as a person and respect him or her as a player.

Fourth, keeping a low profile outside athletic performance is an important strategy. The less athletes say and do off the court or field, the less media attention they garner about the incident. Bonds would also be an exception to this because of the nature of the scandal. Another possible exception would be to secure media attention through philanthropic involvement, showing the athlete's good character.

## **Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank Dr. David Copeland at Elon for his supervision and advice, without which the article could not be published. The author also appreciates numerous reviewers who have helped revise this article.

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# Press Freedom Critical Analysis The Examination of East Asia: China, Singapore and North Korea

Grace A. Trilling\*

*Senior majoring in Corporate Communications  
Elon University*

## Abstract

*This manuscript serves as a critical analysis of press freedom in East Asia, specifically examining China, Singapore and North Korea. After observing that Freedom House ratings tend to classify nations into very broad categories according to press freedom, this critical analysis will describe a new system of organization, both exceeding westernized generalizations and using the precedents of past researchers. While the government-media relationship and economic factors are crucial, this article also discusses the importance of cultural factors when categorizing press freedom. In the case of East Asia, Confucianism is a cultural legacy that is impossible to ignore when creating press freedom categories.*

## I. Introduction

After completing an international communications course and examining Freedom House ratings (<http://freedomhouse.org>), I have observed that this organization tends to classify nations into very broad categories according to press freedom. The organization differentiates between free, partly free and not free as its way to categorize 195 countries and territories around the world. Ratings are reached through analyzing the legal environment of each nation, the political pressure on journalists and the economic environment influencing access to information.

Western assumptions surrounding press freedom and democracy have been established and applied to nations in the non-western world through Freedom House categories and other approaches. The East Asian countries I will classify require more distinct and explanatory categories without this ethnocentric approach. To create these models, I will use the precedent of Hallin and Mancini who categorized Western Europe.

I choose to explore China, Singapore and North Korea in my attempt to create a new categorical system. Asia's large population, its emerging markets and the fact that the region exists outside of the western world with ratings of not free, has led me to use these countries for analysis.

Before further analysis, a brief explanation of how these countries are currently rated is crucial. The next section will review existing literature surrounding East Asia and the current models used in classifying a nation's press freedom. While forming my own models, I will also employ the models created by Hallin and Mancini and other researchers to then show my analytical findings and conclusions.

\* **Keywords:** Press Freedom; East Asia; Confucianism; Government influence and Western viewpoints, classification model.

Email: [gtrilling@elon.edu](mailto:gtrilling@elon.edu)

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## II. Literature Review

Previous studies and research have been conducted to explain how political, cultural and economic factors can influence global press freedom. Researchers have even created specific categories for nations around the world in an attempt to classify press freedom. However, in "Beyond Globalization Theory," Curran and Park (2000) said "a tiny handful of countries" were made to represent the whole world's press freedom (Wasserman, 2009, p. 24).

Freedom House tends to categorize nations into very broad categories when determining individual press freedom ratings. According to Freedom House (2009), China, Singapore and North Korea are not free in terms of press freedom. China is considered one of the world's most repressive nations for both domestic and foreign journalists. Despite Article 35 of the Chinese Constitution promising freedom of speech, other articles have suppressed this freedom for national interest (Karlekar, 2009, p. 89). In Singapore, Internet access is monitored and journalists are denied from speaking out against government officials (Freedom House, 2009). North Korea represented the most repressive media environment of Freedom House ratings in 2008. Its one-party regime owns all media and every outlet reports on behalf of the regime (Freedom House, 2009).

There have been several more reports of the same three nations having minimal press freedom because of governmental and economic factors. China and its government have been added to the "worst predators of press freedom" list (Boustany, 2006). Its government is extremely sensitive of political coverage and is willing to pay the media for a political-favored story (Yin, 2009, p. 376). Next, Singapore is a developed country and uses nation-building media, has high literacy rates and the support of commercial advertising, allowing news media to be profitable (Yin, 2009, p. 338). This profit would be very unlikely in North Korea, where outside broadcasting is limited and fixed dials prevent foreign radio programs from reaching the public (Freedom House, 2009).

East Asian cultural values can also be used in creating categories for press freedom ratings. Confucianism is a major social value of present East Asian culture and has been practiced for centuries. Singapore is one of the major Eastern nations that promote these Asian values linking to Confucianism (Luwarsso, 2002, p. 388). As social harmony and stability of the nation are involved in Confucian beliefs, citizens of this region may believe that the government should control press freedom and political order to ensure economic growth of the nation. However, the belief of government control also merits for and justifies why the leaders of these nations censor the media that the citizens have access to (Luwarsso, 2002, p. 388).

China, Singapore and North Korea are not alone in declining press freedom ratings. A United States Freedom House study has shown a global decline in press freedom in every nation of the world including those that are completely democratic (Lefkow, 2009). In addition, the study found that only 36 percent of 195 countries examined have free press zones (Lefkow, 2009).

Other ideas have been expressed in how nations should be organized by their press freedom. As western-centered frameworks have dominated how these categories are created, we need to see non-westerner's points of view (Wasserman, 2009, p. 23). Categories should not be an absolute factor and with changing global environments, press systems can no longer be understood by these western-biased models like the government and media relationship (Wasserman, 2009, p. 23). To overcome this recurring bias, global perspectives need to be taken into account when creating an organization system (Wasserman, 2009, p.23). Furthermore, a study by the University of Maryland concluded that the majority of Chinese respondents believed press freedom existed in China and that people have different perceptions of the "yardstick" of press freedom ("Confidence," 2009). Of the respondents, 22 percent also thought less press freedom should exist in the U.S. Therefore, citizens have different opinions of what press freedom is within their country ("Confidence," 2009).

Unlike Wasserman, Hallin and Mancini have devised a three-model system for comparing media systems in Central and Western Europe. Using political parallelism, the development of journalistic professionalism, state intervention and press circulation, these researchers created their own categories. Rather than free, partly free and not free, Polarized Pluralist, Democratic Corporatist, and Liberal Model titles were used (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

While there is research and information about media systems, government structures and other factors affecting press freedom in East Asia, an analysis of these factors and how to categorize them in terms of press freedom has yet to be organized. Through an integration of existing research, this critical analysis will

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attempt to take previous and very broad categories and create a new system of organization, surpassing the standard western notion of press freedom. Research will be used to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of government influence on press freedom?
2. How do these East Asian nations compare with one another in terms of political structure, economic status and cultural values?
3. Are Freedom House ratings always accurate or do they impose a western generalization?
4. What are better ways to classify categories for these East Asian countries, inevitably relating to other regions across the world?

### III. Method

In order to adopt a critical analysis and propose my own classifications of press freedom, I will review current studies and information on the topic. Sources will include academic journals, news articles, edited books and websites. From these sources, I will be able to discover what has been researched and what has yet to be examined. Using examples like Hallin and Mancini, I will investigate the media-government relationship to form my own classifications with what I believe would match East Asia and what could be elaborated on, to better create an accurate analysis. After further examination, I will use the Asian culture to draw conclusions and create my own classifications to categorize East Asian countries.

### IV. Findings

#### ***Factor 1: China, Singapore & North Korea***

According to Freedom House, China, Singapore and North Korea are rated not free in terms of press freedom. Before creating classifications for these countries, it is important to examine the history, cultural, economic and governmental factors that influence press freedom.

##### **China: Background and Press Freedom**

With a communist government, China has become a top global power next to the United States. Its current government system has been in place since 1949 after 20 years of civil war between the Nationalist and Communist parties ("Timeline: China, 2009). Its legal system was derived from this Soviet influence and the country currently is ranked third for its GDP at just under 8 trillion dollars. However, individual GDP was \$6,000 in 2008, making China the 133<sup>rd</sup> ranked country in the world (CIA, 2009).

