Social Media and the News

Jacob A. Blair
Eastern Kentucky University, jacob_blair50@mymail.eku.edu

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Social Media and the News  
Jacob Blair with Faculty Mentor Dr. Minh Nguyen

Abstract:

The way news is received by the general public has changed. If you want news fast, isn’t the best way to receive information based on the use of social media?

Social Media in Hometown News:

- Football, basketball and other sports scores can be tweeted or posted long before it is printed or broadcast.
- City and local government meetings can be live-tweeted.

Twitter Breaks News:

When did Twitter beat traditional news sources?

- Arab Spring protests…ground photos, footage and accounts.
- Miracle on the Hudson.
- Brett Favre’s signing with the Minnesota Vikings.
- Hurricane Sandy, people needed power to share news and cellular devices (when they had a signal) were the way to communicate.

The Future:

Based on changes I have seen in the past ten years, I believe social media will still be popular, but I think it will be even more mobile than the Facebook and Twitter apps we have now. Stories that are posted to social media will link to websites that will be more “responsive,” meaning as we progress in the digital age, more websites will adjust based on the size of the screen from which you are reading the content while maintaining the same content on all devices.

The Death of Traditional News?

- Has the rise of social media helped decrease traditional media consumption? Not quite.
- According to the Pew Research Center, 21 percent of the sampled survey population of Facebook users still read the newspaper and 42 percent still watched local TV.
- 18 percent of Twitter users still read newspapers and 32 percent get news from local TV.

Social Media Ethics and Codes:

- A big thing about social media is reliability.
- Maintain your presence professionally, be objective and not promoting political stances.
- The SPJ is currently working on revising its Code of Ethics to include more guidance in regards to social media.
- 2012 AP Stylebook, “Basic ethics still apply…”
- Reuters prints in its handbook, “We expect our journalists to reach conclusions through reporting, but they must also demonstrate the intellectual discipline to keep their conclusions susceptible to further reporting, which requires a posture of open-mindedness and enlightened skepticism.”
- The ethics code in The Los Angeles Times says, “Our job is to tell readers what is true, not what might be.”

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