The Evolution of Media

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THESIS ABSTRACT

Media has been changed irrevocably by the ingenuity and availability of the World Wide Web, creating a global network of users who share information and entertainment. This shift has encompassed nearly every medium of information, and forced many industries to reevaluate archaic business models and means of dispensing information and products. This project examines how the World Wide Web has transformed the way that outlets of media, especially news, have re-imagined their approach to distributing information and the effect that the digital revolution has had on previous formats, such as print.
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I: The New Evolution

*How Advances in Information Technology Have Affected Our Lives and Our Future*

Conceptualizing exactly how the world has been transformed by the creation and subsequent proliferation of the Internet, specifically the widespread availability of the World Wide Web, is a long process involving a close study of most aspects of modern life. In an article in *The Morning News*, an online magazine, columnist Lauren Frey said that explaining how the Internet has changed the world is “like an assignment on how walking upright transformed the human race.”1

Evolution may be the perfect analogy for the impact of the Internet on human life; it has accelerated our access to bases of knowledge, changed our way of life through convenience, and revolutionized the way that we communicate with each other, providing an opportunity for advanced interaction between humans.

Tim Berners-Lee, credited as the “inventor of the World Wide Web,” states that because the internet is a system able to “follow and analyze the tentative connective relationships that defined much of our society’s workings,” which, in turn, unveiled “entirely new ways to see the world.”

“Computers might not find the solutions to our problems, but they would be to do the bulk of the legwork required, assisting our human minds in intuitively
finding ways through the maze,” said Berners-Lee, who is current chair of Computer Science at the University of Southampton’s School of Electronics and Computer Science, in his book *Weaving the Web*.

Although unable to fix many problems that humans encounter, computers aid everyday life through easy access to knowledge, goods, and services. Aside from simplifying research and offering intuition, the web quickly allowed a brand new audience access to near limitless information.

“Initially, it rapidly increased the flow of information; good, bad, and especially disinformation.” said Lionel Bascom, 60, a journalist and author, with a resume including work for United Press International and the *New York Times*, who is currently a professor of writing at Western Connecticut State University.

“In a brief time, it gave anyone with the cheapest hardware instant access to top flight news, research, video, hard to find access to rare books, and information that make travel and communication across vast landscapes instant.”

Some argue that the impact of the internet could possibly change our perception of location. Janne Quitney Anderson, in *Imagining the Internet*, states that “in cyberspace, the current rules of geography may also disappear” due to “the ability to ‘be’ anywhere in the world at anytime through internet communications.” Others feel that the Internet has the potential to divide humanity further, due to a third of all new global Internet users living in developing nations, which displays disharmony through the mirroring of
inequitable power relationships. In “On Distributed Society,” a guide to the internet as a means for sociological understanding of communication, author Terje Rasmussen claims that “central features of the history and the anatomy of the Internet may transcend the technological and then may point toward central aspects of society,” again suggesting that the internet mirrors society. Rasmussen argues that “the internet and other information-technological changes are as much social as technical innovations,” and that “the general evolutionary forces that lie under the innovation and development of computer technology and the Net also affect social change,” classifying human interaction with the Web as a positive and educational experience, and unlike Anderson’s theory of the potential for divide.

If the Internet has as much impact socially as it does technologically, the study of this impacted society would begin at a civic level, with attention for the ways in which it facilitates social change.

Javier Corrales, author of “Lessons From Latin America,” argues that internet connectivity should be viewed as a “cause, as well as an outcome,” of democratization, stating that the Internet is “more likely to expand where there are greater levels of economic freedom, and once introduced, it is more likely to enhance democracy among those regimes with intermediate levels of political freedom.” The web’s democracy-enhancing potential is cited as a possible motive behind the Chinese government’s banning of Google China in the fall of 2006.
Some experts can see consequences in the advancement of communicational technology. Communications scientist Greg Blonder predicts that “by 2090, the computer will be twice as smart and twice as insightful as any human being,” eventually surpassing humanity to the point where “[we] might make a good pet.” Although his comments are undeniably caustic, Blonder unearths a valid point about technology that is often applied to science: just because we can do it doesn’t mean that we should do it.

Despite the growing influence of “new media,” the objectivity and accuracy of such outlets of information is questioned. Along with questions of the precision of information, the use of the World Wide Web as a source for news stories has some professionals uncertain its effect on reporters.

“We do much of our research and gain contact information online now. It's faster and more efficient than using other methods, but it does tend to make reporters lazy,” said Emily Olson, Managing Editor of Housatonic Publications, a Connecticut-based media company with a host of publications including the New Milford Times and the Litchfield Enquirer. “However, as much as it makes our jobs easier, we still have to be sure to fact check every single thing we find online, learn to attribute it properly and seek out real ‘live’ sources.”

“News online is still news, but it can be completely wrong, false and dangerous if it's not credible. That makes our jobs even harder because no one
believes what we say. So we have to be more careful than ever to attribute all the
info we get from the Web.”

Olson is not alone in her uncertainty with online sources.

“Opinion predominates over reporting on the net,” said Dr. John Briggs, Professor of Writing, Linguistics, and the Creative Process at Western Connecticut State University and Associate Editor of the *Connecticut Review.*

“Few places have the money to pay reporters to dig up real stories. And since the mainstream press is gutting its newsrooms of reporters, the facts diminish and the analysis of facts flourishes. We still haven't made the leap to where net based news organizations are developing the fact and investigative base on which analysis takes place.”

In the shadow of online publications, many print publications are in the process of a shift in advertising. Although newspapers still subside on print ads, many are moving portions (some larger than others) to online marketing.

According to the *New York Times* online media kit, the paper has circulation of 1,120,420 weekly papers and 1,627,062 for the Sunday edition, an impressive circulation from the #3 national newspaper⁹. Yet, this figure seems miniscule next to their twelve-month average of 13,372,000 unique visitors to nytimes.com¹⁰.