China is considered one of the world's most restricted countries for both foreign and domestic journalists. The government has direct control over media coverage and journalists face strict punishments, including jailing, job loss and harassment if they speak or write out against officials (Freedom House, 2009). Furthermore, there are a wealth of Chinese media outlets, but they are all state owned and regulated. The Communist Party has also hired a committee of journalists called the "Fifty Cent Party." This group of people is used to write positive comments about the government on the Internet, in hopes of influencing the Chinese and even foreigners (Karlekar, 2009, p. 89-94). China has also experienced "media blackouts" on behalf of the communist party. If unauthorized information is released without the permission of the government and is seen by the public, the government will freeze media coverage or public access (Karlekar, 2009, p. 90). Online Chinese powered search engines like Google and MSN have also been shut down or filtered to keep information from the public. According to Yin (2000), China experiences ancient civilization media that are increasingly driven by market pressure with economic reform.

Despite this strict hold on press freedom, there has been international advertising and public relations growth in China due to national expansion (Newsom, 2009, p.99). In addition, the commercial media are economically stable even with a repressive government (Wasserman, 2009, p. 26). Economic reforms and new governments have created a more "relaxed political environment for the media" (Yin, 2009, p. 338).

##### **Singapore: Background and Press Freedom**

Unlike China, Singapore is considered a Parliamentary Republic with a corruption-free environment. Gaining its independence in 1965 from the Malaysian Federation, Singapore has become a very successful

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free-market economy. With a per capita GDP of \$51,500, Singapore ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the world. However, its per capita GDP is lower than China's at 237.3 billion, still 47<sup>th</sup> in the world (CIA, 2009).

Singapore is very similar to China in relation to press freedom. There are several press and defamation laws that keep journalists from speaking out against the government. These firm regulations often cause working journalists to practice self-censorship in fear of being punished. Also similarly, almost all media outlets are state owned. The government places attention on keeping national interest, public order and social harmony, as seen in Confucian beliefs. The Newspapers and Printing Presses Act, Defamation Act and Internal Security Act have all be instated to ensure this order (Freedom House, 2009). Furthermore, being a more developed country with a high literacy rate, Singapore can support commercial advertising, making news media very profitable and considered nation building (Yin, 2009, p.338). Like China, public relations and advertising is also on the rise in Singapore as the government is beginning to display a less repressive reputation (Newsom, 2009, p.99).

### **North Korea: Background and Press Freedom**

Another communist nation, North Korea experiences a one-man dictatorship. The country currently faces major economic issues and is considered one of the least open economies in the world. With a GDP of 40 billion and per capita GDP of \$1,800, North Korea ranks lower than both China and Singapore (CIA, 2009). These attributes can be contributed to the nation's previous roots in the arms of Japan and the Soviet Union. At the end of WWII, North Korea was formed in 1948 and supported by the Soviet Union ("North Korea," 1998). With the leadership of Kim Il-sung, economic and social reorganization were put in place, forming the split between North and South Korea. With the Communist supporting the North and the United States remaining in the South, the Korean War occurred in 1950 ("North Korea," 1998). As a result, North Korea began its more independent economic reform lead by Kim Il-sung. North Korea has since seen economic despair and political power struggles, making it "the world's last outpost of Stalinism" ("North Korea," 1998).

Along with China, North Korea has been named one of the "worst predators of press freedom" (Boustany, 2006). In 2008, North Korea was also named the nation with the **most** repressive media environment. The one-party regime owns and regulates all media outlets, making journalists report on behalf of the government. Furthermore, North Korea strives to keep information blocked to the public. Foreign websites are blocked and limits are placed on what the public can access (Karlekar, 2009, p. 94). North Korea allows a small amount of outside broadcasting and only domestic radio programs can be viewed. The government has even placed fixed dials on radios to ensure that the public only listen to regime influenced news (Karlekar, 2009, p. 250).

## ***Factor 2: Confucius and Cultural Influences on East Asia***

A key factor missing in the Freedom House ratings is cultural and religious values. With its main focus on political influence, the ratings seemed to be based exclusively on the government-media relationship. Economic and political factors are important in this analysis, but values and religious beliefs are also important when analyzing press freedom. Confucianism, being a central East Asian belief, has led me to focus on its influences on East Asian press freedom.

Created and led by Confucius, the philosophy mainly include social harmony among groups, the stability, peace and prosperity of the state, and focus on education, family and individuals (Yao, 2000, p. 26). Another major aspect of this philosophy involves respect for elders, including political leaders (G. Scott, personal communication, 2009). Today, the modern East Asia still experiences these influences of Confucianism through its philosophy, religion, politics, ethics and culture (Yao, 2009, p. 4). According to Yao, present day Confucianism can even be linked to the effects of previous Western powers on East Asian nations (Yao, 2000, p. 245).

Since industrialization in the 1970s in this region, "more people, academics and politicians alike, have come to rethink the tradition more positively and to reclaim their lost identity by asserting that cultural idiosyncrasy lies in the very heart of modernity" (Yao, 2000, p. 245). For example, in modern day China, Confucian values have been used to create social harmony in relation to the President's decisions when addressing social issues and his "money first" approach (Asia Times, 2005). Furthermore, Luwarso adds that authoritarianism, as seen throughout these nations, interconnects with Confucianism (Luwarso, 2002, p. 388). Countries like Singapore strongly promote these Asian values where its government controls its press freedom, because they want stability among the state (Luwarso, 2002, p. 388). Likewise, the leaders of these countries are firmer on press freedom to keep with Confucian values (Luwarso, 2002, p. 388).

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Another Confucian practice seen in China and Singapore is *guanxi*. In the advertising and public relations fields, professionals will use “secret personal connections in a strategy” (Newsom, 2009, p. 100). Even though this is part of the Confucian value and people see this strategy as a way to improve national communication, Westerners see *guanxi* in a negative light (Newsom, 2009, p.100). This may be interpreted in the “not free” ratings we have observed.

### **Factor 3: Three Models**

There have been several attempts to categorize nations’ press freedom in the past. However, I will focus on Hallin and Mancini’s three distinct models relating to Western Europe. In order to create classifications, Hallin and Mancini used four different dimensions: the development of media markets and mass circulation; political parallelism; the development of journalism professionalism; and state intervention on media systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pg, 21). Using these considerations they created the following models:

**1. Polarized Pluralist Model** - There is a high level of political and state intervention in social life and in the media coverage. A large portion of the population holds a strong loyalty to different political ideologies instead of focusing on common rules. There is also an “unequal consumption of public information” between the politically active public and those less involved in the political environment (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 298). Finally, media outlets including newspapers tend to release state influenced stories (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 298).

**2. Democratic Corporatist Model** - This model focuses on groups in society and supports social harmony. Rather than repressing the flow of information, the state promotes the freeness of information. The media are seen as a positive tool in circulating political information and media autonomy is valued by the state (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 298).

**3. Liberal Model (Anglo-American Model)** - This model is classified by low state intervention and political parallelism. Social groups are less of a concern and the media deliver to a wider mass audience. The press is seen as “watch dog” to the government and is used to distribute information to the public (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 299).

Even though these models were created to classify Western Europe, they offer key ideas for further classifications. This empirical approach can be applied to regions outside of Europe, including East Asia. For example, the first two models focus on social harmony and loyalty to ideologies. Confucianism represents the philosophy used to keep this social harmony in East Asian nations. Also, each of these models has distinct characteristics that explain China, Singapore and North Korea. However, the Polarized Pluralist Model seems to be the most applicable, emphasizing strict intervention on press freedom.

### **A New Paradigm for Categorizing East Asia**

Using existing research and framework set forth by Hallin and Mancini, I have created three distinct categories that can be used to classify China, Singapore and North Korea.

