

CHARACTERISTICS OF ONLINE EDITORS AT
CITY AND REGIONAL MAGAZINES

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CHARACTERISTICS OF ONLINE EDITORS AT
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Internet has forever changed the way people consume media. Options are no longer limited to a newspaper tossed on subscribers' front lawns or a glossy magazine available at a local newsstand. A world of information is now a click away, and traditional print media have more competition for readers' attention than ever before. As a result, a daily, weekly or monthly issue of a newspaper or magazine is no longer enough. A website has become a necessary and vital counterpart to these traditional print products. Additionally, along with the typical editors-in-chief, managing editors, senior editors, etc., online editors have also taken their place on the staffs of magazines and newspapers worldwide. While they serve a similar role as their print-focused counterparts, they also face a separate set of pressures and journalistic challenges synonymous with the continually changing World Wide Web.

This study addresses the profiles of online editors — the gatekeepers of content published on publications' websites. Specifically, this study will survey online editors associated with a genre of publications called city and regional magazines, which are just

beginning to explore the potential of extending their brands into companion websites. While previous studies have addressed the role of newspapers' online editors (Singer, 1997, 2003, 2006; Brill, 2001), few studies have applied the same questioning to online editors associated with magazines and, in particular, city and regional magazines. This study aims to fill that gap in the literature by assessing the demographics of online editors; characteristics of their magazines' online editions; online editors' job duties; their job satisfaction levels; and how they relate to qualities of particular magazines; and what online editors see as their primary responsibilities, professional achievements, goals and areas of improvement for their respective publications.

The Rise of City Magazines

After World War II, the U.S. population expanded quickly and people began to drift toward urban and metropolitan areas. This led to the development of a new type of magazine — the city magazine. According to a study by Ernest C. Hynds (1993), these magazines developed from a variety of sources and for a variety of intents. In general, however, they served as guides to their cities, means of providing information on dining, events, the social scene and local personalities. Many of these magazines even began to cover news and issues affecting their readership, providing in-depth articles on such subjects as crime, education, politics and business.

Over the decades, some of these magazines have faded away because they struggled to find advertisers. Many, however, have created a niche and a brand, becoming a recognized part of their cities, states and regions. Additionally, while the current economic climate has resulted in the closure of some national magazines, city and

regional magazines, with their hyperlocal focus, have thrived. *Folio* magazine's 2007 survey of these publications reported that the city and regional market had enjoyed explosive growth over the previous five years, and, in contrast to many mainstream consumer magazines, their print editions accounted for their healthy and wealthy status, with 86 percent of respondents reporting that print was their largest revenue stream. In December 2008, as the reality of the economic challenges set in and many national magazine titles were closing their doors, the regional magazine market was considered a "bright spot in the industry" (Fell, 2008). Michael Carr, president of regional publisher Greenspun Media, even noted, "When times are challenging, readers want to know what's important to them within five miles of their front door. That's where regional magazines, which are closer to the markets they serve, make a difference." In fact, while 275 new magazines debuted and 427 folded in 2009, according to MediaFinder.com (Kinsman, 2009), city and regional magazines were responsible for 21 new titles and were the largest category for magazine launches.

What often sets these magazines apart is their "superior editorial quality" (Felker, 2000). As one source in Felker's article noted, "You have to have editorial writing that moves people. In order to do this, we are primarily staff-written, and we have a staff of fact checkers to make sure that we are accurate. It's expensive, but it's what makes the difference." This dedication to editorial excellence has resulted in city and regional magazines earning national recognition, competing with the top magazines in the country. For example, in the 2010 National Magazine Awards, the premier recognition for American magazines, *New York* magazine won awards for magazine section, personal

service and general excellence (250,000 to 500,000 circulation) (“2010 National Magazine Awards,” 2010). Additionally, *Texas Monthly* was honored in the feature writing category of the same competition. *Texas Monthly* and *New York*, as well as *Indianapolis Monthly*, *Los Angeles* magazine, *Atlanta* magazine and others have developed widespread reputations for their investigative reporting and willingness to shed light on challenging topics.

The Influence of the Internet

Although they continue to find success in their print formats, city and regional magazines have not been immune to the influence of the Internet. Many of these publications have adopted companion websites, and although e-media accounts for an average of less than 2 percent of overall revenues for city and regional magazines (Kinsman, 2009), publishers of these publications nevertheless realize the potential and impact of the Internet on this genre of publications. In a keynote address at the 2009 Niche Magazine Conference (Silber, 2008), Steve Churm, president of Churm Media, a city and regional publisher in Orange County, Calif., described his company’s strategy for transitioning from a print-centric focus to a brand-centric focus, including e-media. His company invested \$250,000 to rebuild magazine websites because, as he said, “We embraced the idea that print and online work better together. Our own print-centric thinking had gotten in our way.”

