Panel 3: Digital Storytelling

How far have we come in creating a new, multimedia style for online journalism?

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Panelists:
Dirck Halstead, Editor, Digital Journalist.org

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NORA PAUL: Today's multimedia is to me just multiple media. You've got your text column, you've got a slide show here, click here and you can hear a sound byte, and click over here and you can see a video. The media are all represented but they're not integrated. Multimedia is a true integration of the media elements. Then you look at the type of media that you use and things like that. We've got a little granular on some of the things. And actually the thing that's been very interesting is to start seeing the variety of sort of new infographic forms and things like that that are being created. And I think that this list will grow.

The second element that we were looking at is the action. And this is a two-part thing. What is the action that the content takes on? Is it dynamic? Does it move? Or is it static? Does it sit there like a column of text in your newspaper? And then the other piece of it is the action that is required by the user to make the information become displayed. So there can be both passive user action in that those kinds of websites where if you link to the flash animation it just immediately starts going and keeps going until it's over with. Or there are those ones where you have to be active and you have to actively keep the action moving through either clicking or selecting in some way. And then there are certainly mixed things. One of the things that we want to test is what tends to be more engaging to users. Something that makes them have to re-up every couple of screens, or something that just once it starts it keeps going? I think there are some real differences and some real interesting research that could go on around that question.

But it's the relationship element that I think contains the things that are the most unique to this particular medium. And this relationship refers to the relationship that has been created consciously by the content designer to give a relationship between the user and the content. One of the things - and you end up if you made any of these things be yes, then you have an open relationship with the user. Anything that's all no, then it's a closed relationship, basically. Closed like reading a newspaper is.

So the first relationship is the whole notion of linearity. Is the content created in such a way that you move through it in a pre-described or prescribed form or has it been created in such a way that the user can create their own relationship with it? And that I could move through a content set in a way different from somebody else.

The second one is customization which has a fascinating potential and again something unique to this medium. To be able to go in and say, I just want this particular slice, or here's something about me, give me those things that speak just to me. So something that's customizable you could put in your zip code and you would just get the test results for the schools in that zip code. Customizable would be I'm going home on this route. It would let you get the traffic reports based on the way you're going home. Standard, it goes to everybody the same way.

Calculation is another interesting one. That you can - information designed for your input that is then calculated and you get some kind of report back that demonstrates the input that you made. So this ability to get response and then give feedback from the response is another completely unique sort of attribute for online.

Manipulation I think is one of the really fun ones and I wish I had a chance to show you some examples. Manipulation is this ability to actually move stuff around. The content has been designed in such a way that the user gets engaged through getting to use the content piece. One of my current favorite manipulation examples is at El Mundo the Spanish newspaper, the website, they have a wonderful, they do wonderful infographics, online information graphics. And one of the things they did was the Iraq bomb inspections. And they had, as the last slide of this very good animated graphic about the missiles and everything in Iraq, a little map of Iraq where you could move where the bombs were and the radiating circles out would show you the range that those missiles would have to other countries. So it was an incredibly effective graphic way to demonstrate that and something that I wouldn't have gotten reading 18 inches of text.

Appendage is also, I think, a unique attribute of online in that this is inviting in contribution by outsiders to create part of the story set. Appended content is asking people to submit something - you know those sites where you can do a drawing and then you can add it to the whole thing. American High has an interesting little feature on their website where you can create a yearbook profile and then you submit it to the yearbook and so the yearbook grows and grows and grows. So that's an example of appended text.

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And then the fourth one is context. And this is one of the things that people often talked about was the big new thing about online is its ability to hypertext and so we kind of broke this down again in a sort of anal, granular way to all different ways that context can be provided. Is the link embedded or is it a sidebar link? Another thing that would be worthy of studying. In fact there have been a couple of studies about that. Some online producers have said, we put all these wonderful links in and nobody seems to use them and we even get feedback like, well why didn't you tell us where to go for this? And it's there. People don't see it. So what could make that more effective?

We were talking about different purposes for the context that is given. Is it to be related exactly to the story or is it just to give links to some other kinds of things? And it kind of goes on. What's the source? Is it internal, external? Things like that.

And for each of these there's sort of the wired version and the more, the legacy version. So does the story stand-alone? There really is no context provided. Or is it a linked one? And then the final one is the one that again a lot of people are referring to when they say it's interactive and it really is just about the kinds of communication links and we go into all sorts of more specific things here.

We are building a database of some examples of what we think are really good uses of these particular kinds of elements in stories. So in calculation we've got some examples of some things. MSNBC airport security which is a wonderful example of calculation as you try and spot whether there's a bomb in the suitcase and then it adds how many time you got it right, and things like that.

So, we're trying to build a little resource here. This again is going to be very selective. We want just really good examples - things that will inspire people. And then we have a research area where we hope to start gathering the growing number of masters' theses and undergraduate research reports and things like that, that are looking at different kinds of comparisons of media elements or the kinds of way that we can figure out if we are doing things because we can or because in fact it creates a better experience for the people in the audience.

In fact I think there's one here. Locater maps to understand geography. This is that one I was talking about. Where should you put the links - a comparison of four locations. So I would very much urge you and your friends to please send us links if you've got things that we could add to this research resource and hopefully we can start creating a dialogue around how to test whether the kinds of elements that you can combine, in fact enhance the user experience. And I'm going to stop here and let some people who are on the front line of creating new forms talk about what they have discovered, not only with the creation of these things and the decision-making going on in creating them, but also what kind of effects they've heard from their audiences about it.

And so we will start first with Regina Mccombs. She is a multimedia producer at the Minneapolis Star Tribune. She's going to come up and talk first. Then we're going to have Dirck Halstead. He is the editor and publisher of The Digital Journalist. And

those of you who are students here have seen him wandering around campus some. And then we will have Angela Clark live and remote from MSNBC, but luckily it's not on one of those satellite phones, so I think it won't be quite so jerky. And then we'll have Mark Stencel who just flew in this morning from Washington D.C. He is the Chief Development Executive for the Washington Post and Newsweek Interactive. And he's in charge on the national and international initiative. So, people with a lot of experience.

REGINA MCCOMBS: Well, I thought before I started I should really introduce you to our website since I'm pretty sure you've been to most of these other illustrious panelists' places, but you probably have not been to the Star Tribune.

This is the newspaper of the Minneapolis Star Tribune, although it bills itself as the newspaper of the Twin Cities. For those of you aren't quite sure where that is, if you drive north on I-35 and stop right before you get to Canada, you're there. OK, I can do this all off my own laptop if I have to, but I'm hoping we can actually do this live. The Minneapolis St. Paul market, the Minneapolis paper has, for those of you who know the numbers, has a daily circulation of about 415,000 and a Sunday circulation of about 675,000. There's been a lot of talk and things - out there I've seen a lot of things saying that local sites have been hurt by the war and national sites have benefited. We have not found that to be true. March was our biggest month ever, with about 53 million page views. Typically on a weekday we get about 2 million-page views. We had 3.7 million unique visitors in March, which actually was not our biggest number for unique visitors. We're a good-sized site but not nearly as big as the national folks.