In a collective report by the *Wall Street Journal* titled “How Old Media Can Survive in a New World,” the difficulty for old formats to metamorphose is
made clear. “Their old way of doing business isn't as profitable as it used to be, but they haven't found a new way that's as profitable, either.” The report also argues that there are many ways for traditional news outlets to remain viable in the new age, including web components, such as that of ABC News, which offer 24 hour coverage and interactivity. This idea is echoed later in the article by the thoughts of Andrew Swinand, senior vice president of Starcom Worldwide, a member of the Publicis Groupe, the world’s fourth largest communications group and the world’s second largest media counsel and buying group. Swinand feels that “papers shouldn't just use their online sites to post the same stories readers can see in print. Some reporters should be allowed to craft blogs about their topic of expertise. Readers should be able to add comments and reaction to a story in an online community.”

How has the web changed humanity?

To start, the web has changed how information is viewed, gathered, bought and sold, made us fear for the sanctity and reliability of that information and for our future, helped us through the logistical maze of life with bottomless intuitivism and made us reevaluate preconceived notions of location and self while promoting intellectual evolution through the broadening of humanity’s base of collective knowledge.
II: We’re Gonna Need a Bigger Boat

New Media and What It All Means to Print Publications

The convergence of computing and media has irrevocably altered the way that many people receive, give, and site information.

This marriage, bonding modern communicational technology with previous formats, has proven beneficial to some, profitable to others, and devastating to the rest. Publications and various other mediums have drastically altered methods of outputting information to keep up with technology that seemingly has no restriction. In conjunction with weighing the limitations of print versus digital, leaps in informational technology have made it so the newspaper, magazine, and the book are no longer the only source for information. Open access to information and entertainment has inspired many to go to their computers for these needs, whether legally or illegally.

In the dawn of new media, many previous formats for publication, such as newspapers, magazines, and journals, have suffered and others have vanished entirely. In this emerging age, the “sink or swim” mentality is prevalent for many major outlets of news and entertainment who seek to stay afloat in the rising tide of technology.
There is an ongoing dialogue about how the web has ubiquitously reshaped news. While the detrimental effects, such as decreasing advertising revenues, are clear, others focus on the opportunities that the web has allowed news organizations to connect with readers on a whole new level and output much more information in an astoundingly quicker timeframe.

“[The internet has] addressed a lot of the inherent problems with delivering news, especially print news. The second a newspaper is printed, it’s out of date for an entire day,” said Keith Whamond, Online Editor for the News-Times, a daily paper that covers the greater Danbury, Connecticut area. “Web sites are constantly updated. Newspapers have a finite space for news; the online news hole is almost limitless.”

While advertising and marketing have made an easy transition to the web, printed material has staggered with its inability to tread water with an almost infinite, and mostly free, outlet for the same information that was previously sold.

In a UCLA study, it was found that 57% of internet users “report reading news online as a key activity,” with internet users reading news 6% more than non-users, a factor which may be due to a “pre-existing inclination to use of media of all types, combined with familiarity of and ease with these media”\(^{14}\). These large groups of news consumers, who are as comfortable with reading the
news online as in print, are a catalyst for the de-emphasis of print and the accentuation of online components.

Trends in circulation presented by the Newspaper Association of America show a steady decline in circulation since the mid-90s, bottoming at a total of approximately 53.2 million, down from almost 63 million ten years before. These figures are undeniably affected by the application of news to the World Wide Web.

Although many assumed that with the mingling of the Internet and news would begat new channels for information and more options to choose information from, it has been found that the case is quite the opposite. Associated Press Writer David Bauder’s article, “Web wasn’t supposed to change journalism like this,” shows that sources of information have actually narrowed after the marriage of the Internet and news organizations due to “many Web sites primarily packaging news that is produced elsewhere.” Bauder also quotes the Project for Excellence in Journalism's annual State of the News Media report which concluded that “citizen-created Web sites and blogs are actually far less welcoming to outside commentary than the so-called mainstream media.”

“The Internet has profoundly changed journalism, but not necessarily in ways that were predicted even a few years ago,” said Bauder.
To add credence to these findings, and a certain level of irony, Bauder’s article was featured on the web sites of *USA Today*, *Editor and Publisher*, and a host of regional newspapers.¹⁸

*The New York Times* was an early supporter, or at least a recognizer, of the possibilities of the digital age. Since 1995, the *Times* have had a formidable presence on the web, with some content free to all readers and others requiring registration and a fee. It has consistently ranked at number 1 amongst news sites, with a September *BusinessWire* report stating that NewYorkTimes.com solicits 13 million unique visitors a month, with a record of 555 million page views in March of 2005.¹⁹

Utilizing material from their blogsite “Bits,” Simon Dumenco argues, is evidence of “the paper conjoining their print and online blog powers,” adding that the inclusion of such material “offers a higher level of honesty and transparency - meaning Hansell and his colleagues no longer have to suppress what they really know and feel just to keep up appearances - i.e., to maintain the vaunted journalistic lie, the self-delusion, of objectivity.”²⁰

*The New York Times* is an example of the ability for print publications to evolve and thrive in the present environment by embracing the digital format, much like a fellow Manhattan-based organization, the *Wall Street Journal*.

*The Wall Street Journal* has consistently been a viable and popular example of an online publication that is able to solicit users for its paid
subscription service. *The Wall Street Journal* launched its online component in 1996, and by 2007, the website had 980,000 paid subscribers depending on the Journal for stock news, according to an article by their own Cynthia Crossen\(^\text{21}\). At $99 a subscriber\(^\text{22}\), the Journal pulls in estimated gross of $97 million, with an average reader’s income at $191,000 a year. In 2004, the Journal released an application, along with Oasys Mobile, that allowed subscribers to access stock information with their cellular phone\(^\text{23}\). *The Wall Street Journal* is a clear indication that the internet has not rendered news unprofitable, but changed the way it must be marketed.

