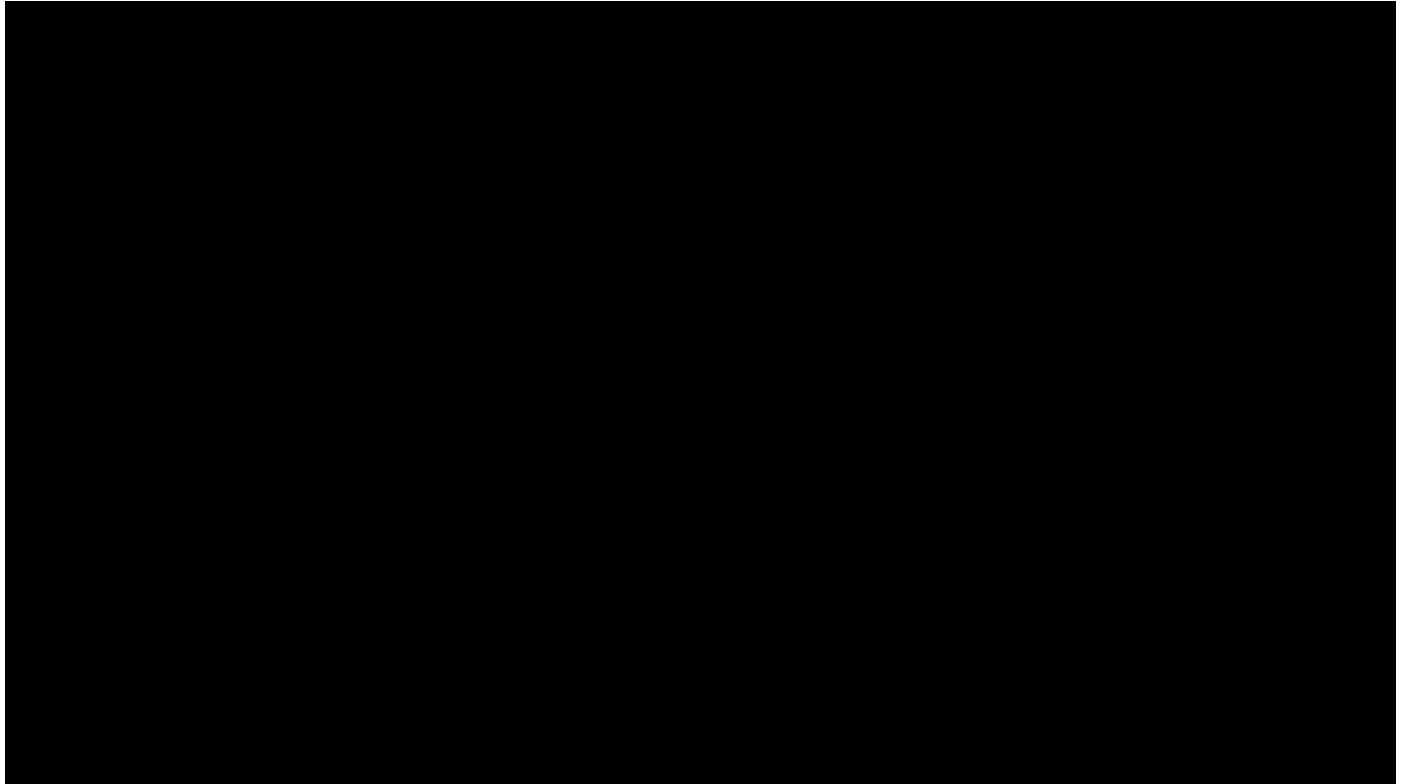




How to use the learning layer



The learning layer helps teachers and students take up the discussion about journalism in the digital age by providing assignments, activities, questions and supplemental reading and research.

Click on the red buttons to get at the learning layer. You can print or email the content as individual elements or as chapter units. The layer should be readable on mobile devices as well as laptops and desktops. It also can be displayed on a large classroom screen.

Students, teachers, practitioners and citizens have equal access to the learning layer content. Assignments and other activities are organized on three levels: Flashlight, Spotlight and Searchlight. Some may find they roughly coincide with high school, community college and college-level teaching. But others may see them simply as different approaches to the same subject matter. Teachers should feel free to assign work from any or all of the levels as they see fit.

We call it the learning layer because it is literally that – a design layer within this HTML 5 package. It is the work of a team of graduate students as well as college and high school teachers as part of a joint publishing project of the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute at the Missouri School of Journalism and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

The right ages of communication?

The author offers his own version of the four ages of communication: visual, language, mass media and digital. Previous scholars have divided the history of human communication differently. Below are the Ages of Human Literacy as discussed by Marshall McLuhan in 1967 and later referenced by Neil Postman.

Oral Age: Communication, particularly storytelling, was done by word of mouth. Stories survived when they were remembered within a community.

Literary Age: Symbols and then written language radically altered the communication environment. With writing, the same message could easily be repeated exactly and transported without distortion over a long distance.

Print Age: Mass production of printed materials began due to the development of the modern printing press — moveable metal type used in an old wine press. Identical messages can reach large numbers of people, though less community interaction is needed to consume media.

Electronic Age: A time of instant communication. First was the telegraph, then the telephone, then radio, television, computers, video games, the Internet and mobile phones. Before the Internet, McLuhan used the term Global Village to illustrate that humans were no longer in isolation. This age is also characterized by technological convergence, the tendency of different technologies to evolve toward performing similar tasks.