I was thinking about the question of this panel which is "Have we created a new form of story-telling?" and the short answer to that, I think, is that we're beginning to. Just now. I've been doing this almost six years now and just really in the last year or two have I started to think that, OK, yes, we're starting to get to it. Sadly in daily news, we're not really doing so much. Mostly what we're doing in daily news is what Nora called the multiple media. We do a lot of audio and video related to our stories and as you can see with our news story on the Iraqi stuff we've got quite a bit of audio and video. We've got maps and graphics and all kinds of things. We've got a fun little thing here that gets you to all kinds of different information. But for us, this kind of story is what we call a Christmas tree, which is you have your main story and then you just hang a few things on the side. Not really any kind on integrated kind of storytelling. (Are you writing that down? That's very exciting. That's not mine, though I have to say. It's by one of my coworkers.) And then sadly, also, I'm so proud of how much multimedia we have coming out of Minneapolis. We have five folks in the region but then we have all their stuff that's sort of living in a link bar. There's a little better presentation of the photo galleries there - audio and video and things - they're just sort of all dumped in this spot and hopefully people find it once it's gone off the front page. So it's not really anything new. I mean, we're doing a lot of audio and video which is new to a newspaper. We're doing a lot of flash graphics, which are new to a newspaper, but it's not really any sort of new form of anything. It's just sort of stuff that's all dumped in and mixed up.

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But I do think in the project work, we're starting to find ways that are much more integrated, that combine those things in a way that you really can't do anyplace else. And I'm going to just quickly show you two projects that we've done in the last nine months and we've done a lot of others but these are a couple I think that show we have made some strides. And they're far from perfect and they've got a lot of things that don't get us quite where we want to be, but they start.

This project was "Here is a public safety." It came out a week before the anniversary of September 11th. It was designed for kids age 10-16 and it was a project where we worked very closely with the newsroom. It came out over three days and it has to do with police, firefighters, and paramedics. And in the newspaper, just so you can see the equivalent newspaper thing, it had a big three-page spread over - it was really just what is the job? What do they do on a day-to-day basis? Why would you want to do this job? Those kinds of things. What kind of gear do they use, all that kind of stuff. And it's won some nice awards for its design from S&D and things, so that part's nice.

So we started with that and then went at, what can we give to this that can't possibly be done in the newspaper? And did a lot of brainstorming. Is there audio here? [My name is Jeff LaBirch. I've been with Robins (inaudible) fire department 13 years now. I've been an officer now for about five years. Currently I'm what's called Captain One. We have two captains on our department. Why do I like firefighting? It's fun. It's interesting. I love the idea of helping people….] I'm just going to give you the fast view of this. We had originally planned [originally it was designed by the Navy. It was designed to go into a smoke-filled atmosphere so that when you literally cannot see your hand in front of your face. With that you can see images based on heat…] Originally our plan was we actually shot that guy talking in video and we wanted him to be talking but we couldn't' make it work. And then MSNBC came out with their big picture and were, dang it! We tried! We just couldn't' get it to happen.

So here you can dress the firefighter. He only goes down that far, though. We had a debate, exactly, we debated how far do we go with it? Then we have an action for each of these - we went out and picked a specialty within these things and thought what would kids be really interested in, and tried to find some things. (Sorry this is slow.) In this case, we went out to the haz mat team (the hazardous materials team) and did video with them doing a drill. And then also did a 360 picture on the top of one of the big extension ladders the firefighters on the extension ladder - went up and showed them the view from the top of the extension ladder. You can go play here. (Well, I may have to switch machines if this isn't going to do it for us here.) We're going to go to the police officer here. The wheels. This is my favorite part. Don't ask me why.

But we did some really high tech testing and basically had people show it to their kids - people at work who had kids in the right age range. But it was great because we found that kids played with it for about half an hour. [The light barn has red, white, blue, and amber emergency lights. Different lights are activated at different times. More ticket books are citation book. The Minneapolis police department…]

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These are a lot of things that came straight from the newspaper project, but at least you get to roll over the pick so it's a little more interactive. I'm still trying to find my favorite part here.

[sirens] When we were testing this online we got some complaints from our coworkers, but it was fun. In this case, we went up with the air ambulance, did a video with one of the local air ambulance crews and then also went along over night with a paramedic crew. So that's the kinds of things we were working on in this particular project. The thing about this story is it's really non-linear. There's no particular way, there's no path you have to go, it's just sort of fun things that you can look at a play with, and you can do it as long as you want and don't do it as long as you want. And I think it starts to get at where we want to be in terms of putting these things all together.

One of the things I was thinking when they were talking about the statistic about nobody goes for audio and video, and I thought part of that is because I don't go to the web and say, I want to play audio. I want to find an interesting story, I want to read an interesting story, I want to be entertained, I want to do whatever. I don't go to listen to audio and video and I think until we get to a point where it's not about how we're delivering it, but it's just about hearing an interesting story, then we're not going to get past that sort of thinking about what people what to do on the web.

The second project I just wanted to show you is a project about two local guys. For those of you who follow baseball you may know the name. Not this past year, the one before, a local kid right out of high school got drafted number one overall in the draft by the Minnesota Twins. So a St. Paul kid got picked by hometown team. A pretty big deal. And he'd been an absolute standout high school athlete in four sports - just an unbelievable kind of athlete. He got chosen first overall in the draft, signed a 15 million dollar contract. His older brother just out of college got picked 676th in the draft also by the Minnesota Twins. His older brother got $5,000 for signing and $880 a month while he played baseball. So I thought it would be really interesting to follow them through the first year in the minor league ball and to see what life was like for these guys. And my expectation at the time (and again we may have to switch machines here since this is only partially loading) was that they would have really, really different years. That turned out not to be true. But it still was kind of an interesting thing to following them through that whole year - so we released this then this summer at the baseball draft again. And this is a very video-based system.

The video works now. [Brothers Joe and Jake Mauer were drafted last June by their hometown team. It's a joyous day…] (I think it's somehow because the fonts in here are big. Alright, we're going to do a swap here. I'm going to switch to my machine. We'll give it 5 seconds…) This is the other part I really, really love about my job is when I get up here and show it to people and then I think, is this what everyone at home has to deal with? And then I get really depressed. And then I look at the numbers of people who actually do use audio and video and then I get really, really depressed and think, "I'm going back to TV." It's moving slowly.

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Well I went to this first press conference and I thought there's a story here somewhere and I made a conscious decision at the time I was going to do it in video in spite of the web being what it is because it just felt like a video story to me. I'd come from television, I'd been looking for a story that was a TV story without being TV. And this just felt like video to me and so it was actually an adventure because this family is your typical Minnesota family. And any of you who have close acquaintances with people who live in the northern part of the Midwest know that they don't just open up to you and open their home and open their life to you. They're very nice and very polite and so it was a challenge to get to know the guys and the family.

But I wanted to tell this story. [.... Joe Mauer, a power hitter and a catcher with a killer throwing arm was the first choice overall in the amateur draft right out of Cretan Durham Hall High School. Joe's drafting and signing for more than five million dollars got plenty of media attention. "I really don't know what to say. I'm just kind of tickled I guess. It's kind of been like a dream come true." His chance of making it to the majors - excellent. Joe's older brother, Jake, a second baseman known as a smart hitter was chosen by the team in the 23rd round of the draft out of the University of St. Thomas. No hoopla at all accompanied Jake's $5,000 signing bonus. "I got the chance that I always wanted. Now I've just got to go do it, I guess." His chance of making it, a long shot. Despite their age difference, Joe is 18 and Jake is 22, many confused the St. Paul brothers. "Will you sign this for me?" "They're a lot alike." "I'm not really sure how they're really different. May height, I don't know." They are identical in their desire for one thing - the chance to play major league baseball. If they can navigate their way through the levels of the Twins minor league system, both brothers will get a shot at the big league.]