“The *Wall Street Journal* Online at WSJ.com, arguably the largest paid subscription site online, is a true web content success story,” said David Meerman Scott, author of *Cashing in With Content* and *The New Rules of Marketing and PR*. “While the vast majority of online newspaper sites provide all content for free (and make money exclusively by selling advertising and site sponsorships), the *Online Journal* has always focused on selling subscriptions as well as generating ad revenue, just like its print counterpart\(^\text{24}\).”

CNN, the long-time leader in cable news, introduced its online counterpart, CNN.com, in 1995 Like the NewYorkTimes.com, CNN.com offered a large portion of its content for free, but also offered a paid subscription service, known as CNN Pipeline, which offered access to more videos, news stories, and delivered breaking news in the form of “pop-up” windows\(^\text{25}\). CNN’s turn to
digital also saw a partnership with TIME magazine, which has also directed a share of its focus towards the digital format. CNN Pipeline was discontinued in July 2007 and was replaced by a free service, a trend not unfamiliar with the partitioning and regulating of Internet media.

Additionally, CNN.com incorporates blogs and citizen journalism with “i-Report,” a channel in which amateur reporters can submit stories and photographs to be featured on CNN.com. i-Reporting has become a considerable portion of CNN’s material, and was a main source of information for the company during the time surrounding the Virginia Tech school shooting.

“Surely, the rise of blogs, citizen journalism, and newsbots make the model of news an increasingly irrelevant dinosaur,” said Mic Dover, writer, editor, and contributor to NzStories.com, a web-based media syndication agency, and author of “Web News: Conjuring Trick or Brave News World.” He refers to the shift as a “cultural chaos” that is welcomed by some who feel it could be a “democratizing force.” “In the long term, media watchers worried about information quality and diversity believe the industry must invest in more original reporting to the few genuinely international news stories now on offer.”

**ADS & CLASSIFIEDS**

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 41.7% of the American workforce 16 and over uses the Internet at work, as of an October 2003 study. Many Americans are bound to the Internet by their profession, and with
advertising being prevalent on the majority of websites; this increases the number of people viewing Internet advertising inside of work hours.

Figures from the Newspaper Association of America show the decrease in funds being spent on print ads and the increasing amount of money that newspapers are shifting into online advertising, which increases at approximately a half a million dollars a year, while print decreases at roughly the same rate\(^33\). Similar trends are taking shape in the magazine industry, with publications such as Scientific American, down 49.2\% in first quarter ad revenue since 2007, and U.S. News and Report, which saw a 37.5\% decrease\(^34\).

“Newspapers are in stiff competition with online news, and most of what we publish is an effort to keep it fresh and as up to date as possible. It eats into our ad revenue so we have to come up with specialty publications to make up for that loss,” said Emily Olson, Managing Editor of Housatonic Publications, a subsidiary of the Journal Register Company that holds such publications as the Litchfield County Times and the New Milford Times under its wing.

According to the New Media Institute, “a research and fact finding organization whose mission is to improve public understanding of issues surrounding the Internet and other forms new media communications,” online shopping during the 2007 holiday season was up 19\% from the last year’s figures, netting approximately $28 billion dollars\(^35\). This flux in spending has raised many eyebrows in the advertising world, prompting a large shift in focus to online
advertising, and less emphasis on the ads, flyers, and circulars packed into the daily newspaper.

Websites have the ability to display ads to global readers. In turn, new media has revolutionized the way that advertisements are viewed and sold.

“As compared to traditional media, advances in digital technology permit advertisers to more easily and, more precisely measure the effectiveness of their methods on the web,” stated authors Sudohb Bhat, Michael Bevans, and Sanjit Sengupta in their survey of advertising effectiveness on the web. “In the digital realm, advertisers can more track an individual customer’s behavior on a web site or across different websites.”

In predicting the foreseeable future for online ads, the authors of Advertising, Promotion, and New Media stress the importance of web organizations need to compel users back after the initial page view.

“One of the biggest challenges for advertisers will be to reach the selected target market. To help accomplish this, advertisers and web site designers will need to offer a compelling reason for the internet user to select, and periodically return to, their particular site.”

Free online classified ads, such as those offered at craigslist.org, are more effective both in cost and garnering a larger readership. Craigslist, founded in 1995 in San Francisco by Internet entrepreneur Craig Newmark, offers classifieds viewable around the world, representing 450 cities in 50 countries. By charging
for job ads in selected large cities such as New York, Seattle, and Chicago\textsuperscript{39},
craigslist is able to offer an almost unlimited internet community including 9 billion page views and 30 million monthly ad listings while maintaining revenue estimated between $55-81 million\textsuperscript{40}. The website has spawned a legion of imitators, such as oodle.com and sell.com, and has provided a proven formula for using the Internet as a tool for displaying ads. When compared to that of a regional newspaper, the potential span of circulation for online classifieds is staggering.

“The detailed search engine allows you to input your price range, broker or no broker option, and even more specific details such as neighborhood or rules about pets and smoking. I think it’s a powerful tool because it saves time and connects people in a new and more efficient way,” said Julia Mennone, Designer with Ted Moudis Associates of Manhattan, who has used craigslist.org to find an internship and an apartment. “I don’t know if it ends up this way for everyone, but the first apartment I looked at ended up being the one. I would think it would also be a valuable tool to use in a situation where I needed to view a bunch of apartments in a short time. I would say that based on my first experience I definitely got what I was looking for and expected\textsuperscript{41}.”

In much of the same fashion that the web has adjusted practices, connected organizations with consumers, and given new opportunities to news and advertising mediums, the wide world of sports has seen a drastic overhaul.
SPORTS

Sports journalism has been irrevocably changed by the advent of the World Wide Web. In a field where up-to-the-minute coverage is the ultimate goal, the Internet has allowed those who report on sports to connect with fans in a whole new way.

“The internet is a huge part of our business when it comes to sharing information. More and more viewers/customers are getting their news and TV listings online,” said ESPN Listings Publicist Samantha Baron. “People can go to the website(s) and find what they are looking for in a matter of seconds. Whether it’s sporting news and information - or spending time on a fantasy league - the website has up to date, continually streaming content. Without espn.com, we wouldn’t have the ability to cover as many different sports, topics, and writers columns as we do.”

