

ISOJ 2005: *Real Time: How Online Journalism Is Responding to the Increasing Demand of Hard News During the Work Day*

- 
- **Rosental Calmon Alves**, professor, Knight Chair in Journalism and UNESCO Chair in Communication, UT Austin
  - **Len Apcar**, editor-in-chief, The New York Times on the Web
  - **Jim Brady**, executive editor, WashingtonPost.com
  - **Mary Zerafa**, director, LaOpinion.com, Los Angeles

**Rosental Clamon Alves:** I'd like to explain that this panel is about like I said in the opening session, this panel is about how the main mainstream media, especially newspapers are changing their culture in terms of news production. I am not sure if I'm gonna have time to show up. I wanted to let you know that. Amy Schmitz and I have been working on a project where we took 30 newspapers of the least of the 100 largest newspapers in the United States. We took the top 10 At the bottom of those papers, and we are doing a multi-year analysis on how they are dying, they are evolving in terms of the frequency and why they are updating their home pages during two weeks. We have a researcher from a company in California called Imar that that goes and visit every hour those newspapers and take a shot of the of the homepage and then one hour later go back there and then compare the both pages and see what is what is the page if there is anything new that they should send us an email with changes highlighted so this is a page of the Washington Post just to show you how we so everything that is read there are two weeks of those 30 newspapers start upon project analysis. We have already published a small article about that but we are reserving this for a journal article. Later when we have more more years whereas the presentation (*audio cut*) this is the way it has any paper that we have the pages of them so we are also kind of creating a database in archive so this is a new, a new that is different from one hour before where it is like, okay, those are some of the things that we did in 2003. We counted in content and analyzed 90,974 items this year. We did the same papers and we counted 25,752. So there is an increase of about 30%. We also collect data that is not yet processed by cnn.com And the idea was to have a comparison with television as the project goes, this is some of the findings compared to 2003 and 2004. We saw an increase in local and regional news and a factor people are updating to take about a job, but I want to start studying dynamics there. So I think Amy's gonna have to have helped me with the names but visits in Long Island. Newsday, which was less than last year in terms of changes. This year was different than it used to chronicle, but there was a change in the design of Newsday and a story. So, we are not talking necessarily about revenue. Development in this research. So the second was the USA Today. This is New York, New York Times. Last year was the Chronicle and this year it's the Washington Post. Fourth was no, that's weird Texas. Alright, so this is just you know, some of the comparisons here to the largest newspapers are gonna take more time, from our guests of course. Not going to take more from our guests.

**Len Apcar:** I'm gonna stay up. I'm just gonna stay right here. I'm glad to see that we're doing pretty well. It's been a long haul. We start at 1000. If you're allowed to do a little bit of work in newspapers. This is difficult to do. The culture is to hold back to preserve the morning paper article. Start to give anything away. And it's taken us a long time, five years to get to what you saw up there, where we need to go. The culture basically has passed around the central idea that a school is no matter where the paper or the website or the international journal. view an earlier edition. Like the stories in the New York Times. You have to get to that point. And I am in all candor, we're not there. I think sometimes, particularly when reporters say I have you know a scoop on x and I'm pretty sure it's not going to keep till 10 or 11 o'clock tonight. So why don't we go on anyway, so I want to get this out because I want to. That's been going on for a few years, more and more slowly. Words are coming to us and saying I don't know. But I really want to get it out. And so they'll push it out. Oftentimes, ticks is that they may have when say a sports reporter has wind of a Yankees tray or some kind of major like that and they don't get credit from any of the tabs or others who will take take the take the information sometimes we do get credit but there are some publications who are really good about saying this news first broke on the web. But oftentimes it's not. But to change the culture. Ultimately you have to get to the point where what you're making in the newsroom and the reward compensation in the newsroom has to be adjusted as well. In other words, sports editors, business senators, Metro Nashville all I have to say I will reward you for remembering that story whether it appeared in the paper or not. I remember that you wrote that story or any performance or any script. I will tell you that one terrific watershed just in the last week or so. Culture again was not the whole back everything on the phone before the book died. Just say well for the web. We would do the obituary we might do. This means the total package and maybe nine or nine or 10 stories would not be made available to the web and in fact, depending on what time he died in relation to our press runs, we might have not put everything in the paper the first day I argued that this is exactly what happened. Blanket coverage, eyeballs and a war for eyeballs need to get out to get everything out there right away. Why hold back just and I'm happy to say Bill Miller, and he said we'll give everything for the West. So we spent a fair amount of time getting the package together. Getting the package together for that main print desk and not preparing another one. final edits and all of that had not happened. But time allowed we were able to copy through our own continuous news desk edit, copy edited and then have it ready to go and so when we were very proud of the fact that when we die which we take as a pretty serious competitor. It's not easy to so that was that. That was until that kind of preparation and they need hair this guy beats so how do we do this? We have a continuous news desk of 10 people. They are reporters and editors who have worked at the paper or at work. Now we're bringing in some younger folks who are about to come in are coming in from places like the Associated Press and other places of lawyers where they add you know, pretty good wire experience because I think what, what this entails the skill set you need to do this well is a little different than the skill set. That a news reporter working in a morning paper hats, not that they can't do it. A lot of them can. But oftentimes what you need is you need somebody on the phone. You need somebody who's working with a correspondent, basically

fashion rewrites and doing it very very quickly. We like to wire stories as fast as we can. The first thing we've got to establish is that a lot of reporters can do it. I'm not at all taking anything away from that staff at the time they want to do it. They say hey, I could give us a very short term. You give me 20 minutes. I will give you a very fast website. byline. I will often do and you don't need to, you know, for a few minutes I'll take you on average a day on some really busy days we can do days can go as high as the rebuy report. Some of those are retox inaccurately ripped right through some of those are our fresh stories. And some of those may be just talked about all of that is moving, moving through the desk which sits in the floor over on the continent tenuous news the main biggest news areas those areas or national politics overnight continuous news desk we basically stopped about seven or eight o'clock at night but I like to say about our feeds are starting to come in to the stories line of paper and they started to come into our content system that basically makes the paper the entire paper working. They're putting out a paper but in the store our queues are filling as the story is earlier than we otherwise would as the paper is generally between 10 I'll stop there because I know we're pressed for time and we can take questions Washington post.com