But the idea I wanted was to do a story that was something that my mother would enjoy who is not a baseball fan. Something that would be essentially a feature story but at the same time for people who are baseball fans, they really want the baseball side too. And so I was sort of thinking, what we talked a lot about, is how can we make both of those audiences happy. And part of that is that we had a lot of other elements. (I really want you to see the end of this, but I may just give it up.)

The thing about this story that's different from the last story is it's got a real strong direction. It has a start and a middle and an end. So the hard part was, how do we get people to move through it the way we want them to move through it and yet still give them the freedom to move around to do some fun things? And so what we did is each piece as you get to the video piece begins playing immediately as you go to each part. But at the same time, (and I'm just going to stop this) you can do some other things. You can play a little game here. Can you tell Joe and Jake apart? Then for the people who really want to know about stuff you can read about first year contracts. The baseball guys can get the stats. I have to show you my favorite little graphic here. We also wanted to give you some information about minor league baseball and what it was like to be a minor leaguer along with the path people take. And this is just a thing we did to show that this path from the minor leagues to the major leagues is not necessarily a simple sort of thing. So we took four current Twins players and showed their path from the minor leagues to the big leagues. And you

can either do it this way or you can look and read at each sort of level they went to if you really want to know where they went. Or, which I think was genius, or you can just watch them jump around. And watch their little heads bobble.

And again you can read about minor league spring training and how it differs from the big leagues. And you can read about the schedule of a day at training camp. And you can do all those kinds of things. Or you can just follow the video pieces of the story through the project. We also did video sidebars so that you can see the main piece of the story, but then if you're interested, if you want to hear about Miss Jane who you meet in the main story who was the house mom for five boys in Elizabethan, Tennessee, you can get a little background on her. Or you can hear more about the wacky e-town fans. I just had to show you him since he's my favorite guy in the story.

I'm going to one more interactive graphic I'm going to show you cause it's kind of fun. A little thing on minor league on baseball cards. Joe, because he went first in the draft, there's like six rookie cards of him and you can look at them all. Or you can look at his brother's of which there's one. And then there's a couple other Minnesota players.

So those are two of the projects we've done where we've really tried to look at how can we do a better job of integrating all these different media and make it really something that's more of a seamless experience for people. I did want to mention one thing because Dirck's on this panel. We have a photographer in Iraq, somewhere in southern Iraq, who is shooting video for us as well. And this has been something Dirck has been talking about for a long time - how the day was coming when newspaper photographers would need to be able to do both of these. And I see that we have a video from Mike, which I'm not going to try to show you. I was going to show you, but I think I'll pass on that. But, he's been doing just a really great job. Before he left, it was kind of a weird thing right before he left. [Here's a weird thing we have going on. I'm not even going to talk about that. We love the web don't we.) I said, well, do you want to take a video camera? And I thought he'd just be extremely abusive and laugh at me. Well, you can have my email address. That's right.

Anyway, so he agreed to take a video camera. And he went and he's been sending back videos and it's been great. Did you want me to do some of those tips? OK. We work really closely and are pretty closely integrated with our newsroom, unlike some organizations who… Yes, that's me. That's my work zip code, by the way. It's a real one, but it's work. So we're really dependent on the goodwill of the folks in the newsroom and so Nora asked each of us to give some tips. So the tips I have are for working with the newsroom. And the number one tip I have for working with the newsroom is to get in on anything as early as you possible can. The second it comes up out of someone's brain is your best, optimal spot. But if you can't be there then, then the first time they meet. The sooner you meet, the better success you have with getting everyone to buy into the whole online additional thing. If they're not, nobody is surprised by it. You bring it in right at the beginning and no reporter walks in and says, well I'm not going to let you videotape my interviews. Let's see if it will

plays here. Anyway, there's not much audio in this first part, although it's louder than that.

The second tip I would have for people who want to do better multimedia working with their newsroom is to find people who have a vision or to infect them with a vision for how their story can be better on the web. How they can do more interesting, cool things on the web. And we've had really good luck with photographers with this. Because a lot of time photographers may get one or two pictures or something. Whereas if you can put a whole display together of their photos or add audio and combine it with their photos, they really see how it creates a new thing that is really, really cool and yet takes what they're already doing and makes it something even better and gives their stuff better play. And we show them stuff, we brainstorm with them, we show them places from other places that have big names like Washington Post and New York Times and say, we can do this just like the New York Times, and then they get really excited. And we offer to help them. If I can set up something for them, if I can organize something for them, if I can find some information for them, I'm glad to do it. If in the end that will mean they'll let me do what I want to do with the project. And then we keep in really close contact, because projects and stories change. They're just completely moving targets. This hero's project went through - I got five different iterations and four different reporters and all kinds of different things before it ended up being what it was. And if we hadn't stayed right on top of that it never would have been as successful.

And then you have to develop the web content with or without their help. Sometimes they want to be involved and sometimes they want nothing to do with it. They just want you to make their stuff look good. And you just got to work with them on their level - whatever level they're willing to work, then go with it. And then the final, and I think the second most important point after the first one, is do not let their presentation and content dictate yours. You start with what they've got and then you do it the way it should be done for the web. We have projects where I've completely gone with their designs and their types and their graphics and others where we've completely ignored right down to the title of the project because it didn't work for the web. And you've just got to sort of take it and go with what's good and throw out what doesn't work for the web and do what you can do.

And if anyone wants to go back and look at any of these or any of the other things we've done, it's startribune.com/projects has all our stuff we've done in the last year or two.

NORA PAUL: Does anybody have a quick question for Regina?

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Was the emergency workers content repackaged and sent out to school?

REGINA MCCOMBS: You know we talked about it and it still sort of floats around. No. We put it on CD and it's completely playable from the CD but we haven't issued it in any way.

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DIRCK HALSTEAD: OK, I am Dirck Halstead. I am a dinosaur. You are looking at a genuine dinosaur. I am the product of Henry Luce. I am a product of the old Time Inc. I'm not talking about AOL Time Warner. I'm talking about Time. And I joined Time in 1972 and spent the next 29 years under contract to them. That means every year they renewed by contract for 29 years. And I loved working for Time because when I was growing up I fell in love with Life Magazine. Life Magazine was absolutely the way I looked at the world. I just admired their photographers and their photographs so much. And when I joined Time in the spring of 1972, one of the first things that happened is Life Magazine went out of business.

And over the next five or six years, Time tried to do what Life did. And there was a very spirited competition between Time and Newsweek in which they did what they did in the old days, which is they spent lots of money. Now, how much money? Let me put it this way. When I went to work for Time for the first five years, the managing editor of Time had no budget. Zero budget. Henry Luce's philosophy was, he didn't want the editors of Time or Life to worry about money. That was the job of the publisher. The job of the editor is where to worry about content. So I came out of this era where everywhere I went it was first class. I didn't know there was a back in the airplane. More importantly, when I would go off on stories, the average time on a story would be six weeks. And those six weeks would result in 10 -12 pages of photographs in the magazine. Color photographs. And until actually the mid-1980s that was the way it worked and we had the best staff of photographers in the world. Limitless resources to do anything you wanted to do. And then it changed. And it all changed and I didn't get those 8 to 10 pages of color anymore. Does anybody have any idea why? Or have any idea what happened?