Baron detailed other changes that web news has had on ESPN.

“Blogs and online media are becoming more popular and more influential forms of news, even if they don’t have the best sources or the most professional approach. We are beginning to change the way we send press releases to include more digital aspects such as video and photos because we need to keep up with these changes. Also, we are changing who we pitch stories to. We now include
some sports blogs and websites in our list of media or writers to contact with pitches regarding ESPN and our properties.”

CONVERGENCE

Due to the impact of the World Wide Web, viability, in nearly every set and subset of media, is dependent on innovation.

“Rhetorical convergence,” a term pioneered by author Anders Fagerjrd, “occurs when rhetorical techniques are inherited from different media.” He argues that the appeal of web media is not simply “juxtaposing text and video,” but an incorporation of many old elements, ultimately making web sites “behave differently from both newspaper and television.”

“Print news is just text and pictures; online news is photo galleries, videos, slideshows, polls, user submitted content, user comments, discussion boards, and on and on,” said Keith Whamond, online editor for the News-Times, a daily newspaper whose web site claims a 90% satisfaction rate. “Web sites are an interaction with the reader and an entry point for a larger conversation.”

Although ingenuity and progression seemed against them, print publications have survived the tide of new media by adapting to it and exploring what it has to offer. With intuition, factions of old media are keeping afloat through innovation and the exploitation of the potential of the web, whether by
communicating with online audiences or continually updating content. Those who
are willing to learn how to swim are able to not drown in the torrent of
technology.
III: Use with Caution

Open Source Information and the Question of Accuracy in Online Sources

The proliferation of the Internet has allowed for the flow of information in the world to become nearly endless, effectively creating a global society and culture in which citizens only restriction is Internet access and the limits of modem speed. The citizens also have no physical interaction with each other, but are able to trade information, products, and entertainment freely with only a few key strokes.

The broad reach of the World Wide Web has allowed for billions of people to share information, leading to the creation of “social news” networks and collaborative, user-based conduits for information. With these discretionary sources of information comes a question of legitimacy.

The rise of interactivity in information available on the web has raised questions about the reliability, potential bias, and the chance for inaccuracy in sources of information compiled by users. Are people, especially students, able to trust sources of information, open to revision from sources that are not required to prove credentials, on the Internet?

Wikipedia, which touts itself as “the free encyclopedia that any one can edit,” has come under fire from critics, especially in the academic spectrum. Critics feel that along with the accessibility of such sites comes a great
responsibility to be accurate, a characteristic not universal among those who compile and edit information on Wikipedia.

“There is an ongoing dialogue on Wikipedia that is very democratic and, in many ways, its more accurate than other, more formal encyclopedias,” said Lionel Bascom, a professor of writing at Western Connecticut State University, who is the author numerous books and has written for United Press International and the New York Times. “I do not rely on it, but it is a good place to start.”

Simon Waldman, of the UK Guardian, stated “to its fans, [Wikipedia] is a fantastic research resource - albeit one that you should use with caution; and an incredible example of what can be achieved by collaboration and cooperation over the Internet. To its detractors - mostly those from the traditional world of encyclopedias and librarianship, it is barely worthy of the label ‘encyclopedia’.” In Waldman’s article, entitled “Who Knows,” he quotes librarian and Internet consultant Philip Bradley as saying, “Theoretically, it’s a lovely idea, but practically, I wouldn't use it and I'm not aware of a single librarian who would.

The main problem is the lack of authority. With printed publications, the publishers have to ensure that their data is reliable, as their livelihood depends on it. But with something like this, all that goes out the window.” Bradley touches on the intangibility of such outlets for information, and warns that along with their infinite potential comes zero accountability for inaccurate information. Despite concerns of accuracy, information from Wikipedia has been used in reports done
by the *New York Times*\(^{48}\), in a BBC article claiming that the CIA had tampered with its own “wiki”\(^{49}\), and even the Canadian government used Wikipedia’s article on same-sex marriage as a link on their website detailing their Civil Marriage Act\(^{50}\).

“I sometimes use it to get an overview of a subject and to get pointed to other sources that would be considered more stable and reliable,” said Dr. John Briggs, associate editor of the *Connecticut Review*, freelance contributor to truthout.org, a political news site, and professor of writing, linguistics, and the creative process at Western Connecticut State University. "Credibility of sources is always an issue, always has been. Rumor moves quickly and can come to seem authoritative because if gets picked up by credible sources who didn't check back to original source of the story."\(^{51}\)

CNN.com featured a video titled “Wikipedia Wars,” examining the effect that the site, which has 300 million page views a day, has had on the 2008 presidential election. Reporter Tom Foreman states that supporters of Hillary Clinton, John McCain, and Barack Obama have been “furiously changing entries” during the collective campaigns to slander opposing candidates and make their preferred candidates look better, including attempts to falsely label Clinton a white supremacist and Obama a Muslim. Foreman referred to the conflict as an “intellectual war.” Andre Rasiej, founder of techpresident.com, feels that the open
sources of information are transforming “top-down politics into bottom up politics.”

“The powers that control the future of the country are realigned around a more participatory citizenry,” Rasiej said of Wikipedia’s platform. “And the internet is facilitating that.”

Although detractors see Wikipedia as a malicious influence on the collective knowledge base, it is hard to ignore a forum that has had such success in changing perceptions and preferred channels of information.

Wikipedia is part of a canon of websites often referred to as “Web 2.0.” Some describe Web 2.0 as “The Web as Platform” basically, any software, interface, or web site which relies on user input and creativity for its content. Tim O’Reilly, web pioneer and founder of O’Reilly media, defines Web 2.0 as “the business revolution in the computer industry caused by the move to the Internet as platform, and an attempt to understand the rules for success on that new platform,” according to his blog on the O’Reilly Media, who held the first “Web 2.0” conference in San Francisco in 2004. Other examples of Web 2.0 include eBay, Digg, and de.li.cio.us, which all include an open user interface, relying on contributors for content, whether anonymous or registered. Tim Berners-Lee, director of the World Wide Web Consortium, claims that the term is a “piece of jargon” and that “nobody really knows what it means,” adding that “if Web 2.0 for you is blogs and wikis, then that is people to people. But that was what the
Web was supposed to be all along. The battle over the term is indicative of many web-related phrases; although they may seem succinct, they are often open to individual interpretation, much like the user-based content which the terms intend to define.