**1. Resistance-Refusal Model** - *This model focuses on historical roots in a nation, including previous powers and influences.* Countries in this model have endured a dominant influence, affecting its modern-day freedoms, including that of the press. However, the state remains repressive and information is often filtered to a political advantage. Despite attempts of reform, internal manipulation occurs to ensure political dominance. This model applies mostly to countries with dictatorships or communist leaders. North Korea falls into this category.

**2. Cultural-Legacy Model** - This model stresses the importance of culture and tradition in a nation’s decision making. Citizens and leaders believe in social harmony and the advancement of their nation. Therefore, the press is monitored and used as a nation-building tool. National and historical values are deeply rooted in the beliefs of the citizens and leaders in these nations, creating a more guided political policy. Singapore can be classified by the cultural-legacy model, especially with its deep and modern roots in Confucianism.

**3. Nationalistic-Capitalist Model** - This model focuses on national development and market dominance. Though state owned and monitored, these nations also focus on nation building. The media are either repressed or have some limitations in hopes of keeping the economic stability it has formed. This model is more rooted in money than culture. China can be placed in this model with its exploding economy and continued desire for market power.

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## V. Conclusion

After examining Freedom House ratings, I have discovered that the organization uses a broad and westernized approach in classifying each country's press freedom. Labels, such as free, partly free and not free, fail to serve as proper categories to classify these countries' level of freedom into. Unfortunately, Freedom House ratings aren't alone in their Western-biased models. John C. Merrill says "the American model of press freedom has 'enthroned itself globally' as a normative concept that is also used as an indicator of where countries rank with regard to how successfully they have conformed to a circumscribed discourse of 'freedom'" (Wasserman, 2009, p. 25).

Using Hallin and Mancini's approach based on Western Europe, along with other classification attempts, I have concluded that government-state power and economic factors have a large influence on press freedom. Asia has a very diverse economic and political infrastructure as seen through its varied GDPs and types of leadership. North Korea has an extremely lower GDP than both China and Singapore along with a strict one-party regime. These factors along with its history of Western influence make North Korea the most repressive nation in the world in terms of press freedom (Freedom House, 2009).

However, cultural and traditional values seem to be disregarded in the classification process overall. With Asia having such a historical and "diverse cultural legacy," the state-government and economic influence can't be the sole factor in determining its ratings (Yin, 2009, p. 338). Therefore, I found it essential to include core beliefs such as Confucianism in my own classifications, as they serve as a foundation for what particular regions are based on, and why particular leaders may dominate press freedom. In addition, critical in classifying press freedom is remembering that the systems are interdependent of each other. One nation may have characteristics in all three categories distinguishing its press freedom, but this is appropriate in analysis as seen in my three models: The Resistance-Refusal Model, Cultural-Legacy Model and Nationalistic-Corporatist Model, based on China, Singapore and North Korea.

With limited research and time, I was able to examine only three countries in East Asia. My analysis along with further research has the ability to present a more regional or global pattern in classifying press freedom. For instance, the United States could be classified in the Nationalistic-Corporatist Model even though it has a democracy with a Freedom House rating of "free." Despite our open media overload, the United States still has the tendency to strive for market dominance and has this nationalistic pride about it. As I did with Hallin and Mancini, my proposed categories of press freedom can be adjusted and expanded to further match nations around the globe.

## Acknowledgments

The author would like to extend her thanks to Professor Glenn Scott at Elon University for his guidance, inspiration and advice, without which the article could not be published. The author is also thankful to Professor David Copeland of Elon University for his supervision and help of revision for this article.

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# Censorship and Evolving Media Policy in China

Rebecca J. Wetherbee\*

*Journalism Major  
Elon University*

## Abstract

*This paper discusses several facets of Chinese media, both historic and modern. It analyzes the effect China's political history has had on modern media and juxtaposes the modernity of China's business industry and its acceptance of free enterprise with its reproach of free speech. It also describes the tenuous relationships between mainland China and the independent regions of Hong Kong and Taiwan, which each have modern, free media policies. Finally, it discusses China's treatment of foreign media, particularly during the 2008 Summer Olympics, and how China has relaxed some of its stringent policies for the purpose of increased globalization.*

## I. Background

The People's Republic of China is one of the largest and most populous countries on earth, and its political and economic power is increasing rapidly. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, there are more than 2,000 newspapers, 8,000 magazines, 374 television stations and 150 million Internet users in China, and all of these media outlets and media consumers are subject to government gatekeeping and censorship. From a foreign perspective, the juxtaposition of China's remarkable technological advancement, business savvy and cultural influence to its continued control of the media is astonishing and, in many ways, unique to China. Somehow, despite the fact that China is quickly becoming a new world leader that rivals the United States, the government has been able to maintain old-world communistic policies toward its media but modern capitalistic policies toward the rest of its industries.

## II. History of Domestic Policy

In 2007, the international organization Reporters Without Borders ranked the level of press freedom in 169 countries, and the People's Republic of China fell at number 163. The introduction of the Internet to China has done little to increase its citizens' freedom of speech; of the 64 known people worldwide who have been imprisoned for their activity online, 50 were sentenced in China (Reporters Without Borders, 2007). According to a spokesperson for Reporters Without Borders, "the reforms and the releases of imprisoned journalists so often promised by the authorities seem to be a vain hope" (2007). While China's constitution technically allows for freedom of speech and press, the vague language of the regulation gives the government the power to censor information that it considers inconsistent with the values of the country. Because the regulations can be interpreted so broadly, the government is able to legally censor almost anything.

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\* **Keywords:** Censorship, Media policy, China, Internet, the Chinese Communist Party, Taiwan, Hong Kong  
Email contact: [rwetherbee@elon.edu](mailto:rwetherbee@elon.edu)

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Hu Jintao, the current president of China, has maintained the strict media regulations established by his predecessors despite speculation that he may allow the Chinese media to reach the same level of modernization and globalization as Chinese business and technology (Bhattacharji & Zissis, 2008). Hu's conservative stance may be a reaction to the introduction of the Internet in China, which has exposed Chinese citizens to foreign press material that sometimes contradicts or undermines China's laws and values. The Internet has also given Chinese citizens a forum to express anti-government views. In some cases, the government has punished cyber dissidents with imprisonment. But it is likely that the Chinese government does not receive more opposition from its citizens because, since its inception, the PRC (People's Republic of China) has never allowed a free media.

The PRC was established in 1949 as a Communist party-led state under the leader Mao Zedong, who helped restore the war-torn China with an economic and political agenda modeled after the former Soviet Union. Mao also wanted to create a social structure similar to that of the Soviet Union, so he allowed very little government transparency and very little press freedom in order to ensure the obedience and cooperation of the PRC citizens. After Mao's death in 1976, Deng Xiaoping took over the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and adopted new political approaches that allowed for better foreign relations and economic and legal reform (U.S. Department of State, 2009).

According to the U.S. Department of State (2009), Chinese Journalists and writers had more critical and artistic freedom under Deng but were still prohibited from making direct criticisms of the CCP. Frustrated that the CCP was not encouraging more drastic reform, young Chinese citizens staged a series of protests from 1986 through 1989 that culminated in the infamous protest in Tiananmen Square in the capital city of Beijing. The Chinese military responded violently to this protest, using any means possible to clear dissidents from the streets. Though the government has no official numbers, witnesses of the protest believe that soldiers killed several hundred citizens that day. To date, it is nearly impossible to find information about Tiananmen Square in China, and many Chinese citizens know nothing about it.

When Mao Zedong was in power, he assigned four tasks to the media: to propagate the policies of the Communist Party, to educate the masses, to organize the masses and to mobilize the masses. Under Mao, the government served as the main source of funds for news outlets until the needs of the media grew more expensive than the government could afford (Yin, 2006, p. 34). Now that the modern Chinese media support themselves, journalists have some power to challenge the government and socialist media policies, though they don't always take advantage of it.