While early manifestations of city and regional magazine websites were largely limited to repurposing content from the print editions, several of these websites have

adopted blogs, videos and other original content, thereby providing another means for their readers to interact with the brand (Kinsman, 2007). DLG Media Holdings, which publishes *Philadelphia Style* and *DC Style*, reported that it would make a few hundred thousand dollars in online revenue in 2006 and expected to bring in more funds in coming years. At that time, the company offered features such as podcasts, daily blogs and web-enabled video players with videos of photo shoots and events on its magazine websites. *Down East* magazine in Maine also reported plans to increase its online presence, aiming to create a destination or portal site for anyone who wanted information about the state of Maine.

This focus on creating online extensions for existing print brands follows a trend that has affected most all general-interest magazines. In 2008, consumer magazine websites attracted 67.5 million unique visitors a month in the fourth quarter, an 8.1% increase from the fourth quarter the previous year (Ives, 2008). Those magazines with the most popular sites also had significant monetary potential, with their success and reader interest serving as lures for national advertisers. Also, according to a survey of consumer magazines conducted by the International Federation of the Periodical Press (Consterdine, 2005), more than 81% of magazines used their online extensions to attract more readers to the corresponding print product. While earlier studies of the relationship between magazines' print and online products revealed that websites had a tendency to "cannibalize" the content of their print counterparts (Simon & Kadiyali, 2006), current manifestations of magazine websites fulfill a more complementary and even supportive role (Kaiser & Kongsted, 2005).

Purpose of Study

Because websites have become a necessary counterpart to magazines' print editions, many publications have hired online editors to oversee these products. While these positions require similar duties as print-focused editors, online editors are working with an entirely different medium. Thus, they face different content approaches, deadlines and standards from print editors and, as a result, likely approach the editing process in a far different way. While attention has been paid to the editing practices, ethical standards and attitudes of newspaper online editors, those of online editors for magazines and, specifically, city and regional magazines have undergone little scrutiny. As the Internet continues to affect traditional print media, an understanding of how publications are transitioning into web formats, and those overseeing this transition, is vital.

Theoretical Framework

Like the print-oriented editors who came before them, online editors serve as gatekeepers for their publications. They determine which articles, blogs or other content makes its way onto a publication's website and, via editing, the form that content will take. The content could mirror what has already been presented in the print edition or take an entirely different approach that the online editor deems as more effective in a digital presentation. Thus, online editors serve an important role on a magazine's staff, largely determining the digital "face" that magazine will present to its online readership. This study will assess online editors' roles as gatekeepers, including their personal characteristics, their job satisfaction levels and their opinions of the work they have done.

Using this data, the study will address the potential impact these editors have on the product that is presented to readers and provide insight into the future of city and regional magazines' presence on the web.

Method

This study will use a survey of online editors associated with member magazines of the City and Regional Magazine Association to examine five areas: the demographics of online editors; characteristics of their magazines' online editions; online editors' job duties; online editors' job satisfaction levels; and what online editors see as their primary responsibilities, professional achievements, goals and areas of improvement for their publications.

This study borrows from the literature on job satisfaction and employs an established scale to measure the degree of satisfaction with employees' work, co-workers, supervision, total pay and promotional opportunities. The study also uses a Likert scale to determine the frequency of particular job duties, as well as other survey items developed by the researcher to determine demographics of online editors; characteristics of their online editions; and their impressions of their work. This analysis will not only describe the population of online magazine editors and their roles as gatekeepers, but it will also use statistical tests to determine whether a relationship exists between editors' job satisfaction levels and job duties. The study will also address whether job duties and job satisfaction levels vary significantly according to different sizes of city and regional magazines and other demographic variables.

Lastly, the study will adapt questions used in Singer's (2003) assessment of

online newspaper editors' attitudes toward campaign coverage of the 2000 election, including their roles, goals, achievements and areas for improvement.

Significance of Study

The body of research associated with online editing practices and attitudes has been largely limited to studies associated with newspapers. This study seeks to add to the literature associated with online editors, as well as that addressing the theory of gatekeeping as it relates to online editing practices, and apply it to city and regional magazines. Additionally, much of the literature associated with city and regional magazines has explored the content and influence of their print editions. Conversely, this study aims to address characteristics of their online counterparts and describe the editors of these online editions, thus filling a gap in the literature and providing insight into the continued evolution of this genre of publications.

Limitations

This study will be limited to a purposive sample of online editors associated with city and regional magazines that are members of the City and Regional Magazine Association. Therefore, results cannot be generalized for online editors of all publications in this genre, or all magazines.