Well, what happened was a thing called RunaPress Color. And when I first joined Time Magazine, Time like Sports Illustrated, like People, all the magazines, every magazine was printed worldwide for Time at Charles Donnelly & Company in Chicago. Huge plant. Great big presses. And they would start to print Time on Wednesday afternoons and the first thing that they did was print color. Now, if you look at this magazine, this is actually like the old Time magazine used to be because you open it up. Here's the cover. Here's the first page, here's the second page. Black and white basically with two tone. Same thing in the back - black and white. But then this page here - this is color - and here's this page. Because what was happening is the pages were being printed in forms and so page 1 and 2 would be printed at the same time as page 90 and 91 would be printed. And because they needed to print the color pages early, and the reason why they wanted color pages - that's where the advertising dollars were. They wanted those full color ads from the car companies and cigarette companies and the liquor companies. But they needed to balance the advertising in color with editorial. Therefore they spent zillions of dollars training people like me running around the world and coming back with these, what they call them, color aqs. Well, what happened in the mid-1980s, ROP color came along which meant that just like the newspapers, what they could do is they could drop color in anywhere in the magazine at anytime they wanted. And that came along at the same time with satellite delivery. No longer were they printing at Charles Donnelly. Instead they were printing all over the world at all of these plants.

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Everything was being transmitted by satellite, and guess what? They didn't need Dirck Halstead running around the world anymore spending all that money coming back with the color. And once I understood that, it was very clear that something fundamental had changed and it wasn't going to go back.

So now I'm suicidal. And about that time I ran into people who had come up with the idea that maybe photojournalists could do this new video journalism with high 8 cameras. And we just did the little mental math and we decided that in the days when we had NBC, CBS and ABC providing all the news broadcasting, they commanded 25,000 hours of airtime per year, which they could fill quite well. Then we did the math in the world of cable alone. We now had 2 and a half million hours of airtime and they needed content. And furthermore they needed content that was less expensive. So, this is how I morphed into television, into video news, helped to create now called video news international which today is a New York Times company, and started teaching other photojournalists about video journalism. And a lot of them did very well with it.

So, that's basically where my transition came, but understood that as we went through this process, being informed about the video, I fell in love with sound, I fell in love with motion. Now, how do you use this? How do you get it all together? And that's when the world wide web came galloping along. In 1997 I had been talking about this stuff for some time and a guy from HP caught my act at the Smithsonian and came up to me afterwards and said "you want a website". And I said, "yeah, I'd like a website." He said great. Well it turns out that HP, which is a plain brown vanilla wrapper computer company, had decided they were going to go into imaging. The trouble was they didn't have a clue what imaging was all about. Furthermore, to kick off this new initiative, they had a vice president who was going to go to the United Nations right after Labor Day and announce this new initiative and how HP was going to save the world with the worldwide web. And this is August, mid-August. And so they come to me, "Look, we need pictures. We need something to put on a website." And I said, "OK, that's cool." Next thing they said, "Give us 60,000 of your best pictures and we'll put them up." And I said, "I don't even have 60 of my best pictures, let alone 60,000. I'm not interested. I would like to create an online magazine." "We don't care what you do. Can you do it in a hurry? We've got ten days left." And so sure enough I went up to MIT where HP had this bodacious server and sat down with a very talented group of people and over a long weekend created the Digital Journalist. So, that's where it came from. And here is the Digital Journalist.

This issue came up at 11:00 o'clock last night. This is our April issue. And I'm not going to even go anywhere near playing a movie because… not going there. From the very beginning and the very first issue we created the template for what the magazine was going to be. And I had a very simple and modest goal. I wanted this magazine to be the Life Magazine for the 21st century. And I said, why not, we can do that. And the reason we could do it is because I'm a dinosaur and I've got a dinosaur rolodex and I know every photographer, every editor who's out there. And a lot of them have gone through my video classes and they're now doing video. And I also knew something else that photographers are the most underrated storytellers

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on earth. They're not just good visually, but you give them a chance and they'll tell you stories like you wouldn't believe. They'll tell you war stories. And actually that was our concept. Create the Life Magazine for the 21st century. It's now been five years.

This is issue number 66. I tried to get on our tracker. It's impossible because the numbers are rolling too fast. Our unique total as of today is 26 million unique visits. We are growing now at the rate of over a million a month. And so I want to just take you back to… this is, by the way, our current page. And let me just show you the sort of thing - the idea that we would become the Life Magazine. Alright. What did Life Magazine do? OK, Life Magazine presented great photo essays. Here's a great photo essay by Vincent Lefora for the New York Times. The New York Times ran a few pictures, but, this is his text that he wrote, his diary. And then you go into the gallery. And I'm just going to show you the thumbnails. Here's the thumbnails for this story. All these pictures are… One of the things we learned and I wanted to mention from this morning. The average newspaper website, the size of the pictures is 3 inches. There was just a study done by the Visual Communications Quarterly. That's the average newspaper website picture. Our pictures are all essentially 7 x 9. We fill the screen with our pictures. Make them big with the captions. We give a voice to the photographer so New York Times ran maybe half a dozen pictures in this story. We got 50 and they're wonderful pictures.

The Battle for Baghdad. How do we cover the Battle for Baghdad? It's a fairly ambitious story. Incidentally, as we're on the way talking about economics, (OK, I'm not seeing the D10 come up. Come on.) Interstitial. What have we got here? We've an interstitial. This is the model that we have followed right from the beginning - the broadcast model that you lead your viewer into your site through the sponsor's page. And furthermore, the people who are coming to our site are photographers, photo lovers. They're going to love to read about this brand new Canon D1. Rosental told me we were one of the most aggressive sites he saw, because we've been doing this for the last five years. So when you enter the Battle for Baghdad, look at what we've got here. OK. This is an essay by Peter Hall, former picture editor of Life and head of Corform or head of Corvas. OK. The Battle for Baghdad. Twelve pictures from AFP, the best pictures by (inaudible) Demick, their editor. AP - twelve of their pictures edited by David Ake. Corbis - twelve of their best pictures edited by Rick Booth. Getty Images - twelve of their best pictures edited by Sandy Sirk. Newsweek - twelve of their best pictures edited by Sarah Harbert. The New York Times - twelve of their best by Margaret O'Conner. Reuters - twelve of the best. Let's just for a minute click on Getty images. So what we have here is - what is this? Oh, I hit the Getty Website. Didn't mean to do that. But you know what, this is why I get these people. Why do people give me these pictures? Because I've got Getty all over that site. So once you look at their pictures, then you can go see this thing, whatever this turkey is.

OK, so. See, I'm not even trying to play movies. Anyway, enter the gallery (can I do that?) OK, so here are the thumbnails from these pictures and back to the contents page. Now look at the depth of content we have here. In this issue, just going scrolling down. Photojournalism. Patrick Saloin, Pulitzer Prize-winning Reporter

writes his columns for us - has been since January. Here he's going after Bush. Pat Cox, PhD at Communication School tracing the history of battle and the innovations that come. The first TV War by Ron Steinman - how TV really came to be a force in warfare in the Vietnam War. Then, war stories. These are all diaries, pictures from photographers in Baghdad. If you go down here you'll see there's a total of 8 diaries. There's this one diary here by David Turnley which was - and this is an example of the depth that you can go into on the site - you just can't at any other time. David Turnley was smuggled into Iraq through Syria. It took him a week to get there. He sent me an 8,000-word file with not a period or a coma. No paragraphs. Eight thousand words of stream of consciousness which I have to edit. But it's a great diary. And it's a great diary that's just full of his pictures (and eventually we come to pictures - well, trust me, the pictures are there.) Anyway, so what we have done is we have actually, we are now like the Life Magazine of the 21st century. Same deal.