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Guided reading questions for chapter one

1. What is the Knight News Challenge? What example does the author give of a successful project funded by the Knight News Challenge?
2. According to the author what are the major phases of communication throughout history?
3. What innovation started the age of mass media?
4. What is the name given to the first generation of American media consumers? What form of media was popular for that generation?
5. What three eras followed the first generation of American news consumers? What media defined each era?
6. What does the author mean when he refers to World War 3.0?
7. What names does the author give the four generations that will follow the Digital Age? What will be the relevant media in each era?
8. According to the author, why is news literacy important to college students?
9. According to the author, what is the disadvantage of having news that is more "portable" and "personal" than ever before?
10. What solutions to the current state of journalism are offered by the four reports highlighted by the author?



Understanding transliteracy

“Transliteracy” describes the interaction of traditional literacies, such as the ability to read, with new literacies, such as the ability to use digital media. Our increasingly digital culture is changing the way we learn these literacies. In classrooms, students can know more technology than the teachers. In newsrooms, community members can know more about the story than the journalists.

Journalists, teachers and communicators of all stripes need to be transliterate. They must know how to align message, media and timing in ways that engage their communities. How do we begin to go about learning this?

The following articles explore how journalists and scholars see transliteracy:

- [What is Transliteracy, and How Does it Fit at Empire College? – Diane Longley](#)
- [It's Not Nothing – Diane Cordell](#)
- [Transliteracy, reading in the digital age, by Sue Thomas](#)
- [Internet Learning Creates a Digital Divide – Ron Barnett](#)

Class discussion questions: Are there people in your school or community who are unable to participate in the digital exchange of information? Research shows the poor, the elderly and rural residents are less likely to have access to broadband Internet services. What does this “digital divide” mean to the evolution of journalism? Are mobile devices closing this divide?

Classroom activity: Select a message and a target audience. Develop and convey that message in three different ways. You might, for example, use a Tweet, a blog and a photo, or perhaps e-mail, video and word of mouth. Compare and contrast. Was one tool or platform more effective than another in terms of reach, understanding and engagement? Why? Would your efforts have had more success had you investigated the interests of your community before sending the message?

Extra credit: The Pew-Knight Information in the Digital Age Project is a series of studies of the changing news

ecosystem. Check out the Pew study about [social media and news](#). Are some social media platforms better suited for news? Do you consume more news incidentally (seeing a friend's shared post) or deliberately (following a news organization or journalist)? What news topics are present in your social media?



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Shaded terms for chapter one

What are “shaded terms”? These are the terms that you may not use on a daily basis, but if you want to get the most out of this book, they are terms you’ll want to know. Here is list of the terms that will be mentioned in the introduction and first chapter.

Technological convergence: the tendency of different technology systems to evolve toward performing similar tasks.

Literacy: the ability to read and write, as well as think about the written word. Digital media literacy extends this to all digital media and adds the ability to find, create, analyze, distribute and use content.

The Knight Foundation: a foundation that supports journalism excellence and advances media innovation, community engagement and the arts.

Innovator: someone who creates a new or better product, process or idea.

Ecosystem: a community of living organisms interacting with nonliving things in its environment.

Cyberspace: the computer-based network environment.

Extrapolate: to guess at something that is unknown by using information that is known.

Legacy media: long-established or traditionally produced newspaper and broadcast news outlets.

Bio media: reconceptualization of media so that they interact with biological components and processes in humans.

Innovation: the process of introducing something new or different.

Personal, Portable, Participatory: three ways in which consumers interact with media, a phrase popularized by Pew researchers. Personal means catering to an individual; portable, mobile; participatory, interactive.

Credibility: The trustworthiness of something based on its source, appearance or other factors.

Journalism: the independent verification and clarification of recent events or previously unknown information of public interest, distributed to a community for its benefit. Definitions of journalism often emphasize its role in self-government.

News: Current events or previously unknown information of public interest.

Information: Knowledge, facts or data.

Singularity: In technological terms, the creation of self-aware digital super-intelligence either separate from or combined with humans.

Some of the shaded terms are in the text; others are in the Learning Layer; still others are in the source material linked to from the book. This list helps define them, wherever they are found.



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

“The Elements of Journalism”

Through the history of communications, humans always have needed information. In their book *[The Elements of Journalism](#)*, Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel call this the “awareness instinct.” They noted how people in different eras and cultures share similar definitions of news. The instinct to seek news is natural; having timely knowledge of the world around them helps people live their lives, protect themselves and bond with one another.

As civilization grew and self-government spread, the need for independent information grew. Journalism evolved into a profession. The best journalists came to believe in a specific set of principles. Kovach and Rosenstiel call them **The Elements of Journalism:**

1. Obligation to the truth
2. Loyalty to citizens
3. Discipline of verification
4. Independence from those they cover
5. Monitor power
6. Provide forum for public criticism and compromise
7. Make the significant relevant and interesting
8. Keep news comprehensive and in proportion
9. Practitioners are obliged to exercise their conscience
10. Citizens have both rights and responsibilities regarding the news

Questions for students: What do you need to know to be free and self-governing? Ask your peers, your parents, your professors. Do they have different needs? Does news you consume come with all the elements of good journalism? Do you agree these are the best elements? If you had to choose, would you say it is getting harder or easier to find excellent journalism?

Activity: Now that you know the elements of excellent journalism, look at the [history](#) of [The Wall Street Journal](#), which was first published in 1889. How have its journalism and practices changed over time? Can you categorize the changes into the ages of the evolution of human communication the author describes?