Thesis Plan

Chapter Two outlines the existing body of literature related to the history, growth and influence of city and regional magazines, as well as the impact of the Internet on journalistic publications and editing practices. This chapter will also provide an overview of the gatekeeping theory as it relates to mass communications. Lastly, the chapter will

examine the literature related to job satisfaction in the area of mass communications.

Chapter Three will provide an overview of the methodology for this study, including research questions, as well as descriptions of how the sample will be selected, the research instrument and how the data will be processed and analyzed.

Chapter Four will present the findings of the survey and descriptive statistics associated with the findings.

Chapter Five will summarize the study and its findings, as well as explain the study's place in the existing literature, describe implications for the research and provide recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Unlike many other forms of American media, city magazines are a relatively new product. As a result, research related to this genre of publications is fairly limited. Naturally, many media-oriented trade publications, such as *Folio*, have documented the influence of city magazines, their economic ups and downs, their ability to attract advertisers and their editorial accolades. However, substantial research seems to be limited to the histories of these publications (Riley & Selnow, 1991; Greenberg, 2000); their content and influence (Hynds, 1993; Fletcher, 1977; McGraw, 1982); and case studies of circumstances related to particular publications (O'Grady, 2003).

In recent years, studies on city magazines have been few. This is most likely attributable to the fact that most city magazines rose to prominence in the 1960s, a decade when more than 60 city journals were introduced (Tebbel, 1991). However, a multitude of these magazines have survived and thrived in recent years, often based on the quality of their editorial product (Felker, 2000) and continued willingness to report on issues important to their community (Hynds, 1993). While the print editions of these

publications continue to attract the largest audience and revenues, many have also adopted companion websites to further connect with readers (*Folio*, 2007). These products have grown to such an extent that some city and regional magazines have hired web-focused editors to oversee their online editorial activities (www.phillymag.com, www.chicagomag.com, www.bostonmagazine.com).

A significant body of research has focused on the impact of the Internet on newspapers, specifically comparisons of print and online editing practices, including online editors' opinions of these practices (Arant & Anderson, 2001); analyses of gatekeeping practices as related to online editing (Singer, 1997, 2001, 2003, 2006; Boczkowski, 2004; Cassidy, 2006); techniques employed when editing online (Dimitrova, Connolly-Ahern, Williams, Kaid & Reid, 2003); and changing roles of online journalists (Brill, 2001). Other studies have addressed ethical considerations raised by Internet publishing (Black, 1994; Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Singer, Tharp & Haruta, 1999; Singer, 2010). However, few studies have focused on the same questions as related to magazine editors who prepare content to be published online. Rather, research regarding magazines' online presence has focused on the impact of websites on magazines' brands (Tarkiainen, Ellonen & Kuivalainen, 2009) and the effect of website usage on magazine reader loyalty (Simon & Kadiyali, 2006; Tarkiainen, Ellonen & Kuivalainen, 2010).

This study examines the demographics of editors of online editions of city and regional magazines, as well as characteristics of those online editions. Additionally, the study will address the duties of these online editors, their job satisfaction levels and their

assessments of their roles and responsibilities, the work they have done on their respective magazine's online edition and their goals for their online editions. The study seeks to build upon previous literature assessing these topics as related to newspapers while filling a gap in the research by applying similar theories and research questions to city and regional magazines. This chapter will begin by providing an overview of the growth and development of city and regional magazines. Next, it will provide a description of the common attributes of these publications. It will then review the gatekeeping theory as it relates to mass communications and, subsequently, the role of city and regional magazine editors. It will also describe studies addressing the impact of the Internet on editing practices. Finally, it will assess existing literature related to job satisfaction, particularly in the field of mass communications.

Background

Although they came to prominence just 60 years ago, city magazines actually have a much longer history. The concept of a city magazine can be traced as far back as the late 19th century with a publication called *Town Topics*, which Colonel William Mann founded in New York City (Hynds, 1993). This publication, which catered to an upscale, society-oriented audience, included gossip and light news. In 1925, Harold Ross developed another magazine aimed at reflecting life in New York, *The New Yorker*, now a high-profile magazine much different from the traditional definition of a city magazine (Hynds, 1993). In the 1940s, a publication emerged that is considered to be a precursor to the modern city magazine movement of the 1960s, *San Diego*. This publication, developed by Edwin Self and a partner, aimed to provide an alternative voice to local

monopoly newspapers (Hynds, 1993), a justification that would lead to the creation of similar magazines in later years.