Now, the staff for this? The staff for this is basically two people. Me and a web master in Minneapolis. A guy named Mark Kermish who's absolutely terrific. But what makes it work are all these contributing editors. Pulitzer prize-winners, head of the George Eastman House, David Friend, Creative Director of Vanity Fair, Peter Hall, former picture editor of Life, Dick Krause formerly of Newsday, Gratsi Anari, picture agency owner in Italy, Roger Richards, chief photographer of Virginia Pilot, Pat Stone, David Snyder, Alice Sinbeck, Amy Gars. These people every month contribute. They step up to the plate and contribute to this magazine. If we were doing this as a print publication, this month's issue would be almost 400 pages. Very quickly we did a story on 9/11 and up until October 1 of 2001, we had just hit our first half million unique visitors. And our tracker had been in place for about 18 months before that. We ran our first 9/11 story which is exactly like this. We went out and interviewed every photographer, we gathered all the pictures, all the best pictures in one place, and we blogged. We sent out messages to photographers, do you have anything? Do you have a story, do you have pictures? Send them to us. Between October 1st when we have half a million on the site and October 15th we went through our first million. Between October 15th and November 15th through three million, between November 15th and the end of the year five million. And as I say today, 26 million, growing at the rate of one million unique visitors a month.

Now, this is essentially the mouse that roared. This just goes to show how individual storytellers - and this is what this is all about. This is about story telling, about how individual story-tellers can be empowered in this medium, and furthermore how we can share that empowerment with all these other dinosaurs out there who can't find a place to run their stories.

Very quickly, I've got one minute left, what do I see as the future? We make just enough money from our sponsors to keep going. But we also, we don't have a lot of overhead. But what we're doing now is we have partners and we find like-minded sites and we bring them into our loop so they become partners with us and we're partners with them. Eventually what's going to happen is these like-minded sites are going to start to aggregate and that aggregation, that eventually you're going to get advertising agencies say, ok, we've got these five fine photo publications. We'll be the advertisers - we'll take them to the advertising agencies and we'll do block sales.

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I think you're going to see this economic model is going to start changing and changing rapidly. OK, thank you.

ANGELA CLARK: We average 11 million unique users and 61 million page views for just this site alone. So we're neck and neck with CNN. There are some months when we are ahead of them as number one news site and other months in which they are ahead of us. We're really looking ahead to March because that will be an interesting time because we seem to be running very, very close so we'll see who comes out on top.

So I'm going to try to switch you guys to our browser here so that you can see, so yell if you have any problems at all seeing anything. OK. Well, let's try again. I should have taken that class here about how exactly we do this. There we go. So we'll go move over here and zoom in to the screen itself. Finally.

OK, so we've been experimenting with something that we're calling the big picture in which this is kind of a piece that we came about with mostly because we've been working really hard on instrumenting and looking at how people use our site. And we've been using some unusual ways to figure that out. But in this case, this is basically many, many, many months and weeks of punching data and finding out how to do it. So this particular one was the MSNBC big picture on Iraq. Can you guys hear this OK? […Hussein says he has nothing to hide. President Bush wants proof. While many of American's ally's hope for peace, it may come for war. The risks are enormous and the issues complex. …. That was a tough question. …. US go it alone. Would war spin out of control ….] So essentially what this is is the final product of everything that we've learned so far. And it basically combines about six elements that we know really engage our users and are the most effective elements of what we do here in the interactive world.

Basically, one is control and that's giving the users as much control as possible. But at the same time, allowing them to kind of have a lean-back experience as well. So if you take a look over here on the left-hand side of this, we've got clear exposed navigation in which we can allow readers to skip it and go on to new pieces if they really need to. In other areas they can just sit and have it run through. We've found that we can keep up to 75% of the users in our interactives a lot more if kind of pull them from one aspect of the story to the next. And we make sure that they aren't just turning it on and leaving their desk because we ask them to engage in this discussion quite often, which kind of moves into the next element which is the depth.

That's where we kind of give people a chance to opt in or out and make a choice as to whether they want to follow up on questions, whether they want to make a choice or find out additional information. And so, for example, I'm going to go ahead and continue this. Here we have Lester Holt talking and he's introducing all of our various experts here which we were lucky enough to take advantage of - our partnerships with both MSNBC and NBC cable. And in this particular case, people can either sit and watch this particular element of they can follow up on the questions there. Can you see this where you can click here and find out more information specifically to it?

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And that kind of follows into the next aspect of this in which essentially we ask people to be a little bit more introspective. So at certain times, especially in this particular element, we ask our readers to think, ask them to challenge themselves and to think about the topics that we're talking about here. And then occasionally, we'll also ask them to vote in various polls as well. So, it's having that interaction between the readers that Nora was talking about in the relationship and so on.

So, we also have the community in here where - here on the bottom left which probably you guys can't see, but it has email this and write this, in which people can type in what they like or what they don't like, any questions, and so on. We've also got - in just a few minutes here - we have an element in which - right here - we have the viewer mail down here at the bottom in which we're actually responding to what people have written in, so that we can have that interaction with our readers as well. So we've got all kinds of different new and exciting things.

We also try to make sure that the viewer is constantly active. There are certain elements in which people - like here - they can type in what they like, what's your take on inspections. We give them x number of seconds to respond and there's audio cues also what Lester is saying - let us know, we'll move on once you press send. We also give them a sense that if they don't want to even respond at all that they have x number of seconds to move on.

So we also think that this is a fairly unique approach to telling the news. This is something that we've been very successful with so far. We've had it on both the elections and Iraq. We also just chose to do one on Oscars which was kind of superceded by other elements. But with all of them we've taken feedback and watched how our users are reading this so that we can make it better next time. What we're concentrating now on is essentially trying to make this easier for everyone in the company to use. So we're approaching it in a number of ways. We're templatizing certain elements of it. We are teaching everybody with our trainer how to write for these types of interactives as well as the referential basic types that we currently do as well throughout the rest of the site. And there's just a very big push within the company that we make sure that we think about doing this in a smart and interesting way.

So, I'll go ahead and close this out. And in here the interactive producer who makes this - he wanted to make sure that, hey, when you left a link when you started the show, do you want us to send you an email or do you want us to hold it for you, and if you say "sounds good" you can have your email sent to you. I think I'll go ahead and cancel that for me. So that's the big picture Iraq.

With Oscars we experimented a bit more. We worked with Newsweek, our partner, as Mark Stencel can tell you. We were very lucky to be working with them. This particular element is detecting whether someone has the right bandwidth and will also detect the person's resolution and will launch a window based off of what they have set on their machine so that we don't download absolutely huge files - [It's been 75 years since the first academy awards and business at the box office has been booming…] - that we don't download too many huge files on anybody's

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particular machines. And actually when we've quizzed people if they've left the show too early like in this case, it will ask them, why are you leaving? What are your challenges? And typically people are leaving mostly because they don't' have enough time. Most of our readers, as I think Mark will tell you as well, are from the work audience and so we need to make sure that even in an experiential kind of situation like this, that we make it so that people can come back later and only experience certain elements of it.

We also have kind of taken the big picture ideas and the lessons we've learned and done it to a smaller version. [Space shuttle Columbia launches into a clear Florida sky. Another perfect liftoff. Or is it? NASA engineers….] This is something that we were able to do after only a few hours after the Columbia disaster. And it was taking the lessons that we learned specifically from the big picture, which was having the clear navigation, but at the same time walking somebody through it, giving very clear clues as to what they're supposed to be doing with these things and giving people a very good sense of what's coming up next. So this also was very helpful to us and we're also working on having this in more areas of our site.