Tracking your family's media history

The author contends that every generation grows up with a different form of media on the rise. Those who come of age as the new media form blossoms become “natives” for that particular means of communication. They shape the future of their preferred forms. They hold those preferences throughout their lives.

Discussion questions on three levels:

Flashlight:

Older generations sometimes refer to millennials as “digital natives.” What do you think they mean when they say that? Do you think you are a digital native? What do you think that means? Mizuko Ito and other scholars say young people use digital media to hang out, mess around and geek out. Is that true? Is it different from how your parents used media? How?

Spotlight:

Come to class prepared to discuss a media audit of your family. Where do your parents get their news: television, radio, newspapers, the Internet? What's their favorite form? What about your grandparents? Has their media consumption changed? What do they think about your media consumption? Would they have any trouble being “unplugged” from digital media?

Searchlight:

Consider your own media use. Be honest: How many hours do you spend each day with media? Do you multitask in several media forms at once? Some call this “continuous partial attention.” What would you call it? Consider this list of news sources important to the millennial generation. Do you use any of these sources? Do your parents?

Extra Credit:

Go 24 hours without consuming media of any kind. Keep a hand-written journal of the experiment. What happened? Could you do it? Was it difficult? What, if anything, did you miss? Compare your experience to that of the students of University of Maryland professor Susan Moeller. Were their reactions the same as yours?



Integrating social media into lesson plans

The Pew Research Center reports that [73 percent](#) of Internet consumers in 2013 used social media, approaching 10 times the audience of 8 percent in 2005. The 18-25 year old group used more social media than any other.

Social media is an essential tool for newsrooms. Its capabilities include news distribution, content gathering, source locating and marketing.

Journalism schools need to adapt to dynamic social media. When Facebook's Vadim Lavrusik was a student at Columbia University in 2009, he wrote a Mashable piece entitled, "[10 Ways Journalism Schools are Teaching Social Media](#)." How many of the 10 points are included in your classes? Should they be? Are any out of date?

For students, assignments on different levels:

Flashlight: Miami Herald sports writer Michelle Kaufman teaches at the University of Miami. Her students live-tweeted LeBron James' career-high [61-point](#) game. Many news outlets didn't bother with the game, just before a road trip and against a lesser opponent. Kaufman's class dominated the Twittersphere. Organize a class to live-tweet an event. Did the class make a splash by [trending on Twitter](#)?

Spotlight: Social media encourages immediacy. But journalists still need to verify facts. Check out the [PBS Media Shift](#) article on tools that can reveal altered pictures. Websites such as [snopes.com](#) show what myths aren't true. What other sites or devices check facts?

Searchlight: Social media enables new types of news gathering, especially when stories are breaking. [Storify](#) is an online device that allows users to create timelines with social media content. Select an ongoing story and create your own Storify. Continue your coverage until it is no longer relevant.



Is imagination better than extrapolation?

Innovative breakthroughs often are inspired by intergalactic sagas and other futuristic stories. Ideas that seem far outside the box can prove in time to be the most relevant. For example, for years sci-fi movies have shown a world in which robots are just as intelligent as humans. Now that world is nearly here, and some are proposing [that humans and robots can work together](#) in the newsroom. It's one of many ideas from sci-fi movies that is proving true.

Review and choose an activity:

Flashlight: Pick a sci-fi book from the list below or a popular sci-fi movie. Review, then discuss the forms of technology they predicted. How accurately did the book or movie predict the future? (Example: Star Trek replicators and [today's 3D printers](#), or The Terminator's visual screen and [Google Glass](#).) Are there predictions that haven't yet come true? Do they include new forms of media that you wish existed today?

Spotlight: Explore the [Paleofuture blog](#) by Matt Novak, writer for Gizmodo.com. Browse through the decades from 1870s-1990s. Find at least two media elements that were predicted accurately and two that were not. Why did some come to life while others never got past the drawing board? Try to make connections between ideas rooted in the original time and setting and those that looked beyond what was already there.

Searchlight: Writes Nate Silver in *The Signal and the Noise*: "If our appreciation of uncertainty improves, our predictions can get better too." Research the book and [Nate Silver's blog](#) with a book by an out-of-the-box thinker such as *The Innovator's Dilemma*, by Clayton Christensen. What is the secret of Silver's success as a predictor? Does his form of predictive analytics make sense, given what Christensen says? Make your own predictions for the future based on these principles. Does the use of data allow you to see far into the future, or does the crystal ball get cloudy?

Suggested science fiction novels: *The Time Machine*, H.G. Wells; *I, Robot*, Isaac Asimov; *He, She and It*, Marge Piercy; *The Sparrow*, Mary Doria Russell; *The Bohr Maker*, Linda Nagata; *Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom*, Cory Doctorow. Novels with a biological twist: *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley; *InfoQuake*, David Louis Edelman; *Blood Music*, Greg Bear; *Beyond This Horizon*, Robert Heinlein; *The Diamond Age*, Neal Stephenson.

Books promoting out-of-the-box thinking: *The Innovator's Dilemma*, Clayton Christensen; *A Whack on the Side of the Head: How You Can Be More Creative*, Roger van Oech; *What a Great Idea*, Chick Thompson; *Thriving in E-Chaos*, James Underwood; *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell; *How to Read a Book*, Mortimer Jerome Adler; *What Would Google Do?*, Jeff Jarvis; *Innovation*, Richard Foster.



Making new forms of media

This chapter discusses how news might function in the changing digital media environment, much as [this article](#) looks at mobile journalism. What will rise as a new form of news? Will all media converge? Who will do the inventing?