Though Deng Xiaoping instated an open-door policy in China and made some capitalistic reforms to the socialist economy, he did little to reform the structure of the mass media (Yin, 2006, p.35). This is evidenced by the coverage, or rather lack of coverage, of the 1989 Tiananmen Square Student Movement. Deng made it clear that, just like Mao Zedong, he wouldn't tolerate any subversion of the government.

### III. Modern Domestic Policy

According to the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (2006), there are several government agencies that exert control over the media, including the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television; the Ministry for Information Industry; the Ministry of Public Security; the General Administration for Customs and the State Secrecy Bureau. Additionally, the General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP) is responsible for screening all print material and enforcing prior restraint, and all publishers, including Internet publishers, are required to receive a license by GAPP. GAPP has the power to deny a publisher a license or to take one away. The State Council Information Office controls the content of the Internet, and any news organizations or private organizations that post on the Internet have to report to it, and any information they post can be pre-screened. Finally, the Central Propaganda Department screens publications for any content related to the government, and it educates publishers and editors about what types of information can be published and what ideologies can be represented in print.

In addition to the various government agencies that directly influence Chinese media through policy and legislation, the *People's Daily* newspaper serves as the official news outlet of the Chinese Communist Party. With a worldwide circulation of between 3 million and 4 million, the paper also serves as an unofficial guide for every other Chinese media source, determining what issues can and cannot be covered and from what angle they must be addressed (Yin, 2006, p. 36). For instance, while the *People's Daily* writes fre-

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quently about the economy and the benefits of globalization, it does not cover issues related to social justice, human rights or the environment. Yin (2006) says this gatekeeping is used as a way to “cultivate a new elite urban consumer class in China by constructing a consumerist culture. ... This elite consumer class in turn supplies a lucrative market for transnational corporations and Chinese businesses.” The *People’s Daily* furthers China’s economic agenda while continuing to turn a blind eye to potential social injustices committed by the government. Because most other Chinese media outlets follow suit, issues related to social and environmental justice continue to be ignored throughout the country.

While the chilling effect caused by the Chinese government is an effective control over most of the mainstream media, the Internet has presented new challenges to censorship that the government is still struggling to overcome. The U.S. State Department estimated that the CCP has between 30,000 and 50,000 citizens serving as Internet monitors — reviewing Web sites, blogs, e-mails, chat rooms and forums for any questionable material (Bhattacharji & Zissis, 2008). The job of the Internet monitors has been made somewhat easier by the fact that all of the Internet service providers in China are owned or supported by the state (Endeshaw, 2004, p.46), but because the Internet has an infinite amount of space for information, it is impossible for these monitors to catch everything.

According to Assafa Endeshaw (2004), when the Internet became widespread in the early 1990s, China’s original instinct was to ban it altogether. It learned quickly, however, that the Internet was an essential tool for globalization and that Chinese businesses could not thrive without it. From that point forward, the government has been engaged in what Endeshaw calls a “cat and mouse game” between regulation and deregulation of information technology.

Because it is impossible for government agencies to monitor the online activities of hundreds of millions of individuals, China shifted its focus to Internet service providers and gave the providers the burden of monitoring their users. For instance, most blog-hosting Web sites require their users to pay a registration fee and turn over their personal information before they are given an account. This lack of privacy encourages self-censorship on the part of the account-holders (Kang & Yang, 2009). The government has also begun monitoring Internet cafés more closely by requiring café owners to obtain certification and by limiting the circumstances under which youth can enter the cafés (Endeshaw, 2004, p. 46). In recent years, the government has shut down ISPs (Internet Service Providers) that have not complied with regulations. Responding to this threat with greater self-censorship, several ISPs organized with the China Internet Association in 2002 to create a “pact” or “pledge” with the purpose of “safeguarding the information safety of the State, upholding the overall interests of the industry and the interests of the users, and improving the service quality of the industry” (Endeshaw, 2004, p. 48).

The government and ISPs use software that searches the Internet for particular terms and word combinations that may relate to sensitive social and political issues like Tiananmen Square, Tibet and Taiwan independence, or the controversial religious movement known as Falun Gong. In September 2002 before the November Party Congress, the government blocked access to the search engines Google and AltaVista, forcing its citizens to redirect their searches to government-approved search engines (Endeshaw, 2004, p. 47). In 2007, the government shut down several Internet data servers, and therefore thousands of Web sites, to prevent any controversial political commentary leading up to the National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (McMahon, 2008). Despite the preventive actions the government has taken with the Internet, it still serves as the best source for sensitive or controversial information. For instance, it was through the Internet that Chinese citizens first heard news about an AIDS epidemic in the Henan province, the subpar safety conditions in Chinese mines and the 2005 poisoning of the Songhua river (McMahon, 2008).

In November 2005, Shanghai hosted the first Chinese Blogger Conference, and bloggers wrote about and filmed the activities of the conference free from censorship (Mackinnon, 2008, p. 83). However, while there are somewhere between 20-50 million bloggers in China today, there is no such thing as a “political blogosphere” like there is in the United States because very few of those millions of bloggers actually address political issues. In fact, most Internet users have not been exposed to political blogs because some of the largest and most popular blog-hosting sites like Blogspot.com and Wordpress.com are inaccessible on Chinese ISPs (Mackinnon, 2008, p. 84). Bloggers use their accounts for the same purposes that most Chinese citizens use the Internet — for entertainment. Mackinnon speculates that most Chinese citizens are satisfied with the material they are able to access online because they are not using the Internet as a primary source of news. There is, however, a growing population of Chinese citizens who are using the blogosphere to discuss sensitive issues unrelated to politics, such as their experiences with homosexuality (Kang & Yang, 2009, p.

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21). While homosexuality may still be a controversial topic in socially conservative China, the government has made little effort to stifle this type of speech. Though there are some ways for political bloggers to fly under the government's radar, like by using proxy technology or foreign e-mail services that allow them to circumvent filters, most bloggers do not take advantage of this technology either because they don't have the expertise to use it, or because they fear getting caught (Mackinnon, 2008, p. 84).

## IV. Relationship to Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, which comprises more than 7 million people, lies on the coast of southeast China on the South China Sea. Hong Kong has never been an independent state — China surrendered control of the region to Great Britain in 1842 and did not regain it until July 1997. The Sino-British Joint Declaration, which was written in 1984 when the transition began, and Hong Kong's constitution, known as "Basic Law," dictate that for the 50 years following Hong Kong's reversion, the region will maintain political, economic and judicial independence (U.S. Department of State, 2009). Hong Kong now operates within a "one country, two systems" theory that has allowed it to maintain a certain level of autonomy from China, including autonomy over its press. As in America and, for that matter, in China, Hong Kong's constitution gives the region's residents "freedom of speech, of the press, and of publication" (Lee, 2007, p. 135). Despite this, the mainland Chinese government has been able to exert some subtle control over Hong Kong media, particularly when it comes to the reportage of international issues. Before the British handover, the PRC warned Hong Kong's media that any advocacy for Taiwan/Tibet independence, any engagement in subversive activities or any personal attacks on government leaders were strictly forbidden (Lee, 2007, p. 136).