Wikipedia has two types of contributors: anonymous and registered. Anonymous users are allowed the same freedoms as registered users, though they are not required to have a profile. Registered users are required to have a Wikipedia account, where curious readers are allowed to check credentials, if any. Although information from registered users may seem more reliable, a study by Dartmouth College found that information contributed by registered users is no more reliable than that of anonymous resources, according to an article by Scientific American titled “Good Samaritans are On the Money.” This revelation may surprise some of Wikipedia’s detractors, including seasoned professor and journalist John Seigenthaler Sr., who in an op-ed article in USA Today called Wikipedia a “flawed and irresponsible research tool.” The opinion article was in response to a post by an anonymous user who wrote a five-sentence entry containing “false and defamatory information,” according to a Susan Page article in USA Today entitled “Author apologizes for false Wikipedia Biography.” The site’s prevalence of inaccuracy was a source of satire for The Onion, a comical fake newspaper, which featured an article titled “Wikipedia Celebrates 750 Years of American Independence” in July of 2006.
Despite the gray area of discretion inherent in a system which allows discretion to anyone with minimal brain power and internet access, some still feel Wikipedia is more credible than news organizations with financial and other special interests due to its unfettered and self-censored dialogue.

“MSNBC is a corporate site that has financial goals and its own entities that have often reported stories with slanted points of view. Wikipedia may just be wrong, but people can go there and dispute claims on Wikipedia. That will never happen on the New York Times or MSNBC,” said Bascom, who has also worked for publications such as Fortune and Money Magazine. “If a mistake makes it onto the New York Times site, the editors have to first, find it, second, decided to correct. Often the correction can get lost and mixed into with the second and third version of the facts. Wikipedia tells you on page one that what you are reading is disputed. I’m not saying Wikipedia is better than the Times, but it has greater potential for accuracy in time.”

Wikipedia is part of a much larger umbrella of Web 2.0 sites, all the property of the Wikimedia Foundation, a recognized 501(c) (e) charitable organization based in San Francisco, CA. The group operates a number of online editable resources such as Wiktionary, Wikinews, and Wikiversity, a “a center for the creation and use of free learning materials, and the provision of learning activities” founded in August 2006. As of December 2007, the Wikimedia Foundation had a total of 12 employees, which is considerably more impressive in
connotation with the fact that Wikipedia is the one of the top ten most visited web sites in the world\textsuperscript{57}

Although much information is up to the reader’s interpretation, including print news, encyclopedias, and broadcast journalism, the stigma of online knowledge and its potential for inaccuracy seem to consistently shadow the advantages of such a free flow of information. When it comes to sources of information that allow open editorial and compositional privilege to all, users should proceed only in remembrance of three simple words: use with caution.
IV: Tome Sages and Home Pages

How the World Wide Web has Changed Books

In an era where almost every aspect of life is being revolutionized by the vast capabilities of the Internet, books are not far behind.

Project Gutenberg, started in 1971 by Michael S. Hart\textsuperscript{58}, is a radical example of what digitization has to offer. Although founder Hart may have had an inkling, it is hard to believe that he had an idea of what his pet project would become.

Beginning as an effort to digitally archive and distribute cultural works,\textsuperscript{59} Project Gutenberg is the oldest digital archive, and as of December 2007, offers 24,000 free works, including books, audio books, and sheet music, all archived digitally by volunteers\textsuperscript{60}. Gutenberg has caused some uproar over the topics of intellectual property\textsuperscript{61}, concerns prompted by user’s ability to post copyrighted works which were not authorized for use by the author or their representatives.

Although the owners of intellectual property are uneasy with the web’s potential for easy infringement, open access to information and entertainment has allowed many to get non-solicited works to a much wider audience.

E-Library.net, billed as an “Open eBooks Directory” allows authors to upload their works and make them available for purchase all over the globe. The site offers more than 300 free eBooks, with approximately 8,000 books in total,
all available from anywhere in the world with computer access. Whereas in previous generations, authors were virtually enabled to publish works without a publisher and a literary agent, directories such as the E-Library facilitate a more “grass roots” approach to authorship, albeit from modern technology.

ePalm.org, the “Portal of Free Books,” offers thousands of free eBooks and free streaming audiobooks, in English, Spanish, and Italian. From classic works such as Shakespeare’s tragedies to *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, users are able to read or download eBooks in any of the three languages, all for free.

HarperCollins, one of the largest print publishers in the world, started a web service titled “Browse Inside” in early 2008, offering selected free books online, in “an attempt to increase book sales,” according to a New York Times Article. Also in Rich’s article, it was said that fantasy novelist Neil Gaiman, author of *Stardust, Good Omens*, and the incredibly popular *Sandman* graphic novels, was holding a vote on his blogs for readers, to choose which of his books would be offered online for free as a “gift.”

“It’s like taking the shrink wrap off a book,” said Jane Friedman, chief executive of HarperCollins Publishers Worldwide. “The best way to sell books is to have the consumer be able to read some of that content.”
Despite the surge of eBooks and some publishing organizations moving a portion of their material online, some feel that the tome is too strong of a format to be replaced by a computer screen.

Other authors are still skeptical about print’s future.

“Print sources will probably diminish, for economic reasons, if nothing else. It's cheaper not to use trees. Easier to handle electronic versions of books, magazines and newspapers will gradually take over,” said Dr John Briggs, Associate Editor of the Connecticut Review and Professor of Writing, Linguistics, and the Creative Process at Western Connecticut State University, and author of several books including Trickster Tales and Seven Life Lessons of Chaos.