Student activities on three levels:

Flashlight: Research the life of a media innovator, from Gutenberg to Jobs or anyone in between, even the [students at MIT who are pioneering wearable computing](#). Prepare a presentation on the innovator's life and contributions. Create a descriptive graphic or a physical model of the invention. For example, you can produce a replica of an early tabloid or a model of an early Apple computer or an iPad. You may use any materials available to you.

Spotlight: Innovation professor Dan Pacheco of Syracuse University and his students track new developments by creating [their own page using social media publisher Rebel Mouse](#). Visit the page. Which of the new ideas do you like, and why? Come to class prepared to discuss how students, professors and professionals can keep up with all the new tools and ideas. Should your class create a Rebel Mouse or [Storify](#) collection of social media posts to stay current?

Searchlight: Award-winning Canadian novelist Kate Pullinger tells the story of Alice, a young girl who travels the world with her parents, using a combination of text, video, images, sound and gaming components to deliver the tale in [Inanimate Alice](#). The Center for Investigative Reporting uses alternative techniques for news stories, including [animation](#), [coloring books](#) and even [theater](#). Using these for inspiration, seek out a newsworthy personality in your school or local community and create a story using as many digital and alternative techniques as you can imagine. Does the idea of technological convergence mean that all stories must be told in all media, or are some forms of media better for some messages?



Catching up to the future

The author connects Ray Kurzweil's predictions of a technological merger of computers and humans to changes in journalism and media. The result is a science fiction-like world of robots, cranial implants, telekinesis and more.

Research assignments at three levels:

Flashlight: Ask students to watch inventor Ray Kurzweil's "[The accelerating power of technology](#)" or Kevin Kelly's "[The next 5,000 days of the web](#)" TED talks. In a paper or blog, students would answer these questions: Have some of their predictions already been realized? Will machines make us immortal? What would be the pros and cons of a news environment in the world Kurzweil and Kelly foresee? Use additional sources as needed.

Spotlight: MIT Media Lab leader Joi Ito focuses not on immortality but on what humans should do when he looks at [how technology best helps us innovate](#). In a paper or blog, ask students to take Ito's stance. Why is he right to say technology is not all about efficiency? What do you think of his notion that the [Internet is a "belief system?"](#) Does your school nurture the same skills and beliefs as MIT does with its students? Is your entrepreneurial drive appreciated?

Searchlight: Ask students to explore these links:

- [Guardian CEO outlines digital future of news and media industry](#)
- [Forbes: Tech companies 'control the future of news'](#)
- [The Economist Ideas Arena: The Future of News](#)
- [Newseum: The Future of News](#)
- [Poynter: AP will use robots to write some business stories](#)

In a paper, ask students to imagine they are a journalist in the year 2020. Taking into account the readings above as well as the current chapter of this book, answer these questions: What will your daily routine be like? What are some concrete things you can do to prepare yourself for the future?

What challenges will you face?

Extra credit: How will news be paid for in the future? Look at sites like [Kickstarter](#), [WeFunder](#) and [AngelList](#). Are the media projects funded through these platforms futuristic? Develop a crowd-funding pitch for a form of media that doesn't yet exist.



Teachers: how do you start over?

The author describes a news “assembly line.” A story happens in a community. A content creator reports it, a packager edits it, a mass medium delivers it back into to the community. Too many news organizations, he contends, simply add new technologies to the end of the assembly line. A newspaper might tweet links to its stories, for example, rather than use Twitter to help develop story ideas or report the stories.

When the web first arrived, newspapers simply republished everything online that they already had done in traditional form. Their approach was still “we write, you read.” [Social media advocates noted](#), correctly, that this didn’t take advantage of the ability of interactive media to create communities. It is the author’s view that digital media has disrupted this one-way assembly line and the entire system needs to be reinvented, that [journalism needs creating](#), not saving.

Is the same true for your journalism curriculum?

An exercise for current or future teachers:

Imagine you must create a new teaching plan from scratch to prepare students for journalism and communications jobs that do not exist today. What would it look like? Some of these questions are pondered by the [Online News Association](#) educator’s group and the [College Media Association](#) advisers group on their Facebook pages. Are those helpful? Are the syllabus exchange pages on [NewsU.org](#) or the lesson plans on [SchoolJournalism.org](#) of any help?

Take it a step further. Close down (at least in your mind) the student media at your campus – the newspaper, the radio station, the magazine, the TV newscast. Now engage your students in a project to reinvent student media, designing it to meet the needs of the community you wish to serve. What should 21st Century student media look like? How important to this task is the field of [media design](#)? Consider also the ideas of [Professor Henry Jenkins, “participatory culture” scholar](#) at the University of Southern California.

Examine [this](#) project, in which reality TV was used to help train journalism teachers. Do you think this is something that could work?



Thinking community

The author discusses the resistance to change often seen in the professional news industry. Indeed, journalists (and journalism educators) are creatures of habit. Routines are difficult to break, but if they aren't, inertia sets in and new products and processes can't be created.

Activities at three levels:

Flashlight: [Following up on the largest-ever U.S. readership and newsroom study](#), the Media Management Center at Northwestern University concluded that newsroom culture was highly change-resistant. Attributes important to journalism, such as perfectionism, oppositional thinking and competitiveness – when taken to extremes – can stop innovation cold. Study the center's findings. Do you have the constructive attributes the study describes? If not, can you change? How?

