What's useful? You be the judge

The author complains that not enough research is useful. Are his standards too high? Ask students to read the examples below and then choose one of the assignments.

- **Anonymous content:** In the Newspaper Research Journal, researcher Arthur Santana (now of the University of Houston) says many reporters are troubled by the anonymous content and the incivility of newspaper online forums.
- **Cyberspace, physical space:** The study "Virtual Community Support for Offline Communities Through Online Newspaper Message Forums," by Jack Rosenberry, a researcher at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, N.Y., found that overlaps develop between the geographic community and virtual ones.
- **Social responsibility:** Glen Feighery of the University of Utah wrote "Two Visions of Responsibility: How National Commissions Contributed to Journalism Ethics, 1963-1975," He shows how The President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, and the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence all called for journalists to be socially responsible.

Assignments:
Flashlight: Which of the three examples would be the most useful for professionals? Why? Try to find articles from mainstream publications about the above studies. Why do some studies make the mainstream media while others don't?

Spotlight: Look at one or more research databases. Can you find an example of "useful research" like the ones above? Was it easy or difficult to find? Do you agree or disagree with the author's view that not enough research is useful?

Searchlight: The author calls for more top professionals in journalism schools. Yet he also criticizes the quality of the scholarly research. Was it wise for him to attack scholarship while trying to persuade scholars to embrace more top professionals? How would you try to ignite a conversation about change in journalism education?