**Jim Brady:** I was actually at washingtonpost.com and the difference in the relationship of that paper for the topic of collaboration for the most people understanding that this is where things are headed that they need to get involved running sports I tried desperately to get tried to explain a foreign company I tried all these different ways to get them to work and then finally just gone to the ego part, which was national and international. Whatever happened. the bank told me they were property time has gone on. I think it's really starting to snap a lot of people, personal staff and all that got a hard step to where they were able to get there for 15 hours. Not only by getting ready to store in New York, their sources were saying that they were putting that wasn't their wild successes not only in terms of our ability to also getting a different type of challenge. We have our breaking news desperate to disrupt your time. We have five systematic upgrades. In fact we're at six and the way our process works is story breaks first, the first priority is to get a report in order to file. Your answer is yes we love that story together. They're violent. I've given up on option two. The reporter said to give me some notes, but I don't have the ability to give you the entire story right now. It's trying to work on a lot of paper. They'll give us some notes and we will give them the notes of a reporter on our desk that slapped together a byline and story with a reporter. The third option is called reports into any situation that has no ability to find them. fact that in which case the reporter News Desk writes the story single byline, which is that later self doubt. That's the way the operator works right now. We tend to build our own relationships with the paper on the side, the long term projects kind of around. Just we don't do it. We don't run enterprise paper because it helps out a lot of traffic and that's how we work. We've found the wild success of people to pay for now. We aren't. We didn't see the beginning of this desk as people calling up and saying hey, I failed to get them to do it. Now on a given day you'll have the best areas and you won't get what you got together on this crap backbone beltway.

**Alves:** (audio cut) So our proud crowd dynamic newspapers in Spanish, you know maybe the newspapers in English. I have no problems and discover that there are more and more newspapers.

**Mary Zerafa:** I think part of what I can share is knowing what you don't want and just to give. I wanted to give a little bit of context because most of you people in the room have a very different experience on the web than what we've done. Just to give you an example, I launched this website in 2000 at the same point in time. So we are a little bit you know, we're not in the same area that the general market is. And so we need to do things a bit differently. A few things though, there are 14 million Hispanics who are on when you're taking a look at and I want to give a little context again, there are people who prefer Spanish. Really look at and more quite a bit on the bilingual side, much more so than in the newspaper. What we do know is that most of them actually have only been using the web for about zero to two years. The percentage and actually I've been using the web for five plus years is around 20%. So their level of expertise and using the web is very different from the general market. The other thing that's different is their points of access. They predominantly work during the day where people are accessing the web. They do have access at home but they also widely use schools and other areas to access the web. Without working online. Instead of you know, if they're new to the dialogue. They've gone directly for the broadband Wi Fi point dialog. And they know that they're there, they're not swayed. We've gone more into it, the broadband. What I wanted to bring about their points for how we've approached this is wildly different, but that's why we don't have a continuous. We've had to have three people that were at the website and we try to work with our newsroom as much as possible. And what we tend to focus on you know, we looked at different things. And this was one, they can go someplace not very much about needing to decide what we are and what we're not and we're not going to do certain things if everybody else is doing it. So what do we do? When there's an example when this happened? Which was probably about three or four years ago. We were probably the first that's the kind of news that we bring in that we focus on. We don't do all your 25 years. The way that we do breaking news is we all know who's working on which day and you're responsible for that day. So when that news broke about us just we called in and we told them to go in and do the updates very, very ad hoc. That's one way that we approach it so you don't have a lot of resources. You can do it. The other way that we do it is as we go into rent and ramp ups. And going out areas that naturally provide us that they're not going to get elsewhere. One of the statistics that we have is that even though Hispanics have been a little bit later they do tend to use it quite a bit when they are on the web. Quite a bit more pages that spend a lot of time and then they also over invest in certain areas such as entertainment. They download movies, but why is that probably because, you know there's not as many stores that have Amazon and it's just not widely available. Miles was downloaded right here. Same thing with the listening to the radio fantastic over index as well for Hispanics, because even though Hispanics are highly rated in several areas throughout the United States content markets, it's also growing and so they may be in a location where there isn't a radio station that they want

to hear. So they've been able to find it on the web, where they go. Why don't we bring this up because that's what we're going to really focus on but for example when the World Cup we it was basically and we weren't allowed. There were only the three of us and then we had other people doing it. We really tried to grab resources that were lower, but I have to say I think we did one of the best, you know, World Cup sites out there. It was extremely popular. We actually had a recall but the games were played mostly in the middle of the night. It was 11pm. The next one was at like two or three and the final one was like five o'clock in the morning. So when people wanted to get up in the morning, they wouldn't know what's going on. So we did a simultaneous you know, ask them you know what was going on. When the goal was scored. The whistle blew and we had the story ready to go out. So we really focus on areas of passion. We did the same thing. So something that's very important. We did updates just covering the Grammys throughout that night. So a different approach to whatever other folks are doing here but for us, you know, has been successful and workforce. We're looking to go towards continuous new service and we're trying to do that this year, but some internal changes in our company. We're lifting papers and so we're trying to do the conversation questions I would like to ask. Production papers especially from international without what I'm saying people aren't understanding is like extended services or services containers.