Spotlight: The [human-centered design firm IDEO](#), known for reengineering the computer mouse and conjuring successful new brands like Swiffer, uses anthropological techniques to study people. IDEO focuses on developing insights around what people need, yet are unable to express. That's the opposite of journalism, which reports on needs that are expressed. Do you see the difference? Ask students to investigate IDEO's web site. Should news organizations study the people they hope to serve in this way? How might journalism education change if teachers used [IDEO's toolkit for educators](#)?

Searchlight: Try it. Using human-centered design techniques, investigate the unspoken information needs of a wide range of students at your campus. In addition to what you observe, try doing interviews using these [Diversity Toolbox techniques](#). Discuss your findings. Are there insights about how student media should improve? Share what you learned with the student newsroom at your school. Were they as [defensive as the professionals studied by Northwestern University](#)? What happened next?



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Are librarians a type of journalist?

Librarians and journalists both work in information professions. Many share the same goals: to provide equal access to information; to teach citizens to evaluate, analyze and synthesize information; to provide quality resources and even training to community members. The [Chicago Public Library](#) provides a great example. Could your journalism program collaborate with other groups to work together on shared goals?

Activities on three levels:

Flashlight: [Is journalism a profession](#) only some can enter or [an activity anyone can try](#)? Think about the core values of journalism. Hold a class discussion listing other community institutions that want to provide people with helpful information? Non-profits? Student organizations? Libraries? How long can you make the list?

Spotlight: Review this excerpt from New York University Professor Jay Rosen's book, "[What Are Journalists For?](#)" Rosen talks about the social responsibility of journalists to engage communities and help solve problems. Can journalists collaborate with others and yet remain independent? Ask students to write a paper or blog post explaining their views.

Searchlight: University of Missouri associate professor Joy Mayer says that both journalists and librarians "[share a common mission of improving their communities through information](#)." Are journalism teachers partners with librarians at your school? As a class project, create and launch a partnership with your local or school library with a digital media literacy component.

Extra credit: Explore the web site of the [Digital Public Library of America](#). Imagine the year 2030, and every community had fully digitized all its archives. Write a short paper or blog post explaining how news media of all types might tap into this resource. Is news more meaningful in historical context? How? Do your local libraries participate in the Digital Public Library of America?



Curiosity, risk led Jobs to success

Read The New York Times article “[Reaping the Rewards of Risk-Taking](#),” by Steve Lohr, about the traits and qualities of innovators, namely the late Steve Jobs, Apple Computer’s co-founder and former chief executive. Lohr cites experts saying innovators have “ceaseless curiosity and willingness to take risks.” Longtime leading journalist and Aspen Institute chief Walter Isaacson detailed that risk-taking in [his best-selling book, “Steve Jobs.”](#)

At Stanford University in 2005, Jobs told graduates to “stay hungry” and “stay foolish.” Check out [Jobs’ commencement address](#). Lead a class discussion of how his approach encourages experimentation, risk-taking, and even the occasional failure.



Skills to open many doors

The American Association of Colleges and Universities wanted to know what companies look for in a good employee. Desired skills included the ability to find, organize and evaluate information from a variety of sources, effective communication and an aptitude for analyzing and solving complex problems. Employers wanted colleges to emphasize those skills, reported a study commissioned by the association.

Student activities at three levels:

Flashlight: Look at the study and think about what [journalism skills match employers' desires for quality employees](#). Make a list of the skills you're being taught. Are there any you aren't getting at your school? Are you learning how to communicate, evaluate information and solve problems using digital tools?

One of the most important yet overlooked skills for journalists is basic math, especially applied to [data journalism](#). Journalists once assumed they could avoid dealing with numbers, but in reality, it's a part of [everyday reporting](#). Are you taking any math courses to prepare for this? How far does your knowledge of math extend?

How important do you think [math](#) is for a career in journalism? How about [coding](#)?

Spotlight: Would cross-campus partnerships help students develop these in-demand skills? What kind? Are you among the 250,000 people using [NewsU.org](#) or the two million using the supplemental learning system [Lynda.com](#)? Should such learning tools be standard?

Searchlight: The books [News, Improved](#) and [Newsroom Training, Where's the Investment?](#) discuss news industry attitudes about training. Unfortunately, journalism employers historically have spent .4 percent of payroll in training, while the average American business invests more than five times that amount. Does this put pressure on universities to deliver better-educated graduates for that field? What's your view? Are any scholars studying this? Try typing the phrase "newsroom training" into [Google Scholar](#).



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Out with the old, in with the new?

Right out of Towson University, in 2007, Brian Stelter began his career as a New York Times media reporter. By 2013, he was CNN's senior media reporter and host of [Reliable Sources](#). His rapid rise was fueled by what Forbes calls [entrepreneurial journalism](#). While in college, Stelter started the Cable Newser blog (renamed [TV Newser](#)), gained the interest of the New York Times and sold the blog to [Mediabistro](#).

[Entrepreneurial media outlets](#) come in different shapes and size, though they are generally digital natives that emphasize individual voice and new story forms, and encourage engagement.

- [Buzzfeed](#) was founded in 2006 as a lab to create viral content. It has since become a site that blends lists, news articles, long-form journalism, opinion pieces, quizzes, videos and GIFs by staff writers and community contributors.
- [The Huffington Post](#) was founded in 2005 and features a blend of original and aggregated content intended to be shared. It has developed a reputation for engagement. Sold to AOL in 2011 for more than \$300 million, it won a [Pulitzer Prize](#) in 2012.
- [FiveThirtyEight](#) was founded as an independent site in 2008 by statistician Nate Silver. It was first picked up by the New York Times and then in 2014 was re-launched as an ESPN-owned site. It analyzes statistics to reveal insights on topics such as politics, sports, economics and the environment.
- [Upshot](#): The Upshot, a publication of The New York Times, was founded in 2014 to help readers understand big, complicated stories by writing in a direct, plainspoken way and by analyzing data sets.