Walk through the animation, through graphics of those as well. [Take a look at the shuttle Columbia. It seems to have reminded America…. Poses a huge risk. What do you think? Is regular space travel worth the human risk? Vote now.] Not much of a live vote because we had 86% of the people voting for it. So, does anybody have any questions? I can't tell from over here so you guys are going to have to yell or something.

Also, these are some of the other areas in which we've…. I'm sorry.

NORA PAUL: I'm sorry. We were just talking about a projection thing here. Go ahead.

ANGELA CLARK: So this was one of the earlier ones that we did after September 11th in which we learned some of those lessons, where we boxed people in. [8 am. Two routine flights roar off the runways at Boston. Both 767s. Their bellies full of fuel, their cabins more empty than filled. Flight 11 descends westward on radar. Suddenly its identity disappears. Its transponder shut off. The nameless blip abandons its course. Controllers on the ground report a radio pop from the cockpit. Then another. A voice…] So this was something in which we experimented with the pulling through the story, which we found was very successful here, but by kind of hiding all the various categories, we may not have done a very good service to our readers. So you'll notice that that is now something that we make very clear each time. We're also making sure that we give people a sense of how much time is involved in each one of these various chapters within the story. So that's something that you'll notice as well. These are all things based off of feedback and our stalking of our readers and checking them out, essentially.

So finally, in talking about there's a unique way of telling a story on the web that you would never be able to do in either television, newspaper, or magazine. One was trying to explain this very difficult topic. [Having a hard time with the details of

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Enron's dramatic rise and fall. We'll show you in simple terms what happened from the company's business plans and where they went wrong to who or what is to blame. Click a topic to skip ahead. Otherwise, we'll start from the beginning.]

So in this particular case we were trying to figure out, OK, how are we going to explain this really super difficult topic of what's going on with Enron? And at the same time making it a story that can run through and that people will understand without too much interference. So again, actually Wells Art, one of our interactive producers came up with kind of a sin city idea in which he explained all the various elements with a popup video kind of approach. And it worked out very well because essentially it was the same thing that on TV producers will tell you, which is that you have the audio make a statement and then you have the visual essentially just prove it again. And so in each case we're walking through making a very important point and then putting it up over on the right hand side so that people can be reminded of what was just said. So this was very successful as well. [And they charge delivery fee based on how much utilities were willing to pay. The idea catches on in some states. By the late 80s natural gas use is on the rise. Prices become…]

So let me get back in front of this thing. I'm a journalist, I'm not a technical person. So, let's try again here.

DIRCK HALSTEAD: Angie, you've turned into a logo.

ANGELA CLARK: It makes everybody here happy that I can just be MSNBC for awhile. OK. So, basically, a lot of what we've been doing has been because we want to make sure that we're doing the right thing. So, what we do is we have essentially four ways that we find that out. One is where we take a look at how many people are using our pages, as I think almost every website can figure out how many people are looking at the page. Then we also set up all of our flash files because we mostly use flash to be able to see. If somebody clicks on a button or moves to the next category, we know that they're calling another flash file so that we can actually start crunching those numbers and say, OK, we had up to 75 or 85% of the users who saw the very first section of this. They stuck with it all the way to the end. And that's something that we've taken - a lot of that qualitative data and been able to figure out behaviors. But that wasn't truly everything that we wanted. We wanted to know how people were acting within the framework of those chapters and so we developed something that we call the stalker in which essentially without capturing any personal information we kind of check to see how people are using the page and then sending an email to ourselves to show, ok, this person moused over this thing, used the pause button, used the no audio button. They took advantage of the email this or they didn't, and then we can kind of get a sense of the qualitative approach to this. And we've also been lucky in the last month or so that we've been able to test out in focus groups how well people react to this. And, so far so good. We've been able to make sure we tell the story in what we consider to be a very journalistically evocative way, make sure that we take advantage of all of our partners like NBC and MSNBC, make sure that we have text and interactivities and video and audio, but all in such a unique way that you'd never see it anyplace else but the web.

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So that's my schpiel.

MARK STENCEL: Angie, what was the biggest surprise from your focus groups?

ANGELA CLARK: Mostly it was pretty much 50/50. People didn't like to have audio automatically start and that was something that really surprised us because we have a contingent in the newsroom ourselves as to whether people like it or not. And people essentially on the East Coast loved it, people on the West Coast did not. A little bit more laid back, maybe, on the West Coast.

NORA PAUL: It's interesting. You had said it was 50/50 so, what are you going to do? Will you do a West Coast version and an East Coast version? Do you go by the negative feedback more and change or do you go by the positive feedback and say, we're doing OK?

ANGELA CLARK: Well, that's a very good question. What we're going to end up doing is probably just giving the people a chance to make a decision. It's much better that we don't annoy 50% of the people by automatically starting the audio or vision or sound or something. But instead we give them the choice, or warning them ahead of time. I may not have stayed on the pages very long, but on those launch pages for our big picture, we say, hey, adjust your sound. We are going to be making some noise here, so just be aware of it. Especially when people are looking at these things mostly through their work. We don't want to get them in trouble with their boss.

NORA PAUL: Any question in the audience? Vin Crosbie.

VIN CROSBIE: …(inaudible) examples on your activity … Most of it involved you composing questions and asking the readers or the viewers to answer them, and also stalking the readers and viewers. Do you actually have any two-way interactivity where they can actually ask someone to answer questions about the stories?

ANGELA CLARK: We do. We are experimenting with Flash MX. They have something that they call their communications server in which there's kind of an IM between themselves and the presenter. But we haven't really been able to find something that can handle the type of traffic that we'd like to be able to handle. So right now it's essentially limited to email back and forth and then answering it once the email has been sent. But we're definitely experimenting with different technologies to get eventually to that point.

NORA PAUL: Another question?

AUDIENCE QUESTION: First of all, your presentation kicked ass. It was really cool. And second of all, when you conducted the focus group research, were the people in those studies on dialup or were they in your offices where you had super duper connection? My question has to do with dial-up. We're very smart people here in the journalism department, but I have dialup at home and that's why I cannot stand

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doing video on the Internet. I can't afford a cable modem and it's just too slow. There are too many problems with it. So what are your thoughts on that?

ANGELA CLARK: Well, basically we did two things. We made sure that we were talking to people who were dialup or people who were broadband. And we also talked to people who were familiar and comfortable with MSNBC and people who weren't. And the folks essentially who are coming to us from dialup, we unfortunately - some of the elements that we have we can't make for them at a stage in which they'll get the full interactive experience. We're kind of assuming that people are going to be moving into a broadband arena eventually. However, big picture was something that we very clearly decided we were going to do that. In our other situations like the driving package that we did and some of the Columbia piece and so on, we do do some detection ahead of time with flash to say, OK, what is the connection like? If it is a dialup, then we give you a not as heavy audio and it's maybe not as rich or as clean, but you get an experience that we're hoping won't just drive you crazy,. Because I just now got DSL from home and I used to test all the stuff at home on dialup and it drove me nuts. I completely understand.

NORA PAUL: One more question. Then we'll spring you and Mark Stencel will come up.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: My question is, do you see a foresee a day where the personnel for the site will merge either in New York or Redmond? It seems odd from a distance that you would be a bi-coastal marriage.