Though the PRC does not technically control the reportage of Hong Kong's local news, it does make attempts at controlling the distribution of finances and the hiring and firing of top executives at the region's news outlets. It also openly criticizes some of the behaviors of Hong Kong's media and, in a handful of instances, the mainland government has jailed Hong Kong-based reporters for vague and questionable reasons. In 1994, after a court case that was shrouded in secrecy, the PRC sentenced reporter Xi Yang to 12 years in prison for stealing state secrets — a term that is still very loosely defined (Lee, 2007, p. 136). In 2005, a Hong Kong-based reporter for *Singapore's Straits Times* was arrested by the mainland government and sentenced to five years in prison for writing about leaders within the Chinese Communist Party (Bhat-tacharji & Zissis, 2008). Through these means, the mainland government is able to create some self-censorship on the part of Hong Kong's journalists who fear potential backlash. A 2006 study revealed that 26.6 percent of Hong Kong journalists felt that self-censorship among their colleagues was "very serious." On the other hand, 47.2 percent acknowledged that self-censorship existed, "but is not very serious" (Lee, 2007, p. 139). Despite speculation to the contrary, Lee (2007) suggests that many journalists who provide "objective" or "self-censored" reporting do so not out of fear of the PRC, but simply because they feel no animosity toward it. Because several decades have passed since the beginning of Hong Kong's reversion, the citizens and officials of Hong Kong and the PRC have interacted frequently for cultural, social and economic reasons. Lee believes these positive interactions have led to a closer bond between the citizens of Hong Kong and the mainland and perhaps to a greater respect for the mainland government. Another 2006 study revealed that 45.5 percent of Hong Kong citizens trust the mainland government, versus only 24.5 percent a decade earlier in 1996 (Lee, 2007, p. 141). That means that about half of Hong Kong citizens are still skeptical about the PRC and its communist agenda. Since the early 1990s, a number of popular talk radio shows and a newspaper called *Apple Daily* have provided Hong Kong citizens with critical left-wing analyses of the news (Lee, 2007, p. 138). Their success has proven there is a market for pro-democracy speech in Hong Kong and, likely, in mainland China as well.

## V. Relationship to Taiwan

Taiwan, known as the Republic of China, is an island that lies several hundred miles off the coast of southeastern China. Japan ruled Taiwan from 1895 through 1945 when it relinquished control of the island to mainland China. Following World War II, the Chinese Communist Party, led by Mao Zedong, and its rival, the

Nationalist Chinese Party, led by Chiang Kai-shek, fought a bitter, four-year civil war. In the end, the CCP was able to maintain control of the People's Republic of China, and two million Nationalists fled the country for Taiwan and established the Republic of China (U.S. Department of State, 2009). The Nationalist party, known as KMT, is still in power today.

According to the U.S. Department of State (2009), until 2001, the KMT prevented any cross-Strait relations between the ROC and PRC, still embittered by the events of the civil war. Since 2001, the Taiwanese government has taken steps to revitalize travel and trade between the two nations. In eight short years, China has become Taiwan's number one trading partner, and Taiwan and Hong Kong have become two of China's largest financial investors. Their relationship, though, is still a tenuous one. China considers Taiwan a part of the PRC, whereas the Taiwanese government considers itself an independent democracy. Both on mainland China and in Hong Kong, any discussion of or advocacy for Taiwan independence by the media is a punishable act (Lee, 2007, p. 135).

Like Hong Kong, Taiwan maintains very free media. In fact, it is considered to have some of the freest media in Asia. According to the *CIA World Factbook* (2007), Taiwan has 5.704 million Internet hosts, 15.143 million Internet users, 76 television broadcast stations and 164 AM and FM radio stations. All of Taiwan's newspapers are privately owned, and many broadcast news sources present partisan views (BBC News, 2009). A study conducted in 1997 determined that Taiwanese journalists share more values with American journalists than they do with Chinese journalists, despite the strong cultural similarities between Taiwan and China (Zhu, Weaver, Lo, Chen, & Wu, 1997, p. 86). Perhaps it is because Taiwan has such a free media that few scholars have studied Taiwanese news coverage, including the coverage of cross-Strait relations (Han, 2007, p. 46).

## VI. Relationship to Foreign Press

In 2007, Beijing, the capital of the People's Republic of China, was given the privilege of hosting the 2008 Summer Olympic Games. This was a promising benchmark for the PRC on its path to globalization. While the Chinese government did a lot to prepare its infrastructure for the Olympic Games, it did not make as many media policy changes as foreign news outlets had hoped. In September 2007, the government instituted a new policy that foreign journalists cannot distribute stories to the Chinese people unless the articles are passed through the domestic, state-run Xinhua news agency for pre-screening. In response to this policy, the French branch of Reporters Without Borders said, "It is outrageous that Xinhua, the Communist Party mouthpiece, should claim full powers over news agencies. Xinhua is establishing itself as a predator of both free enterprise and free information" (McLaughlin, 2006, p. 68). In spite of the new policy, the Beijing Olympics committee promised that foreign journalists, who numbered at more than 20,000, would be able to move freely throughout the country without visas and that they would be able access information without interference.

China's treatment of foreign journalists is similar to its treatment of locals — the rules and requirements for foreign journalists are written in such vague language that they are difficult to interpret, and criminal charges are difficult to refute. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, foreign correspondents "shall not engage in activities which are incompatible with their status or tasks, or which endanger China's national security, unity or community and public interests." More than one American journalist has been punished for crossing these fuzzy boundaries. In 1989 following the protests in Tiananmen Square, *Washington Post* correspondent John Pomfret was deported from China for stealing state secrets and violating provisions of martial law. In 2006, after covering protests for Tibet independence, the Associated Press Beijing Bureau Chief Charles Hutzler got harassing phone calls and text messages multiple times an hour for several days, some even making death threats (McLaughlin, 2008, p. 48). Calum MacLeod, the Beijing Bureau Chief for *USA Today*, has been harassed and detained by government officials on more than one occasion — once for interviewing religious protestors and once for attempting to investigate police corruption (McLaughlin, 2006, p. 69-70). These journalists' experiences are not unique. The results of a survey conducted in 2006 by the Foreign Correspondents Club of China revealed that at least 38 foreign journalists had been detained in China since 2004. Most of those journalists were covering sensitive social and environmental issues like HIV/AIDS, land disputes and anti-pollution protests (Thompson, 2008).

But the Chinese government did come through on some of its promises to Olympics' correspondents,

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at least as a result of complaints to the International Olympic Committee. For the first time, journalists and some citizen Internet users were able to view Web sites that had previously been blocked, like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and BBC News. Web pages regarding issues like Tibet independence and the Falun Gong, however, remained censored (Spencer, 2008).

On November 16, 2009, President Barack Obama held a town hall meeting in Shanghai, one of China's largest cities. He spoke to Chinese students about the future of U.S. and Chinese relations and about the importance of free media and citizens' ability to hold their government accountable. Though some pundits said Obama's criticism of Chinese media wasn't stringent enough, he did emphasize the American values of freedom of expression and information, and political participation. Ironically, even Obama's anti-censorship speech was censored by the Chinese government — a local Shanghai TV station only broadcast certain parts of the meeting (Branigan, 2009). Though Obama did not exert as much political pressure as some free media activists may have liked, the American government's stance on Chinese policy may eventually force the CCP to make real changes. America is one of China's most powerful business partners, and as China races toward globalization it will have to adopt some of the capitalistic and democratic policies that have contributed to America's economic and political success. The growth of the Internet and other information technologies may also contribute to China's eventual policy change. As Chinese citizens become more technologically savvy, their ability to seek and distribute information will surpass the government's ability to filter it. Ultimately, the pervasiveness of the Internet and China's economic ambitions will lead to a freer media, whether it is because the government allows it or simply can no longer prevent it.

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Dr. Don Grady of Elon University for his supervision and advice, without whom the article could not be published. The author also appreciates the numerous reviewers who have helped revise this article, including the journal's online editor Dr. Byung Lee and everyone else responsible for creating the first edition of *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*.