Are the best jobs for today's student journalists the ones that don't yet exist?

Assignments on different levels:

Flashlight: Check out [Newspaper Death Watch](#) by author Paul Gillin. Note the publications that have folded since 2007, the ones that have merged and the innovators. In each category, do the publications have anything common?

Spotlight: Nonprofit news models are growing. At [The Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting](#), student fellowship grants fund stories on underreported topics

abroad. Take a look at its [2014 student fellow projects](#). Write your own proposal for a travel grant that includes a story idea, tentative budget and ways you will integrate multimedia into your project. Where does the Pulitzer Center get its funding?

Searchlight: The Poynter Institute's Andrew Beaujon reports [that local newspapers are consistently cutting newsrooms](#). Enter Daniel Ricker's [Watchdog Report](#) blog to report on South Florida government, a one-reporter operation supported by the Knight Foundation and others. Select a topic in your local community that is underreported. Who in your community might fund that reporting? Cover an event relating to your topic.

Extra credit: Select a big national story currently in the news. Find an article that covers that story in each of the following young media outlets:

- [Buzzfeed](#)
- [Gawker](#)
- [VICE](#)
- [FiveThirtyEight](#)
- [PolicyMic](#)
- [POLITICO](#)

How did each publication frame its story? How did each use multimedia or data? Does each employ a specific style? Are there similarities between them? Would you consider these sites entrepreneurial journalism? How do they differ from traditional journalism?



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

EPIC 2015's wild future

Show your students [EPIC 2015](#) from [the Museum of Media History Website](#). It says “the press as you know it has ceased to exist,” then spins out a future based on web giants Google and Amazon. In the video, they combine into “Googlezon” and chase *The New York Times* off the web. Their secret? Personal information collected from everywhere and digital filters provide content and advertising tailored to each individual.

Student assignments:

Flashlight: Have students visit Google News. Is EPIC’s prediction of Google News correct? What else did the video get right? Does the 2013 [purchase of the Washington Post by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos](#) mean future news will be what people recommend and not what news people decide?

Spotlight: Show the class best-selling author Eli Pariser’s TED Talk on [“Filter Bubbles.”](#) Pariser describes how search engines make information choices for us based on our past consumption. Think about the author’s metaphor about digital sunglasses. Lead a class discussion: Should people be able to design their own sunglasses to filter the news? Or are the automated sunglasses better?

Searchlight: [The Guardian](#) revealed the existence of [PRISM](#), a secret U.S. government program that can mine massive amounts of personal data to use in security investigations. [Google](#), Microsoft and [other companies](#) said [they only gave data when required](#) and denied direct access to their computers. [The Washington Post](#) revealed the [National Security Administration had exceeded its authority or broken its own privacy rules thousands of times per year](#). Assign students to research the case and do a timeline of its milestones. Discuss in class: How did students decide what was major?

Extra Credit: Students should try [Upworthy](#) and [StumbleUpon](#), two sites designed to help people find noteworthy content, and post comments somewhere on line saying what they liked and didn’t like about them. Write a short blog post on this question: Does either build serendipity into news consumption?



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Theories behind “comfort news”

Why is it that people seek out “Comfort News?” Academics propose a number of different theories. Here are four:

Information deficit fallacy: Facts don’t always motivate people. Simply put, giving citizens more facts does not always change their opinions or behaviors.

Motivated reasoning theory: People are prone to confirmation bias (accepting information that confirms their beliefs) and disconfirmation bias (ignoring information that undermines beliefs). There is a natural mechanism in the brain that gives a pass to information we believe and makes us more likely to challenge information that we don’t.

Belief perseverance dynamics: People often have trouble remembering which ideas are true or false over time. They may discuss the strange story in which linebacker [Manti Te’o’s dead girlfriend](#) not only isn’t dead, but didn’t exist, but over time, they may only remember that Manti Te’o’s girlfriend died.

Power of particular sources: People are more likely to accept new factual assertions when they come from sources that are perceived as trustworthy and hold the same general values. This explains the popularity of social media and certain trusted media brands.

Class discussion: After reviewing the theories, consider which one seems strongest. Could they all be true?

Do you think people only consume comfort news, or are they still interested in fact-filled “hard news” about things they don’t know. Take a peek inside Emilie Ritter Saunder’s [digital life](#). How does it compare to yours?



How do you know what to believe?

A 2010 study funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, surveyed 11- to 18-year-olds -- 30 percent said “a lot” of what they found on the web was believable. Given the human tendency to embellish, especially when talking about oneself, does that number seem accurate?

Nearly all states have adopted [Common Core Standards](#) for K-12 education. They include the following:

“Students employ technology thoughtfully to enhance their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use. They tailor their searches online to acquire useful information efficiently, and they integrate what they learn using technology with what they learn offline. They are familiar with the strengths and limitations of various technological tools and mediums and can select and use those best suited to their communication goals.”

Class activities:

Flashlight: Study the main points of the [Common Sense Media](#) digital literacy curriculum. Discuss with the class: Does it align with the standards? Are high schools in your region teaching digital media literacy? Do you think the goal of the common core standards is being met?

Spotlight: Have students use the [News Trust](#) web site to rate news stories according to the [news review form provided there](#). Do you agree with the rating system? Are there other elements you would have included in your own system? Find a story that proved to be false and see if the students can spot it.