ANGELA CLARK: I'm not a big enough wig to know whether we are going to eventually move in one direction or not. But I do that because our two parents - both Microsoft and NBC - that they really want us to be promoting. NBC wants us to be promoting what they're doing and so the presence on the East Coast is very important, where NBC is based. And then Microsoft wants us definitely to be here to promote Microsoft technology and also to make sure that we're a large part of their MSN channel wide news provider. So I think that we may have the majority of us move from one coast to the other. But I think there will always be a presence on both ends. And I think it's really helped us a great deal because sometimes some larger news organizations can be very coast-centric and I think that by having a group of people here in Seattle we try to be a little bit more level about that. If that makes sense.

NORA PAUL: You're a big wig with us. Thank you very much.

MARK STENCEL: Well, first of all, I should start out by apologizing for not being here for the morning sessions because I was frankly much more interested in hearing what other people had to say than what I had to say. But I was, as some of you know, held hostage by American Airlines for about 21 hours and in light of the Geneva Convention, and until Deena here stages a daring commando rescue, I was really trapped. But the funny thing is I think I'm starting to get Stockholm syndrome because I actually was starting to think that Dallas was a very nice airport and that American Airlines is a great company. So, my apologies for that.

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I want to talk to you a little bit about how we're trying to cover this war in Iraq at the Washington Post and at washingtonpost.com. And I should start out by sort of setting the stage a little bit by telling you who I am, what I do. If Dirck is a dinosaur, then I'm a early mammal. I've spent seven years in the interactive side of the Post company, but was a print journalist before that, and have played different roles as an editor and as a business person and am now in this very odd position of being the editorial liaison between the print edition and the online edition of the Post. The interesting thing about them is they are put out by two different companies within the Washington Post company - the newspaper division of the Post and the interactive division Washington Post Newsweek Interactive which are run separately and we're not quite as separated as (inaudible) and Seattle, but we're separated by the Potomac, with the dotcom side of the operation in Arlington, Virginia. And the thing to know about the Post that makes us a peculiar company in general is we're a small town newspaper. The circulation of the Washington Post is in the Washington DC area. It is not very easy to go anywhere here in Austin and pick up a copy of the Washington Post. Whereas you can probably find a New York Times very, very easily, or the USA Today or the Wall Street Journal or any of the actually national newspapers. But while we are a small-town newspaper with a circulation basically 99 % of which is between Richmond and say Baltimore, we happen to be a small-town newspaper that's read by Presidents of the United States, by the people who want to be President of the United States, and people who work for Presidents of the United States. And that makes us a peculiar entity. And so despite our circulation area, you can have, we have a bit of a reputation.

A decade ago, we started to realize that technology was dramatically changing the way that we gather the news and the way that we present the news. Seeing that those changes were going to take place, decided to establish an interactive division and start doing things really differently. Why separate? In part to answer the earlier question. I think it's because there was a recognition that we didn't want to just put a newspaper on the Internet. We wanted to do something that Washington Post journalism that worked on the Internet. Now, we can discuss, as we will here, whether we have succeeded in doing that or not, but that was certainly the goal and intent and still is to this day.

The other thing I guess that came up a little earlier today about some of the business issues - and we do know a good bit about who our audience is and where they come from. And a couple of facts that we know about our audience that are interesting to us is that we are incredibly strong as a website within our local market - just about the strongest local news site there is, in terms of reach within the market. So that's a great business for us. That means that we can work with our existing advertisers. But we also have this audience outside of the Washington DC area, outside of the United States, that is, in fact, a new business line for us. We're not trying to take our national advertising and move it to the Internet. This is a whole new business for us. So to the extent to which we work with national advertisers, it's because they want the national web audience, they don't want an extension of our national print audience.

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And the other thing is, as Angie and others have mentioned, is this workday audience phenomenon. Most of our audience - two-thirds of our audience - comes during the work day. And the significance of that is we realized several years ago that a good chunk of our audience was a broadband audience already. And so that gave us license to invest in multimedia presentation in a way that was important to us. It made sense journalistically because we recognized that people at work could, in fact, see video. And not only could they, but if they were at work at 9 o'clock in the morning some bright sunny day in September and something horrible happens in New York or outside our window in Arlington, Virginia, most people aren't like journalists and don't happen to have television sitting at their desk. And the only place a great many people could go to see what was going on was the Internet.

So let me talk a little bit about the tools that we use for online storytelling. One of them is immediacy, and that starts with the Washington Post reporters who are very good at writing the newspaper. But what we've had to do over the past half dozen years or so is turn them into more of a continuous news operation. Not a wire service. We have wires and we don't particularly care to have our journalists replicate the Associated Press and Reuters in its entirety. But by having the kind of reporters that we have covering a story like this war in Iraq, we have access to news gatherers of different kinds whose work we can sort of find a way to transport in purpose onto the Internet. Now in fact, a lot of their stories are filed. Particularly a story like this is a great Internet story because the end of the day - Doha time - now we all know where Doha is - is middle of the afternoon, prime time for us online. And so any day of the week by 5 or 6 o'clock on this war story we can have a great deal of reporting from all of these journalists listed here online already. And so a significant chunk of tomorrow's Washington Post is available today.

The other thing that we can do with these folks is get them to talk to our readers the way they talk to their editors. And, in fact, we've actually connected those two processes by realizing that as these reporters call in to check with their editors and say, hey, I was just almost killed by a car bomb and my back window was blown out and this guy was killed. Really freaked out people in the battlefield seeing horrible, horrible stuff. We can take that reporting - we let them compose themselves - and put that online and get very live reporting. Now television has always had the ability to do this. This is a new thing for the newspaper business and it's been interesting - maybe we can talk about this in the questions - a cultural issue sort of trying to get journalists to recognize that what they see and what they know, we don't have to wait for them to craft 40 inches of brilliant prose to take their journalism and tell people what's going on some place. And so audio has given us a great way to do that. The other thing that we like about audio online in particular, is an accessible format bandwidth wise. And so it's a multimedia format that is bandwidth friendly for a dialogue user. Another aspect of immediacy is just the ability to give people news events as they happen. To stream the White House briefing, to stream the Centam briefing, to screen the Pentagon briefing live. That's a service that we can provide that in fact with rare exception, that television doesn't generally provide. There's a lot of interruption, there's a lot of cutting back and forth. They go in, they go out. A lot of our readers care about that sort so CSPAN unabridged version of events.

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Participation and control is a fancy way of saying interactivity, but I changed it while we were getting ready because Nora said she didn't like that word. And I heard these words before during other presentations and I thought I'd steal them right away.

So one part of our side is our live online channel. We have a group of producers who program interactive discussions, chat, with news gatherers and newsmakers, politicians, journalists, editors, experts, all day long. We usually do 5 to 10 hours of this kind of programming a day. It's cutting edge 1996 technology. You have a forum, you submit your question and you get an answer from somebody really interesting. And the great thing about this is you can give your readers direct access to the journalists or other people they're interested in, entertainers, sports figures. Now we've done a lot of this for the war and just since the war began we've had more than 50 of these discussions. This has been Len Downey, the Executive Editor of the Post, Fred Hyatt, the Editorial Page Editor, all our "foreign" correspondents. A lot of different people participating in these discussions. And the questions are great. We've been doing this stuff again since 1996, but the interest in this particular story and the engagement of the readers and people saying thank you for being able to talk to Peter Baker or Carl Vick or any of our reporters who are actually in Iraq and find out what was going and ask the questions that they want to know the answers to. And the answers are inevitably interesting things that we're not reading in the Post. Things about what it's like to cover this story, how the people are treating them, what they're seeing, where they're eating. I learn something every time I read one of these.