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# Foreign Correspondents in a Modern World

## The Past, Present and Possible Future of Global Journalism

Dannika Lewis\*

*Broadcast Communications – Broadcast Journalism*  
*Elon University*

### Abstract

*As major American news outlets continue to reduce the number of foreign bureaus in existence, the nation becomes increasingly interconnected with the world and its complex issues. This paper investigates the declines and developments of foreign reporting throughout history, how international news is covered today and what the future of this journalism may entail. Alternative news sources, such as non-governmental organizations and citizen journalist bloggers, have recently become more prominent in the realm of international coverage. However, traditional news outlets struggle with verifying the potentially biased or false information and making stories relevant for their audience. The blogosphere and citizen journalists in general can offer a wealth of knowledge and information with a human element from someone who truly understands the land, language and culture behind these worldwide situations. As U.S. foreign bureaus and fixed foreign correspondents become fewer and other traditional methods of parachute journalism may not be effective in reporting complicated global issues, citizen journalists may fill a void that will keep the American public well informed of news from across the globe.*

### I. Introduction

*In the old days a correspondent was responsible for what he put on the air. As a result, he knew his stuff or he didn't last long... It was his mug and his voice out there, and what he did was his own work, unsullied by the dirty fingerprints of anonymous producers and writers... Today's correspondents so often are limited merely to writing captions for pictures.*

From a speech of Charles Collingwood (Cloud & Olson, 1996, p. 363)

Since its "glory days" with the World War II reporting of Edward Murrow and his associates, foreign reporting has experienced definite alteration. Some of the changes have led to an unfortunate truth that American correspondents who do exist now are in a sense simply "writing captions for pictures," as one of Murrow's fellow correspondents Collingwood put it. The divergent realm of journalism and the evolving definition of a journalist may offer some hope of reviving what seems to be the otherwise diminishing foreign correspondent; but the future of reporting from overseas does and likely will look significantly different than what Murrow did in his day and probably envisioned for the future of a position he virtually created in our society. In a world where bureaus and fixed foreign correspondents will likely be non-existent and traditional methods of so-called parachute journalism will no longer prove to be effective in reporting complex global issues, citizen journalists may fill a void that will keep the American public well informed of news from across

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\* **Keywords:** Foreign correspondents, global journalism, foreign bureaus, blogs, foreign reporting.  
Email: dlewis5@elon.edu

the globe.

This paper will briefly illustrate the declines and developments of foreign reporting throughout history, how international news is covered today and what the future of this journalism may entail. Overall, global journalism has outgrown the traditional bounds of network structure and is now defined not by a single correspondent but made possible through a series of different classifications of journalists fulfilling different needs. One question is whether the general public will accept reformed standards as a new norm and recognize a level of importance for communicating information about different world regions and the events that occur there. The emergence of unconventional outlets of international news will put new and greater responsibilities on traditional news organizations and audiences that are not only informed but also are able to participate in the provision of foreign news.

## II. The roots and evolution of foreign reporting

The origins of U.S. foreign reporting can be traced back to colonial times. Unpaid letter writers from overseas would send their news to respective papers and journals coming in on ships and, once in the hands of another nation, stories would be stolen right out of them for news' sakes (Hamilton, 2009). Hamilton (2009) observes that "although there were no editors, let alone reporters, newspapers carried a greater percentage of foreign news than at any time since" (p. 52). Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, bureaus for print and broadcast radio companies functioned all throughout the world and operated largely on an independent basis, without government interference or control. The middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a period in world history – with two far-reaching wars, international political movements and increased interconnectivity – when interest and demand for world news was at its peak.

In these early days of U.S. foreign correspondents, Murrow and other prestigious journalists who helped form the craft were frustrated constantly over various aspects of their positions. One significant frustration was the managements' persistent involvement in their reporting endeavors (Cloud and Olson, 1996). This is an example of what could have been the start of the evolution of correspondents, going from resident reporters telling stories they deemed as most important in the region to puppets of the media corporation stationed in America that decided what would be reported and how. In Murrow's case, CBS News management in Washington, D.C. or New York constantly sought editorial control of the news coming in from overseas, and once World War II was over, the justification for in-depth coverage of those areas like Murrow and others offered was not as much in demand (or so it was perceived).

Since that period of increased control of bureau reports, technology has continued to afford editors back home closer communications with their correspondents, and thus more control over their stories. With that, foreign journalists arguably became "less colorful and less independent, at a time when they were also perceived, like journalists generally, as less credible (Hamilton, 2009, p. 52)." These sorts of interferences by executives combined with economic tensions that began to surface may have contributed significantly to the eventual decline of the foreign news bureaus. The authority shifted to executives when bureaus were once virtually independent entities of the news organization.

It would be logical to believe that as the United States became more involved in the world, the world became more integrated in our news; however, this has not always been the case. Some would argue that our country is more a part of the international arena than ever before. Former CBS Foreign Correspondent Tom Fenton (2005) states in his book *Bad News* that "the foreign correspondent should be enjoying professional heyday. More than ever, our country is part of 'abroad.' America should be fighting its news industry for the reempowerment of foreign correspondents...." (p. 206).

Yet the general trend in the news business is a decline in both manpower overseas and international coverage in their layouts or newscasts. For instance, U.S. TV networks maintained about 15 foreign bureaus in the 1980s while today they tend to have six or fewer (Constable, 2007). According to Constable's article in the *Washington Post*, "ABC has shut down its offices in Moscow, Paris and Tokyo; NBC closed bureaus in Beijing, Cairo and Johannesburg." In addition, there are no network bureaus left at all in Africa, India or South America other than an ABC bureau in Nairobi. Those areas together comprise about two billion people. In regard to U.S. newspapers, the *Baltimore Sun* formerly had correspondents based all around the world and currently has none. *Newsday* once had six foreign bureaus is close to shutting down its last one in Pakistan

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(Constable, 2007).

The networks and newspaper companies tend to maintain the same argument when it comes to rationale for shutting down foreign bureaus: cost. In a capitalistic strive to cut expenditures, a simple action to take for a quick budget fix is nixing a news production center overseas. Foreign editors say an overseas bureau can cost at least \$250,000 annually to maintain. An operation in an area needing additional security can carry a price tag of one million dollars each year (Constable, 2007).

It's not just the number of reporters, but the amount of foreign news coverage that has suffered. As of June 2009, Pew Research Center's most recent annual report on news media revealed U.S. cable networks spent 8% of their airtime on foreign coverage in the year prior (Blet, 2009). Tom Fenton explains how the editorial judgment of shows has become a strong and cyclical force in a lack of international news:

*The gatekeepers of national news turned down one foreign story after another because "foreign news doesn't sell." (To which the obvious answer, It won't sell until you "sell" it, was rarely heeded.) It was a vicious circle. The less we told the public about the turbulent events beyond our shores, the less interest Americans were likely to develop in foreign news. Such events seemed to Americans ever more isolated and disconnected from their comfortable existence. (2005, p. 31)*

Not every news organization has substantially decreased its coverage. Rupert Murdoch actually increased the amount of front-page foreign news and pages committed to reporting it within *The Wall Street Journal* when he bought it (Hamilton, 2009). ABC opened one-person bureaus in seven cities last year (Hamilton, 2009,). Foreign Editor for National Public Radio Loren Jenkins explained that while it does cost a minimum of \$500,000 a year to maintain a correspondent post, NPR's foreign reporting is, in fact, expanding geographically. This is partially in response to the large-scale interest the news outlet has observed from its audience of roughly 30 million (according to Jenkins) for foreign news and partially due to what he presumes to be a social responsibility that was assumed two or three decades ago and is not recognized today (UChannel, 2008).

Nevertheless, in the words of Sherry Ricchiardi, a traditional bureau-based foreign reporter is "a vanishing breed: a foreign correspondent assigned to a country for a prolonged period, with the expertise in the local language, culture, history and customs" (2007/2008, p. 32). This presents a new challenge to today's world with arguably a greater interconnectivity than ever before.