In 2006, Yale law professor Yochai Benkler published The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom. The book was released as a “wiki,” a system of software designed with the intention of collaborative editing, linking, and organizing, perhaps most commonly recognized by tools such as Wikipedia, an “online encyclopedia which everyone can edit.” Benkler’s book, available in its entirety online, details how the interactive capabilities of the internet have changed publishing and encourages users to participate in the research and editing process, “an experiment of how books might be in the future,” according to the author.
Benkler, in a *New York Times* article entitled “Digital Publishing Scrambles the Rules,” explained how such revolutionary steps, such as offering a book for free online, do not necessarily kill profitability.

“'Even in music, price can compete with free,' Benkler said. 'The service has to be sufficiently better and the moral culture needs to be one where, as an act of respect, when the price is reasonable, you pay. It’s not clear to me why, if people are willing to pay .99 cents for a song they won't be willing to pay $3 for a book."'

The impact of the World Wide Web on the book publishing industry is multifaceted; it has changed both the way books are written and sold. Much in the same way it modified the newspaper, the Internet has not stifled print literature, it has merely forced it to adapt and accept more modern avenues of gaining information and entertainment.
V: Gone Out the Window

_Digital Rights, Power in Numbers, and How the Big Four are Trying to Stop It_

The World Wide Web’s vast potential has drastically changed the flow of intellectual property. With millions of anonymous users networking without restriction, many have questioned the future of their intellectual work in a climate with no checks or balances. Some have turned to new and innovative resources to protect their work, with varying amounts of success.

Digital Rights Management (DRM), in a nutshell, is a technology that attempts to control digital access to copyrighted material. DRM is embedded into movie and music files in an attempt to end media piracy. Some, like the Free Software Foundation, have taken issue with the terminology of “Digital Rights Management,” instead opting to call it “Digital Restrictions Management,” stating that “[DRM] refers to systems that are designed to take away and limit your rights.”

Some, like author Michael Stranglove, feel that DRM is not only restrictive, but also ineffective in deterring piracy. He argues that they are “fraught with difficulties” and, in the end, have negative impact on the legitimate buyer and little to no impact on the pirating community. Furthermore, he states that “the very discussion of DRM systems provides hackers with useful information on how to defeat DRM systems.”
“Given the current state of technology the content protection features of DRM are not effective at combating piracy,” said Strangelove in his book The Empire of the Mind: Digital Piracy and the Anti-Capitalist Movement. “The key problem is that even if a small fraction of users are able to transform content from a protected to an unprotected form, then the illegitimate distribution networks are likely to make the content available ubiquitously.” Executive Editor of ZDNet, an offshoot of the Ziff Davis group, a media company focusing on technology, David Berlind suggested a different name for DRM: Content Restriction, Annullment, and Protection a.k.a C.R.A.P., also referring to DRM as a “cancerous technology.”

“Once you’ve bought music or other content to play on one device, it won't play on any other device because of the proprietary layer of CRAP,” said Berlind.

Berlind is not alone in his disapproval of DRM, a technology which is increasingly being labeled intrusive. Steve Jobs, co-founder and current CEO of Apple, called for the elimination of DRM in an open letter to the music industry. While Apple’s iTunes store is an unwilling perpetuator of DRM-coded music and video, Jobs feels there are better options.

“The rub comes from the music Apple sells on its online iTunes Store. Since Apple does not own or control any music itself, it must license the rights to distribute music from others, primarily the “big four” music companies:
Universal, Sony BMG, Warner and EMI. These four companies control the distribution of over 70% of the world’s music. When Apple approached these companies to license their music to distribute legally over the Internet, they were extremely cautious and required Apple to protect their music from being illegally copied,” Jobs explained on his Apple.com blog entry entitled “Thoughts on Music.” “The solution was to create a DRM system, which envelopes each song purchased from the iTunes store in special and secret software so that it cannot be played on unauthorized devices.”

Despite his adversity to DRM, Apple’s viability is, at least partly, based on the 4 billion songs, at .99 cents a piece, sold by iTunes in its little-more-than-five-year career, a number which would surely be impossible without business between Apple and the “Big Four.” Jobs also explained why, for now, DRM is a necessary evil.

“The most serious problem is that licensing a DRM involves disclosing some of its secrets to many people in many companies, and history tells us that inevitably these secrets will leak,” said Jobs. “The Internet has made such leaks far more damaging, since a single leak can be spread worldwide in less than a minute. Such leaks can rapidly result in software programs available as free downloads on the Internet which will disable the DRM protection so that formerly protected songs can be played on unauthorized players.”
“If the big four music companies would license Apple their music without the requirement that it be protected with a DRM, we would switch to selling only DRM-free music on our iTunes store."

Digg.com, founded in 2004 by Kevin Rose, Owen Byrne, Ron Gorodetzky and Jay Adelson, is an interactive social news community, in which users are able dictate, through votes known as “diggs,” what content reaches the main page. The site is considered to be a forbearer in interactive web news, and has caused uproar among those who see an inherent bias with their methods of displaying news.

The site was a source of controversy in May of 2007 when an article posted on Digg’s homepage released the encryption code for AACS digital rights management (DRM), which protected copyrighted material from duplication on HD DVD and Blu-Ray formats. The code effectively opened the market for HD DVD and Blu-Ray encryption, much of which would be illegal in nature due to copyright infringement.

According to site co-founder Jay Adelson’s blog, the Digg group was forced to remove the item from its home page, inciting a backlash in which users continued to post the encryption key on both the Digg forums and its main page.

Forbes magazine, in an article titled “Digg’s DRM Revolt,” referred to the online insurrection as a “digital Boston tea party.” Also in the Forbes article, Adelson stated, “In order for Digg to survive, it must abide by the law. Our goal is
always to maintain a purely democratic system for the submission and sharing of information. In order for that to happen, we all need to work together to protect Digg from exposure to lawsuits that could very quickly shut us down. Thanks for your understanding."