Searchlight: Download [Janet Cooke’s story in the Washington Post](#) about a child heroin addict. The story won a Pulitzer Prize but the prize was revoked when the story turned out to be fabricated. Alter details in the story to mask the identity of

writer and newspaper. Using either News Trust or your own rubric, ask your students to rate the story. Then reveal the story of the hoax. Did any of the students give the story low ratings? Why?



Tests and textbooks

Textbooks are changing, and their future is digital:

- This free HTML book is [used in classes at Northwestern University](#)
- The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) [is testing crowdsourcing for its new book publishing venture](#) by inviting members to submit book proposals to be reviewed and voted on by other AEJMC members.
- Apple has a textbook-optimized [version of iBooks and iTunes U](#), which hosts full courses.

Can the education philosophy of “teaching to the test,” currently being promoted by test and textbook companies, survive as textbooks change their identity?

Activities at three levels:

Flashlight: Review the [Shorenstein Center news-in-the-classroom study](#) from Harvard. Discuss with your class: Do they agree that a shortage of current affairs discussion hurts students’ education? What about your own class? When discussing the news, how much is enough?

Spotlight: Printed journalism textbooks for high schools, because of the slow publishing and approval process in many states, can be out-of-date by the time they get to the classroom. In high schools, for example, highly regarded texts include [“High School Journalism”](#) by Homer L. Hall and Logan H. Aimone and [“Scholastic Journalism”](#) by C. Dow Tate and Sherri A. Taylor. Ask your students to do a paper or blog post comparing high school and college texts designed to teach journalism. Is it possible through a web review to determine if they include social and mobile media?

Searchlight: [Secretary of Education Arne Duncan strongly advocates the use of eBooks.](#) Assign students to explore research on learning outcomes and eBooks. Do they work just as well as printed books? What about other digital distance learning, such as webinars or videos? Assign a paper or blog post: Can students exist on digital books alone? Why or why not? Is your school as digital as it should be?

Extra credit: As a homework assignment, ask students to research MOOCs, massive open online courses, being offered on media and journalism, such as those done by [Professor Rosental Alves at the University of Texas](#). MOOCs include many thousands of participants. As with other forms of e-learning, some faculty have voiced strong opposition to MOOCs. Ask students to write a paper or blog post considering their arguments. Are they valid? Given your answer, what's the right course of action for educators?



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Working on all digital platforms

The [Poynter Institute](#) offers a number of courses (many free) for journalists worldwide. One looks at how the “Multi-dimensional Journalist” covers the 24-hour news cycle. It says journalists must be able to report, write and edit on all platforms, including social media.

Class activities:

Flashlight: Visit [Poynter’s News University](#) and find free courses you like. Share the course descriptions with your classmates. Try one, such as [News Sense](#) or the [Be a Reporter](#) game. Have a class discussion about the courses you would create for high school journalists. How might you cater these course objectives to your high school newspaper or yearbook?

Spotlight: Compare NewsU with other e-learning sites. Can you find better digital classes for journalists? Is it one-size-fits-all, or are there different places for different types of skills or learning styles? Blog your recommendations.

Searchlight: Will every journalist use every form of media? Is specialization dead? Compare journalism to fields like music, medicine, education and the law. Are there others fields where generalists are in demand? Split the class into groups so all student can present their ideas.

Extra credit: The Knight and Mozilla foundations are creating [teams of journalism technologists](#) to develop open-source experiments in newsrooms during 10-month fellowships. [Meet their 2014 fellows](#). What skills do they offer newsrooms? Are they specialists or jacks-of-all-trades? What courses at your school teach some of these skills?



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Using the New Tools

Teaching students to be proficient in this new environment means that sometimes you will have to learn along the way. It is common for teachers to know less about the latest technologies than their students. How might this change the rules of how you think about teaching?

Activities at three levels:

Flashlight: Try a reverse mentoring experiment. In a lab setting, ask each student to find a web site, digital tool or game that he or she thinks a teacher should know about. Divide the students into five or six “stations.” Invite a group of teachers to your class and ask them to rotate from station to station and hear the students explain why the resource they are demonstrating should be used in class.

Spotlight: Ask students to create a [WordPress](#) blog to discuss how digital and interactive news outlets are in your community (including student media). Divide the outlets up among the students and have them write critiques online. Before they write, however, ask them to send the questions they seek to answer out through their own social networks. Do the outlets attract students? What techniques do students want that the news organizations are failing to provide? What are they doing well?

Searchlight: Cover a story yourself. Create a demonstration of how you think a story could be done using whatever digital tools you have available. Evaluate the results as a class. Did the story have a wide audience? Did it engage a community? Did anything change because of it? If you used your personal networks to do and share the story, was its impact limited because of the size and demographics of your networks?



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Investigative reporting

One of the goals of the [Investigative Reporters and Editors](#) organization is to educate journalists in the latest reporting techniques. IRE provides hundreds of workshops each year. Reporters, editors and sometimes entire newsrooms learn investigative techniques such as tracking political funds, online hoaxes and crime. The IRE Resource Center is a research library with more than 25,000 investigative stories from both print and broadcast news organizations. There are a number of Tip Sheets under Story Packs on the website. Tip Sheets pertain to cops and courts, local government, education, environment, non-profits, immigration, aviation and others.

Here are student assignments on three levels:

Flashlight: Consider the topics under [Covering Local Government Story Packs on the IRE Resource Center](#) website. Discuss and present what your group might consider in this scenario: Covering a story about voting in local elections, what might a reporter consider to make sure readers get a more in-depth story?