### III. Foreign correspondents of today

There seems to be some need and demand for international news. In 2004, the Pew Research Center for People and the Press found that 52% of people in the U.S. follow international news most of the time and that those who did follow represented a much broader diversity of gender and ethnicity than ever before ("International News Audience"). With traditional bureaus nearly extinct, there must be others providing this information to news organizations. Former correspondent Edward Behr said it this way: "Somewhere, at the bottom of this inverted pyramid, someone was getting a story first hand. But who was he ...?" (Palmer, 2008, p. 814).

There are many players, then, in the realm of modern foreign journalism. In his essay "In the Foothills of Change," John Maxwell Hamilton describes seven different classifications of foreign correspondent. First of all, there are *foreign* foreign correspondents who work from their native country for American news outlets. A survey conducted in 2000 showed that 69 percent of foreign correspondents for American news sources were in fact not Americans. Part of the reasoning for this is people native to certain countries can move around more freely in those nations and thus more efficiently gather information (Hamilton, 2009). There are also *local* foreign correspondents, those who cover the world's events and issues from their hometowns in the U.S. The Radio and Television News Directors Foundation found in 2004 that "two-thirds of local broadcasters said they integrated world and local news into their shows" (Hamilton, 2009, p. 52), meaning foreign reporting can happen even when the reporters are still in the country. Parachute foreign correspondents are sent around the globe for short periods of time to gather and disseminate news from that area. While replacing permanent reporters abroad with temporary and less-experienced correspondents arguably creates less informative or researched news, Hamilton (2009) points out that it does allow local media to afford overseas assignments. Also, certain worldly events can benefit from having an expert in a certain subject matter covering them, for

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instance, sending a music critic to an international music festival, who would not otherwise be based in that area. In addition, *citizen* foreign correspondents are those who utilize technology to more casually report information from firsthand experiences. Similarly, there are *foreign* local correspondents who report for a local outlet in another part of the world but are read or watched by news consumers in the United States. Premium foreign correspondents are those who charge fees for specialized reporting from around the world. This could target topics such as economics, politics, etc. Finally, there are in-house foreign correspondents that are responsible for gathering news exclusively for a corporation.

## IV. Alternative channels for foreign news

### *NGOs as international news providers*

Non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, are beginning to have a greater hand in providing international coverage as well. For example, the Humans Rights Watch's Web pages were receiving about 60,000 views each day early in 2009. Their organization has reporters in 70 different countries, which is more than the foreign correspondent bureaus of *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*. At first, the information wasn't so "news-like" or in language comprehensible for the general public, but they have recently acquired grants to help pay serious journalists to work for their cause (Bogert, 2009). With this new development in foreign news, there are arguments of whether these individuals should be considered true journalists (who are traditionally upheld for providing fair, balanced and unbiased information) or viewed as more of "unofficial" journalists that merely provide information with an activist cause. Nevertheless, some believe that these groups are the future of foreign reporting. In an article predicting the future state of international journalism, writer Carroll Bogert explained:

In 2014, just as in 2009, the public continues to hold the media in low esteem, right down there with businessmen and politicians. The nongovernmental sector, meanwhile, still enjoys higher approval ratings than any of them. What we learned is that readers don't rust the information less because it doesn't come from the mainstream media. They trust it more. (2009, p. 31)

Whether or not NGOs prove to be a viable alternative to the traditional foreign correspondent for news from overseas, they are beginning to fill a void, providing news that network bureaus don't offer.

### *Blogs and foreign reporting*

The blogosphere is another realm that has been recently studied as a new inclusion in foreign news gathering and reporting. Many of those deemed professional journalists by traditional terms are wary of the promise that blogs offer as a valuable news source. In the *Handbook of Journalism Studies*, John Hartley explains that alternative journalism like blogging "is simply invisible in journalism studies, in J-school curricula, or in discussions of the 'democratic process' and 'professional journalism'" (Atton, 2009, p. 283) even though it has an increasingly important role in modern media. Bob Dietz of the Committee to Protect Journalists even went as far to say that the line between citizen journalism and online activists is almost non-existent, another perspective that may make trained journalists who are expected to be unbiased cringe (*UChannel*, 2008). Admittedly, citizen-based media originate from individual writers and/or groups invested in public interest that seek to present information usually pertaining to an idea or position (Reese et. al., 2007); however, all types of alternative journalism do not base their credibility or authority with the institution of professional journalism but rely on "living experiences" as trustworthy and credible versions of reporting (Atton, 2009).

Blogger-provided information has typically been set apart from what is identified as "mainstream" media and as separate from that journalistic material coming from formally trained and experienced professionals of the field. However, bloggers could be considered to be a correlating force in journalism rather than a source of competition for traditional media (Reese et. al.). Sometimes, this cooperation comes from a news network's use of information from a blog source and forming a relationship with that blogger. Trust can be built with a blogger from another country through the constant provision of truthful and factual information. Often, a blogger relies on his or her credibility and reputation as well much like the nature of professional journalism in today's standards (*UChannel*, 2008). This trust and use of information can be mutual. Much

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of the blog work relies on information provided from mainstream media and could be seen as a way to interconnect those sources. Some claim citizen journalists are not destroying the credibility and authority those networks uphold through their blogs, but actually utilizing that information more broadly, interweaving professional newsgathering with public dialogue (Reese et. al., 2007). There is also a convergence of local hires, such as the *foreign* foreign correspondents discussed earlier, and people who provide information on a grassroots basis in order to create a complete story from a sub-stratum of information from that region (UChannel, 2008).

The concerns with blogs providing information to the general public are essentially two-faceted. First, there is a discussion of how this information would be verified and the sources would be deemed credible, truthful and without significant bias. Secondly, there is a concern of localizing international stories that bloggers may not bring to the level of relevance at which the public demands them to be in order for true understanding to occur. Overall, it's often weighing out the benefits and consequences of a wide variety of sources accessible in a short period of time working together to edit a story versus traditional network fact-checking (UChannel, 2008).

## V. The potential future of foreign correspondents and international reporting

Regardless of whether or not widespread convergence between “unofficial” citizen journalists and the ranks of professional reporters occurs, Peter Berglez (2008) explains a desirable step of foreign reporting in his article “What is Global Journalism?”. Global journalism is defined most generally as the journalistic process of interrelating issues throughout the world in order to make them relevant (Berglez, 2008, p. 846). On a very basic level, this method of worldwide reporting “interlocks peoples and their practices worldwide” by connecting events and processes of worldwide organizations, identities (such as widely-accepted social-economic classes) and political and economic institutions (Berglez, 2008, p. 848-849). In Berglez’s opinion, “[Global journalism] is the natural consequence of increasing connectedness, boundarylessness and mobility in the world: it is the form of journalism needed in times of globalization” (Berglez, 2008, p. 855).

Similarly, Kai Hafez (2009) argues that “we must seek to enlarge the space for international coverage for a broader agenda and more contextualized and intertextualized news” in order to “try and understand the complexities of such world regions, their multiple histories and current often paradoxical developments” (p. 331). This can prove difficult in a world where headline news is all businesses have time for. Those who are typically subscribed to international news services sometimes decide whether to buy or sell based on a slug or breaking news lead (Palmer, 2008).

Some news organizations like NPR continue to maintain a strong correspondent presence on foreign terrain and a strong tradition in international coverage. GlobalPost, for instance, was created at the beginning of 2009 with a mission of “redefining international news for the digital age”. The organization claims to “believe in an old school tradition” of correspondents residing in the countries they report from and provides a wide variety of news coverage from all around the globe by those means (GlobalPost.com). The founders look to generate revenue through advertising on the Web site and through subscriptions to their premium service and syndication to other news outlets (Hamilton, 2009, p. 54).