The leak of the encryption code caused much debate over free speech on the net, and the responsibility of site owners to monitor their content, even, or especially if, that content is decided by users. However, some sites have been banned from inclusion on Digg’s page, including ForeverGeek.com, who claimed them to be a “editor’s playground” instead of a “user-driven website.” A report by Seomoz concluded that the top 100 users on Digg control 56% of the content, causing another controversy regarding the true nature of the “democratic system” for sharing information.

Despite the controversy, Digg was the subject of a bidding war, with companies such as Google and Rupert Murdoch’s NewsCorp each bidding approximately $150 million to buy the social news site, proving the profitability of channels of information that allow users input and discretion into the content they see. The battle for digital restriction and the revolt for absolute technological freedom are being fought on mainstream websites, such as Digg, and through users and CEOs the same. The fight is occurring between big companies such as
Apple and EMI, and the outcome is crucial to those with money and intellectual property at stake.
VI: Locality

*How Print Can Compete with Online News*

Online news has many advantages over the print medium; nearly endless updates, a much broader circulation, and the ability to display multimedia, such as videos and audio along with articles.

Bob Dunn, editorial director for InstantNewsNetwork.com and founder of FortBendNow.com, a “web-based information service” delivering neighborhood news in Fort Bend, Texas[^82^], explains the appeal of the speed of web news over the turtle-pace of print publication.

“The more instant news is, the more useful it becomes. If it arrives soon enough, people can take action on local information in order to improve their individual situations, as opposed to picking up a plastic-wrapped bundle of newsprint from their driveways and reacting helplessly to events that happened a week ago or more,” said Dunn in a piece titled “Backpack Journalism: Taking Web News To It's Logical Extreme[^83^].”

Though the odds seem stack against newspapers, some are staying afloat by exploiting an aspect by which web news has struggled most: local news.
Though it is not impossible to obtain local news online, for small communities, it is likely that towns with low populations, and low crime rates, will not receive coverage from large media outlets.

“I focus on the communities I serve in my two papers and tell stories about the people in those towns, the students, the teachers, the business owners, etc. It's a way to keep in touch with the readers, and based on the phone calls I get and the emails I receive, I know people are reading what I write every week,” said Emily Olson, Managing Editor of Housatonic Publications of Connecticut, who hold a number of local papers, including the New Milford Times and the Litchfield County Times, under their umbrella. “Keeping a close relationship with a community is what a newspaper should always strive for; and a lot of papers just don't do that anymore.

In the absence of local online coverage, the blog has become an alternative for those who want to know what is going on in their town.

“The key is to make sure that we still cover our local communities better than anybody else. As long as that remains true, it won’t matter what medium people get our news from. Readers will always want the best coverage. Cutbacks in newsrooms have led to local blogs attempting to eat our lunch, with some success. That trend needs to end in order to survive. Content remains king, that’s why companies like Yahoo are constantly partnering with local newspapers, Media-News sites included.” said Keith Whamond, Online Editor for the News-
Times of Danbury, Connecticut. “We create the content people want to read, they deliver it, and we both benefit. People will always want to learn what’s going on in their community. We need to adapt to how they want to learn about it.”

Along with increased circulation and instant updates, the ability to display multimedia facets to stories has allowed web news to thrive.

“Print news is just text and pictures; online news is photo galleries, videos, slideshows, polls, user submitted content, user comments, discussion boards, and on and on,” said Whamond. “The print edition is editors sitting in an ivory tower dictating news; the Web site is an interaction with the reader and an entry point for a larger conversation.”

This interaction may be the start of a more open dialogue between a paper and its readers, creating constant feedback and easily accessible statistics which enable editors to quit the guessing game of what their readers want. Whamond detailed how the web allows papers to converse more easily with readers.

“It seems to me that newspapers were largely a hit-or-miss kind of guessing game by editors to figure out what people wanted. Papers used to run these huge discussion groups, trying to poll people to find out what they want to read about. Now we know instantly. The big question is – how quickly can we adapt and change?”

Lionel Bascom, a veteran journalist who has worked for the New York Times and the International Press Association and is current writing instructor at
Western Connecticut State University, is optimistic about the future of some newspapers.

“I think the best guess is that newspapers, the best newspapers, will evolve into better places for more in-depth, better-written information and the internet will serve as a utilitarian, instant access tool like a GPS unit in your car,” said Bascom. “[They will] speed up business and personal communication ...[and] close the gap of time and space for teaching and learning in far off places in the world.”

A hybrid of unmatchable local news coverage and the inclusion of web integration into newspaper’s priorities may be just what the doctor ordered for print. Olson, like Bascom, also remains optimistic about the future of the newspaper, albeit for different reasons.

“Newspapers will not die. They might go underground, but they serve a purpose that laptops cannot,” said Olson. “I think so many newspapers are losing touch with the communities they are supposed to be serving because they just don't try hard enough to find out what people really want to read.”

*Information Today* writer Wallys W. Conhaim attempts to further explain the future of newspapers, asserting that “as long as newspapers don't narrowly define themselves into a we-control-the-news box” they may hold a chance at emerging from the turmoil as a more useful, more democratic medium, with
considerable profit potential from leveraging their significant local audiences into online ad revenues.”

He argues, however, that their viability depends on “the willingness of management to continue to invest in a critical mass of local and subject specialists at the top of their game and maintain deep connections with their communities. Without these as the newspaper’s true competitive advantage, the dire predictions will, in all likelihood, be accurate.”

In their book *Online Communication*, Andrew J. Wood and Matthew J. Smith argue that Americans recognize the communality of newspapers, which unites “an even more geographically dispersed population by fostering a common identity among them.” This sense of community may be one of the only factors to inspire many to shell out .75 cents for the print edition instead of logging on.

The key, it seems, to publishing a successful newspaper that must compete with web news seems to be simple: give readers what they want. Large news organizations can scratch the surface of local news, but they will never be able to recreate the centrality and flavor that community newspapers can offer. Equal parts locality and integration with the web are the cure to the ailments of local news publications.
VII: Revolution of the Millennials

IPods. Facebook. Torrents. Most people over 40 are not familiar with this lexicon. Unfortunately for them, these terms are part of the new revolution. What revolution, you may ask. The “millenials,” my generation, a generation viewed, albeit rightly so in some cases, as a herd of slackers.