Interactivity or participation or control - pick your term - is also something that we can apply to graphics and flash has made that much better. This is the kind of participate in the storytelling, move around the story the way you want. So whether that's navigating around the maps or pulling up the bits of information and menus that you want, or historical, contextual information that you want to present in a way that's a little more engaging than slapping newspaper graphics onto the Internet, but not quite super bandwidth intensive, it's a really great thing to do. And it does let the reader find their way around the story and go to what matters to them.

Imagery is another one of the tools that we're trying to use in ways that the newspaper cannot and that other media cannot sometimes. At the first level of that we have access to the photography that Washington Post shooters collect in the field. And there is so much more of it and it's so good and so rich and there's just nowhere to put all of the good photos that come in. You see every night the news desk at the paper trying to decide which of these images to use and knowing that there's four or five more that makes it into the paper that is great photojournalism. So being able to put up galleries of that work is a great service to not only our journalists but to readers who really appreciate these and use them and click through them incredibly. And we do track how deep into these things people go in the way that Angie was describing the tracking of users at MSNBC and they're very popular. If you click on the first image the drop-off rate is very low for the last image.

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What we started to do more and more of, and we're not alone in doing this, is combining some of these things. Really trying to get into this multimedia idea, not multiple media idea. So that you can add an audio narration pretty discretely, like that little audio player on the left there, and have the Post reporter who phoned in an account narrating the photo gallery of the same thing that happened, and you start to get a much more integrated presentation. One of the previous slides mentioned that we have an online video journalist who is in Iraq right now - Travis Fox. And he's been at the scene of these - the aid trucks first coming into southern Iraq and dropping off the food, and the sort of mayhem that ensued. He's been at the scene when an Iraqi missile sort of landed near a U.S. base in Kuwait. He's just managed to find a way to be everywhere. But the thing that most strikes me about this kind of video journalism that we're able to do online is not being able to match what television is doing, but the ability that we have by not being a television news organization, by letting the story narrate itself, by using these non-intrusive hand-held digital video cameras to really be able to have an intimate relationship with the subject matter - whether it's a serviceman or an Iraqi - and to really be able to capture some of the emotion that - to do sort of what really great print journalism and really good still photo journalism and what really good documentary filmmaking does, but do it in a sort of breaking news pace and deadline structure. That's really been what's driven our multimedia thinking. And that effort's been led by a good friend of Dirck's, Tom Kennedy, who is a former photo editor at National Geographic. And he's being doing multimedia for washingtonpost.com for a number of years right now.

Panoramic imagery. This is one of those ones that the web gets to own. And being able to do that in the battlefield is something. So that you can click on one of these images and go around the roadside checkpoint or see the remains of the Iraqi tank and zoom in and zoom out and find your own way around the scene. Again, takes imagery, adds interactivity, and that to me is much more close to the vision of multimedia that we have. There are a lot of other things that we can apply to this story. The ability to create customized news about particular countries, to email information to people that they want, to deliver information to people using other devices, wherever they are because they may not always be in front of a computer screen but may want the same kind of information that we can make available online. To use databases. To get into our polls for our lists of casualties or other information. And the great thing about databases is they are often low bandwidth tools that add. From a user point of view, they're often hard to engineer behind the scenes, but the information you can present is very rich and very deep, and yet it comes out usually in a texty form that is pretty easy to download.

I'll race through some quick lessons and thought that all this has provoked for me over a lot of time and because I've sworn to myself I was always going to talk about these whenever I talk at one of these things about the consequences and opportunities. The acceleration of the news cycle is a great thing and fun thing and a dangerous thing all at the same time.

When a big news story hits, the fact that it can be in print, on television, and online simultaneously is pretty extraordinary. One of the things that has done has added a

level of competition to our work that is interesting. It means that when a story breaks everyone else is going to be there. But it also means that one person somewhere with nothing more complicated from than a sat phone or even just a regular cell phone can from a very remote place be competing with you instantly. It means for a news organization like ours that we're not only competing with the CNN.coms and MSNBC.com (who's also our partner) we're also competing with great news organizations like Yahoo. And trustworthy reliable news brands like Drudge. So basically any idiot with a microphone and a camera is suddenly your competitor. And sometimes, as Dirck mentioned, that can be a great thing too. And that opens up a whole new world of journalism. But it's also dangerous. And at the same time you get new competition, you also get partners, because the Washington Post, when I was in the partner business, on the business side of our operation, the relationships that we have with NBC and MSNBC, with the Wall Street Journal, with WTOV news radio locally in Washington. We have a long list of people with whom we're participating in news gathering and/or sharing our news back and forth in ways that each other can use.

Accuracy. A huge challenge for us and every news organization in this medium. I'll give you my favorite example. If you happened to click at our website at 3 o'clock in the morning on election night in 2000, this is the homepage you would have seen. If you happened to come to our website at 3:30 in the morning, this is the homepage you would have seen. And if you came to our website at 4:00 in the morning, this is the page you saw. Throughout this war, there have been so many more examples on all the major news sites, equally egregious, although often less noticed because they move and change so fast. And it's a huge challenge to us. Most of the time we're very successful sticking with the mantra that says we would rather be right than first. But the pressure is very intense and people in newsrooms feel it.

No space and time limits. An obvious thing. I'll skip it. There's lots of stuff we can put up here. We don't have the constrained time or space limits that you have in print and other media. But one of the things that the no space and time limits presents is a challenge in deciding what not to report. There are obvious examples where that comes up, and you have to make a quick decision about do you put up the video of the POW's? More complicated things come up in really strange places. So, at lunch we heard about the potential of online real estate sections, which is something which we are very interested in at the Washington Post, as you might imagine. So you can go on to washingtonpost.com and if you're particularly nosy or want to buy my house, you can find out how much my wife and I paid for our house. But because we have the database of public record information, available at any courthouse, that means you can also go onto our website and find out where the deputy secretary of defense lives. So we're suddenly - it's not just a real estate database anymore, it's a national security risk. And how do we deal with that kind of information as responsible journalists?

The last point, the obligatory Murrow slide. I put this here because my favorite book on new media is one called The Murrow Boys which is a book about the team he put together to cover World War II in CBS. And anybody who has worked in online journalism will really enjoy this book. Particularly when you think about who the

people are who are in it and the things they had to deal with early on. One thing he mentions in that book is that when he first arrived in London, one of the first things they did, was mic Big Ben and play it for the world to hear. And that to me is the best example of - this is journalism, we're going to do it because we can. What does it mean? It was a dramatic moment. Wow, I'm sitting in Kansas and I can hear Big Ben. But we're just in online journalism, I think, starting to get past that point of doing things because we can and starting to do things because they matter and because it's important journalism.

This war stuff, and that list of great online contributors that I had early on in this presentation, is something we take very seriously. That list of people are quite literally risking their lives. When I got off the plane this afternoon to come here, I learned that our colleague Michael Kelly who is a columnist for the Washington Post, a former editor of the Atlantic Monthly and National Journal and just a well-known Washington journalism guy was killed in a hum vee accident today. The first American journalist. But not the first journalist killed in this conflict. It is really important stuff and these people are risking their lives to cover this in this new way because there are a lot more people dying - soldiers, Iraqi's, and it's a very important story. And so we want to figure out how to contextualize this information and convey that meaning. Not just do stuff because we can now but do stuff because we can do it in a way that adds something significant to what people know about what's going on in the world around them. Thank you.

NORA PAUL: We're going to take a four-minute break and have the next panel come up. So if you have any questions, please come up and talk to the panelists and grab a cookie.