Spotlight: Visit the [Covering the Environment Story Packs on the IRE Resource Center](#) website. What issues in environmental news might merit more investigative work? Discuss how you might cover these within your community? How could you engage the whole community in the reporting?

Searchlight: Either in groups or individually, visit the IRE Resource Center website. Consider stories you might write in the future. How you might take an investigative approach to that story. Can any story become an investigative story? What challenges might you have to overcome in the investigative process? Record your thoughts and present this to the class.



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Chapter One: Additional Reading

Biagi, Shirley. *Media/ Impact: An introduction to Mass Media*. 10th ed. Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2012. Print.

Christakis, Nicholas A., MD, PhD, James H. Fowler, PhD. *Connected: The Supporting Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, Hachette Book Group, 2009. Print.

Craft, Stephanie, Charles N. Davis. *Principles of American Journalism: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2013. Print.

Doctor, Ken. *Newsonomics: Twelve New Trends That Will Shape the News You Get*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2010. Print.

Diamandis, Peter H., Steven Kotler. *Abundance: The Future is Better Than You Think*. New York: Free Press, Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2012. Print.

Dvorkin, Lewis. *The Forbes Model for Journalism in the Digital Age: Training a New Generation of Entrepreneurial Journalists*. N.p.: Hyperink-Blog to Book, 2012. Print.

Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*. Vol. 1, 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Print.

Folkenflik, David, *Page One: Inside the New York Times and the Future of Journalism*. New York: PublicAffairs, Perseus Books Group, 2011. Print.

Fuller, Jack. *News Values: Ideas for an Information Age*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996. Print.

Gillmor, Dan. *We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People for the People*. Sebastopol: O'Reilly Media, 2006. Print.

Hamilton, James T. *All the News That's Fit to Sell: How the Market Transforms Information Into News*. Princeton: Princeton University

Press, 2004. Print.

Johnson, Steven. ***Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation***. New York: Riverhead Books, Penguin Group Inc., 2010. Print.

Jones, Alex S. ***Losing the News: The Future of the News That Feeds Democracy***. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. Print.

Kovach, Bill, Tom Rosenstiel. ***The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect***. Updated 1st ed. New York: Three Rivers Press, Random House, Inc., 2007. Print.

Kramer, Larry. ***C-Scape: Conquer the Forces Changing Business Today***. New York: HarperCollins Books, 2012. Print.

Kurzweil, Raymond. ***The Age of Intelligent Machines***. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990. p. 133. Print.

Liebling, A.J. ***The Press***. New York: Pantheon Books, Random House, 1964. Print.

Mayer-Schönberger, Viktor, Kenneth Cukier. ***Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work, and Think***. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company 2013. Print.

McLuhan, Marshall. ***The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man***. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010. Print.

Mersey, Rachel D. ***Can Journalism Be Saved?: Rediscovering America's Appetite for News***. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, LLC, Praeger, 2010. Print.

Meyer, Philip. ***The Vanishing Newspaper: Saving Journalism in the Information Age***. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004. Print.

Newton, Eric. ***Crusaders, Scoundrels, Journalists: The Newseum's Most Intriguing Newspeople***. New York: Crown; 1st edition, 1999. Print.

Palfrey, John; Gasser, Urs. ***Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives***. New York: Basic Books, Perseus Books Group, 2008. Print.

Postman, Neil . ***Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business***. New York: Penguin Group, 1985. Print.

Roberts, Gene, Thomas Kunkel and Charles Layton. ***Leaving Readers Behind: The Age of Corporate Newspapering***. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2001. Print.

Rosen, Jay. ***What Are Journalists For?*** New Haven: Yale University, 1999. Print.

Schmidt, Eric, Jared Cohen. ***The New Digital Age: Reshaping the Future of People, Nations and Business.*** New York: Random House Inc., 2013. Print.

Shepard, Stephen B. ***Deadlines and Disruption: My Turbulent Path from Print to Digital.*** New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, 2013. Print.

Shirkey, Clay. ***Cognitive Surplus: Creativity and Generosity in a Connected Age.*** New York: Penguin Group, 2010. Print.

Shirkey, Clay. ***Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizing.*** New York: Penguin Group, 2008. Print.

Siegel, Eric. ***Predictive Analytics: The Power to Predict Who Will Click, Buy, Lie, or Die.*** Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2013. Print.

Silver, Nate. ***The Signal and the Noise: Why So Many Predictions Fail-but Some Don't.*** New York: The Penguin Press, 2012. Print.

Starr, Paul. ***The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications.*** New York: Basic Books, Perseus Books Group, 2005. Print.

Stephens, Michael. ***A History of New: From the Drum to the Satellite.*** New York: Penguin Group, 1989. Print.

Strate, Lance. "Media Ecology as a Scholarly Activity". ***Proceedings of the Media Ecology Association.*** Vol. 3. (2002) n. pag. Web. 2013.

Strauss, William, Neil Howe. ***The Fourth Turning: An American Prophecy.*** New York: Three Rivers Press, Random House, 2009. Print.

Strunk, William Jr., E.B. White. ***The Elements of Style.*** 4th ed. New York: Allyn & Bacon, 2000. Print.

Vinge, Vernor. "The Coming Technological Singularity: How to Survive in the Post-Human Era." ***Vision-21: Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering in the Era of Cyberspace.*** G. A. Landis, ed., NASA Publication CP-10129, pp. 11-22, 1993. Print.

von Neumann, John. ***The Computer and the Brain.*** 3rd ed. Yale University Press, 2012. Print.