Slackers, yes. Slackers that is somehow more productive than any previous generation, yes.

There is a difference between the “millenials” and those who lived before. We have seen the difference that rapidly evolving technology is having on society and we accept it as opposed to being frightened of it, like cavemen afraid of the sun.

CBS recently had a 60 Minutes piece focusing on our burgeoning generation. The piece contained a strong and overt bias, basically calling us out as lazy know-it-alls that want to make our own rules. While this may be frighteningly accurate to some baby booming bosses, there is something that they do not account for. Yes, some of us are “lazy,” but we can afford to be. Through e-mails, BlackBerries, and Web sites, many in the “millennial” generation don’t need to go through the formal drudgery of a 9-5. “Lazy” is relative. Often what
critics cite as “lazy” is simply a difference in technique. We are more productive
in a comfortable environment, leading to the next point.

We make our own rules BECAUSE WE CAN.

CBS’s exposé portrayed bosses who were angered and scared by twenty-
somethings who preferred to do work on their PowerBook from home, on a couch
listening to their iPod and checking their Facebook profile every 10 minutes.
Bosses will have to adapt to this, because this is how we want to work, and we
have unbridled computer and networking skills, so…

THEY WILL ADAPT TO US. Call it selfish, call it lazy. Keep tying that
noose that you call a necktie and I will publish a news site while still in my
pajamas.

For years, a greedy monster has bastardized art, profited from pain, and
made millions of dollars off of the ignorance of our populace. This monster is not
named Grendel, Golem, Frankenstein or the Wolfman. This monster will not
disembowel you, but will certainly take all of your money and your autonomy, if
you let it. This monster profits from sickness, turmoil, and especially death. This
monster goes by names such as Geffen, Virgin, and Atlantic. The record industry,
for near a hundred years, has usurped creativity, dulled it down to a stub, and fed
it to readied zombies, gulping down every ounce of gruel and begging for more.
In a flash, around the turn of the century, these beasts began weeping, crying to a
public whom they had cheated and manipulated for decades.
Starting with simple MP3 exchange on programs such as Napster and Kazaa, the illegal downloading of music has turned the record industry on its head, making it reevaluate every aspect of its business. Sure, illegal downloaders aren’t exactly freedom fighters, but through their manipulation of encoded music files, the world has changed. Now, the laymen may believe that with the destruction of programs such as Napster or Kazaa, the illegal downloading would screech to a halt. Wrong.

A new, more streamlined format to download music, via torrent, is easier, quicker and harder for the RIAA to track. Necessity is truly the mother of invention. Sites that host torrents, such as Mininova.org and ThePirateBay.org have grown to enormous proportions, with The Pirate Bay even considering buying an island to host their servers to skirt the copyright cops. For once, the record industry is on its knees, begging for a dissuaded public to come back and buy $20 CDs and $200 concert tickets. Don’t hold your breath, David Geffen. Make us a reasonable offer, and we will give you a counter offer. Until then, we will continue to download billions of songs and not feel a tinge of guilt about it.

With our ingenuity, the millennials have conquered every form of media. Right now, record execs are holding a meeting, desperately attempted to find a new way to profit off of a generation that is two steps ahead of them at all times. We have revolutionized the way that work is done, by streamlining our productivity to the point where a lot of workers only go to the office for an
occasional Christmas party. Sure, call us lazy. We will be doing your job soon
enough, and working half as hard to get it done, and staying home to do it. We’ll
send a sympathy card to your crowded cubicle.
The Ubiquitous Change

For those with access, the web has changed human life ubiquitously. It has allowed for the conglomeration of nearly all outlets of information and revolutionized the way that people buy, sell, market, and work. Although the widespread use and popularity of the Internet has barely reached a decade, the world is an entirely different place than before its integration into culture.

With this permutation of resources came a wholly new and different channel for knowledge and, therefore, an utterly new point of view for those with instant access at their fingertips. Due to the rise of this innovative conduit of information, the world's people are connected more than ever before, and hold the key to their own education, enlightenment, and erudition.

This technological transubstantiation, like the manipulation of tools by prehistoric humans or the development and acceptance of agricultural society over that of the hunter/gatherer, has changed the lives of individual humans, the entire human population and society as a whole, which now encompasses not just physical neighbors and compatriots but all inhabitants of the world, connected by a link; a fiber optic link.

With the exception of seven books, 92% of this report, including 77 informational sources, all research, and 5 interviews, was accomplished through the manipulation of the ingenuity of the World Wide Web.

The seven books used were found using a library search engine.
APPENDIX

Survey 1
(Sent to Dr. John Briggs and Lionel Bascom)

Name, Age, Title at Current Position, Time at Current Position, Education, Experience with Journalism/Publication…

What has the internet done to change the flow of information in our society, especially news?

Do you use Wikipedia? If so, for what?

Are there issues of credibility with online sources, such as Wikipedia and related sites, which allow unspecified users factual and editorial input?

What, in your estimation, is the future of print publications (news, books, magazines)?
Survey 2
(Sent to Keith Whamond and Emily Olson)

Name, Job Title, Time at Current Job, Education, Experience in Journalism

How has the World Wide Web changed the way that we obtain information, especially news?

In your experience, what changes have been made to the field of journalism since the marriage of news and the Internet?

What, in your estimation, is the future of print in the era of digital media?

Any other comments/information...
Survey 3
(Sent to Samantha Baron)

1. Name, Title @ ESPN, # of years at current position

2. What are a few ways that ESPN uses the internet to share information?

3. How important is the World Wide Web in ESPN's viability?

4. In your time at ESPN, have you seen less emphasis on printed materials, such as ESPN the magazine, etc., and reaching "old" media outlets, such as radio and print?
Endnotes

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