GlobalPost also offers an example of how modern foreign news outlets can attempt to overcome the financial burdens that networks claim hinder their ability to maintain reporter presence in certain countries. There are resources available. For example, the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting has been providing travel grants to journalists (mostly freelance) since 2006, mostly for overlooked stories about war or people in need around the world (Guensburg, 2008). One financial solution that Hamilton (2009) offers is to establish tax breaks to offset the expenses brought on by maintaining bureaus or tax credits to encourage people to buy premium-service news. He asks, “If government can support schools, why not news, which is essential to voter education?” (p. 54).

Nevertheless, these financial resources have been available for some time now without being realized or utilized to their full potential. Today’s professional news organizations are stuck in somewhat of a paradoxical situation: While they will not support as many foreign bureaus as in the past, they do not seem ready to fully trust an army of worldwide citizen journalists without traditional training and potentially with

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activist sentiments.

In *Bad News* Fenton says, “Americans are too broadly underinformed to digest nuggets of information that seem to contradict what they know of the world. Yet whose fault is that, and whose responsibility is it to correct?” (2005, p. 21). It’s almost as if newspapers and networks today want to take the responsibility in moralistic terms but to reject that responsibility in financial terms. If this minimalist trend of fewer bureau-based correspondents continues, the choice will either be no foreign news or at least a partial reliance on alternative journalists in the regions of news generation. The latter circumstance could be considered more desirable over the utilization of parachute foreign correspondents around the world because there is a greater chance that the context missing from news, as Fenton sees it, will be fulfilled by information from individuals who understand the culture, language, etc. of what they are reporting on. Yet, the challenge of balancing questionably credible sources with getting the news quickly and from those who experience the area and its events firsthand will still persist. There will be traditional standards that may need to be slightly altered in the process of incorporating citizen journalists in the newsgathering process or even in the dispersion of international news directly to the public.

As the world becomes increasingly integrated and the issues and relationships of the world more complex, the desire and necessity for foreign correspondents and news from around the globe would be unlikely to fade. However, the nature of and sources providing the information about the international community will likely shift to a more grassroots effort of reporting with a greater emphasis on use of the Internet and other new technologies. Consequently, modern mainstream media will have to be prepared to evolve their methods of newsgathering and verification of facts if they want to uphold their “authority” over the seemingly random voices of citizen journalism. These measures would have to address the concern of validity of information from alternative reporters and bringing a sense of relevance to the story being told. Foreign correspondents from the U.S. attempt to offer a concrete connection between foreign news and the interests of the American public. How alternative journalists will effectively become part of that reporting as more than an interviewee or tip for further investigation is still somewhat unknown; however, alternative reporters have been vital content providers (with video and text) in certain situations, such as the 2009 election riots in Iran. News audiences probably shouldn’t expect to see a drastic change in the outward appearance of foreign news. However, over time there could potentially be a shift in the amount of leverage citizens journalists have in providing foreign news to networks which could provide for a return to days of widespread international reporting but on a less “official” scale. Resident homes or local Internet cafes may become the bureaus of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

While unconventional, these new “reporters” and “bureaus” may offer something to international news that parachute journalists cannot provide as aptly in the stories they tell: an in-depth pre-existing knowledge of the peoples and regions they are reporting on. Even in the time of Edward Murrow, CBS News discovered that a human element would be “intimately connected” to their success (Cloud & Olsen, p. 333). The trusted foundational news organizations of the U.S. have the opportunity to utilize the resources they need to more effectively cover international news with a basis of humanity that comes from knowing the surroundings, experiencing what occurs, understanding the story and telling it as one’s own.

## VI. Conclusion

Foreign reporting has changed significantly since its start, but the basis and purpose still continues to be providing information to the public of important occurrences overseas. In the earliest stages, foreign reporting was the publication of random letters from abroad. In some perspective, news organizations of today have regressed to that sort of news gathering by sorting through various online posts from people living in their respective countries across the globe and using that as information to investigate, if not report on. Yet the modern use of citizen journalists did not come without building up bureaus all around the world in the time of Murrow, virtually deserting them and ultimately opting to do the majority of foreign reporting by flying American journalists to the site of international news with little knowledge of a complicated story or the region itself. It may be cheaper, but questionable whether it is the most effective means of informing the public on international matters.

As with many aspects of journalism, economic resources and technology played a major role in the evolution of international correspondents and how they report. The bureaus of the past, fixed locations from

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which networks and newspapers operated, are few and far between due to cost. Therefore, it is likely that those news outlets will rely on journalists from the area in the future to provide them with essential information to pass on to their public. In the case of the United States, this phenomenon has already been happening and will probably expand. This reliance does not and will not only pertain to journalists but also the scope of stories that is reported and/or aired. The dependency demonstrates the increasingly important role of online content – particularly blogs – as a way of accessing information in otherwise underreported or sometimes inaccessible countries, a situation most recently demonstrated with the election protests in Iran and text and video content being streamed to U.S. bureaus from participants.

There will come a time when the public and news organizations of this nation will realize that there is information vital to us from other parts of the world and understanding to be had about those circumstances that cannot be reported on by parachute journalists. Not knowing the culture and language of an area can completely mask even the most effective of a reporter's ability to comprehend and effectively express what is going on. While entrusting more and more citizen journalists involves ethical issues and challenges to the current, more common perspective about the professionalism and necessary training of journalists, there is potential to organize these individuals and reward them for solid, unbiased reporting. Websites like GlobalPost, where about 100 citizen journalists (or "correspondents") agree to abide by high standards of journalism and provide online international news content, are an example of this sort of organization (GlobalPost.com). A multitude of voices and stories that were once not heard or told will be shared with the public, and a human element in the stories that our public seems to rarely seek and often ignore will be enhanced. The amount of ground one news outlet can cover suddenly expands exponentially.

Maintaining newscasts of totally verified information will be one of the greatest challenges to news organizations with citizen journalists. Information gained from blogs and other more experimental sources still continue to be investigated by official news outlets before it is published as credible. However, with the competition between news sources now centering on timing and quickness in breaking news and the public's appreciative reaction to that, the audience will have to take on a new civil responsibility as news consumers. The sources in a foreign news story of the future may be as significant as the story itself and the public needs to be well aware of that potential change.

There is a lot of new responsibility on the part of news providers and news consumers in allowing the blogosphere to become a new realm of potentially valid information. It is important for journalists to remember, however, that blogs are someone's reality but not necessarily the most reliable, unbiased or accurate reality. As aforementioned, blogs can and should be used as sources of information but also put into context. The public needs to be made well aware that blogs are providing information that may or may not be verified, and the journalists should make all attempts to check that information as thoroughly as possible and be certain that the source is credible. Bloggers will potentially need to assume a greater sense of responsibility as well. A news organization may only have access to a particular region through the information that is available online; in this context, anyone blogging can be considered a citizen journalist and thus is possibly an important asset to informative foreign news.

All in all, international news coverage will likely have to be entrusted to citizen journalists to keep effective foreign reporting alive. Journalists need to know about not only the event or situation they are being sent to cover, but the cultural context of that event. If networks and newspapers cannot (and will not) pay to maintain foreign bureaus, the state of the international community still must be understood by those who live in it. The public may not be able to rely on our major news outlets that provide information with only their American-based staff and the few correspondents at work. Therefore, it will be the job of those organizations to employ the help of other less traditional journalists to make sure the U.S. public is informed of world news. Overall, the definition of a journalist will have to shift in order for international news to be reported as fully and effectively as possible. It will be a shift necessary to enhance our knowledge of this interconnected and ever-changing world we live in.

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## Acknowledgments

This author thanks Dr. Richard Landesberg at Elon University for his supervision and advice, without which this article could not be published. The author also appreciates the numerous reviewers of this article and the overseers of this first edition of the Elon Journal who have helped make this publication possible.

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