Audience

Managing a Conversation

- Interactive discussion is an integral part of online news.

- News is no longer a lecture, but a conversation.
  - Audience expects to be able to have a say

- Comments = interactivity at its most basic

- "If news is important, it will find me."
  - More people turning to social media as primary source of news.

Benefits

- Provide transparency on the reporting process.

- Enable an immediate feedback loop

- Tips

- Spread awareness of news coverage through word-of-mouth marketing
  - Huge potential

Challenges

- Participants may not be as constructive or respectful as media

- Too many people to manage the conversation.

- Not enough people to generate conversation.

Evolution

- Message boards and forums

- Blog comments

- News story comments

- Social Media/User Generated Content

- Next?

Conversation

- Rise of social media has made journalism more social as well.
  - Finding sources via social media

- Most problems that arise are not due to the platform, but to the people.

- Social media represents new ways to connect people and information.
  - But standards of journalism should not change

Conversation

- You need to be where your audience is.
  - Online

- You need to approach/appeal to your users on platforms they're using

- Social media represents new ways to connect people and information.
  - But standards of journalism should not change

Conversation

- Utilize your audience.
  - Tips
  - Story ideas

- As a collective, your audience knows more than any single journalist (or even your entire newsroom).

- Engaging users/trying to get them to create content is extremely challenging.
  - Community manager/social media manager = emerging career opportunity.

Types of News Generators

- 1. Those motivated by money (smallest)
- 2. Those motivated by ego
- 3. Those motivated by issues
- 4. Accidental bystanders who didn't set out to do any reporting (largest)
- 5. And the "plain old crazy" users that every Web site seems to have

- NowPublic via Journalism Next

Citizen Journalists

- Public citizens creating news content.

- Not paid for their content (or pennies/CPM)

Conversation

- Make news participatory.
  - Photos
  - Video
  - Comments
  - Event listings
  - Editing (Wikis)
  - Blog posts
  - Message boards
  - Votes and recommendations
  - Shares on social media

1-10-100

- The 1-10-100 rule for participatory online communities states:
  - 1 percent of the user community—including the journalists on news sites—actually create content.
  - 10 percent of the user community will "synthesize" the content by posting a comment, e-mailing a link to a friend, authoring a blog post on a separate site and linking back to it, voting it up or down, etc.
  - 100 percent of the user community will benefit from the actions of the first two groups.

Conversation

- This is the phenomenon many experts have noted with the most active user-generated communities on the Web.

- UGC and collaboration are not easy to achieve.
    - You have to get people to contribute/interact
    - Takes individual's time, energy and resources

Building Conversation

- Requires efforts on the part of the journalist/journalism org. on many fronts:
  - Evangelize the brand
  - Solicit content and participation
    - Make the effort to get people involved
  - Moderate comments/blogs/submissions
  - Troubleshoot, solve Web problems
  - Take part in IRL community events
  - Drive traffic
  - Inform community about ad opportunities

Conversation

- Often citizen journalism/user engagement is thought of as hyperlocal.

- Useful during breaking news as well.

- Acknowledge tips (give credit where due)

- Journalist/outlet needs to be consistent in building conversation

Conversation

- Use the social/conversation elements of journalism to build out your network of sources

- Widen your audience beyond your geographic area.

- Engage with your existing audience on a deeper level.

Future

- The audience will increasingly provide the "what" while journalists provide the "why" and the "how."

- Pro-am journalism

- Rather than competing with citizens who can supply firsthand accounts and footage of news events, journalists are learning how to collaborate with them.

Future

- Journalism has accepted (if not yet embraced) blogs/social media/new tech as part of the mediasphere.

- Journalists help filter the information and add value and context

- Link journalism

Ethics

- For journalists, traditional ethics still apply

- Find out if your outlet has a social media policy.
  - If so, follow it.

- Represent yourself on social media as you would in public.
  - Not necessarily as you would among your closest friends

- Transparency

Moderation

- All sites have terms and conditions.
  - Users are expect to abide by those.
  - If they don't, have consequences (eventually kick them out/off).

- Monitor postings
  - Services
  - Community moderation
  - Read the comments on your own stories/blogs

- Turn off comments on specific stories if necessary/warranted

- Anonymous vs. non-anonymous comments
  - Facebook comments

Conversation

- Correct errors, but also note that articles have been edited/errors corrected

- Legally, news outlets are considered distributors, not publishers when it comes to UGC, comments, etc.

- Social media can connect journalists to people and information.

Audience

- You can have great content, but you need people reading/viewing/listening to it.

- Web has changed business models.
  - Content + ability to find that content

- Analyze what you publish, publish more of what your readers like.

Audience

- ROI: Return on Investment

- Fundamentals of building an audience:
    - Tracking your content
    - Web analytics
    - Search engine optimization
    - Effective headline writing for the Web
    - Distribution through social media

- Regular content production is essential.

Measurement

- Just SOME of the data being measured:
  - Total news stories per day
  - News stories by topic or section (sports, business, local and so on)
  - Total blog posts per day (if these are different from news stories on your site)
  - Blog posts by specific blog
  - Slide shows/Video stories/Podcasts or other audio stories [per week, per month, per quarter]
  - Breaking news e-mail alerts SMS or other mobile news alerts
  - Social media posts

                                                    -Journalism Next

Measurement

- Analyze the data as it relates to your content.
  - Know your value
  - Know what stories do best
  - Know what stories don't do well

- Revenue plays a key role in journalism.
  - Journalists want to be paid. Therefore outlets need to make money.
  - Building an audience will help attract advertisers.
  - Advertisers give money.

Measurement

- Each section may have traffic goals.
  - Know your department's goals.

- Goals should be based on realistic expectations.
  - History.

Tracking

- Newsrooms are tracking tons of data on the Web. (Analytics)

- Analytic data is key in online media.
  - Traffic
  - What stories are doing best/worst
  - How long people stay on the site
  - Uniques
  - Pageviews
  - Shares

Tracking

- How analytics work:
  - Small piece of JavaScript code provided by the service into the HTML of every page on your site.
  - The code keeps track of everyone who visits the page and sends the data it records over the Web to another site.
  - Those results are tallied and displayed.

- Determine what analytics are most important.

Tracking

- Key analytics include:
  - Pageviews
  - Uniques and visits
    - Uniques = 1 user
    - Visits = 1 visit to the site
  - Engagement
    - Time on the site
    - Shares
    - Comments
  - Referrers
    - How are users finding you?
      - Search
      - Social media
      - Links
  - Mosts
    - Most viewed
    - Most emailed
    - Most shared

Tracking

- Balance between data-driven and editorial-driven decision making.
  - Both are important perspectives

SEO

- SEO: Search Engine Optimization
  - How to get the most out of search
    - Most referrals

- Three functions of search engines
  - Spiders/Robots
  - Indexing
  - Queries

SEO

- Most Web users don't go beyond the first page of search

- Many news sites get as much as 1/3-1/2 of traffic from search.

- Predict keywords people will be searching

SEO

- Keys to utilizing SEO
  - Produce quality content
  - Link
  - Headlines/Title tags
  - Meta tags
    - Meta tags are losing value

SEO

- Many news outlets are not doing a very good job at utilizing SEO.

- Missed business opportunity.

Headlines

- 8 of 10 people will read headline, only 2 of 10 will read story

- Write for readers and robots
  - Readers = Headlines that will get people to click
  - Robots = Keywords

Headlines

- Tips for headlines:
  - Keywords are key
  - Use conversational language
  - Inject a little attitude/voice

Social Media

- Use social media to distribute/push content

- Build social capital
  - Become known as a trusted source on the Web.

- Two-way conversation