The rise of additional magazines in the vein of *San Diego* occurred after World War II because of drastic population changes during that time. After the war, the U.S. population expanded quickly and people began to migrate toward urban and metropolitan areas. As a result, American cities were competing for business, industry and tourism (Hynds, 1993). But these cities needed a means of promoting their business communities, entertainment offerings and housing options. A natural fit was magazines. Chambers of commerce developed many of these publications, some began as manuals for those living in the city and some served the growing group of affluent suburbanites (Hynds, 1993). Over the years, though, many of these magazines became the property of independent publishers and, thus, began to more closely resemble *San Diego* in their desire to cover issues, negative and positive, affecting their readership (Schlosberg, 1986). A few publications emerged that were leaders on this front: *Los Angeles*, *The Washingtonian*, *Atlanta* and *New York* magazines (Tebbel, 1991). *New York* actually began as a reincarnation of the *New York Herald-Tribune's* Sunday magazine and, with its focus on printing service journalism (such as best-of lists and guides to various areas of the community), investigative reporting, lifestyle features and event coverage, has significantly influenced many other modern city magazines (Riley & Selnow, 1991).

The book *Regional Interest Magazines of the United States* chronicles the development of some other notable city magazines. *Philadelphia* magazine started as a quarterly publication published by the Board of Trade in 1908; the Philadelphia Chamber

of Commerce took over the publication a year later and renamed it the *Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce Journal*. Although early issues of the publication included primarily positive stories about local business, by 1967, after a change in publisher, it printed an article revealing corrupt dealings of a star reporter for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, a bold move that earned the publication national attention. *Cleveland Magazine* came to being in 1972 with a *New Yorker*-like focus. That changed with the arrival of Editor Michael Roberts, a former newspaperman, who introduced investigative journalism to the publication and expressed a desire for the magazine to serve as an alternative to the city's two newspapers. The magazine's editorials and blend of light features and hard-hitting, in-depth journalism resulted in a solid reputation and solid advertising base. *D* magazine hit newsstands in the throes of a newspaper vacuum in Dallas. The publication was the brainstorm of 25-year-old Wick Allison, who determined that the magazine "would do something no publication in Dallas had ever attempted: print the truth" (Allison, 1984).

It was in the decade in which *D* and *Cleveland* were produced, the 1970s, that city magazines truly hit their stride, and each of the top 15 markets in the country had one (Schlosberg, 1986). In Schlosberg's article "The Glittering World of City Magazines," *New England Monthly* Publisher Robert Nysten said the market during this time was open for publications that combined "the visual allure of national magazines with the power and impact of local newspapers." Subsequently, by the 1980s, city magazines were drawing acclaim for their editorial coverage in the form of National Magazine Awards

and had developed sufficient advertiser bases, including some national advertisers (Tebbel, 1991).

Of course, city magazines have not always had an easy run. According to an article in New York's *Daily Deal*, the 1990s brought challenges for city magazines, which struggled with rising postal rates that caused an increase in subscription fees and a decline in advertising from department stores. Additionally, some newspapers had begun to publish "service journalism," a type of article, such as a dining guide or best-of listing, that had once been unique to city magazines (Felker, 2000). Even with the accolades many city magazines have garnered, some have been chastised for their tendency to focus on listings, light feature articles and best-of compilations (Carr, 2003). This conclusion could lead to a belief that city magazines do not cover hard-hitting topics or serious issues in an effort to maintain readership and their position in the marketplace. However, there are notable examples of city magazines that are doing just the opposite, although research is limited to the 1990s and earlier.

Attributes

To analyze city magazines, it is first important to define them. In the 1982 study "Specialized Magazines of the South," Riley provides a broad characterization of city magazines, describing them as publications that devote their editorial content to coverage of a city or combination of cities. This definition, however, could apply to a variety of publications. O'Grady (2003) takes this description a step further in his study "The 2003 Relaunch of *Vancouver Magazine*," an analysis of the revival of a 30-year-old city magazine in Canada that bears many similarities to magazines in the United States.

O'Grady provides three defining characteristics of city magazines: a primary, overarching focus on the city it comes from; a blend of service journalism and feature writing; and a format of enduring quality. This differentiates city magazines from publications such as *The New Yorker*, which is geared to a broader audience than only readers in New York City; city guides such as the *Where* publications, which do not devote space to feature writing; and city weeklies that are not created to be kept as long as most city magazines.

In addition to these three key attributes, other factors tie city magazines, located in a variety of markets in cities across the country, together. In 1993, Hynds presented a paper describing the roles of city magazines as reported by survey responses from 56 city magazine editors. The survey was a replication of a 1979 study to determine how the publications had changed in their content and approach. Hynds revealed that most city magazines (89%) were privately owned, with only 5% operated by chambers of commerce and 4% by nonprofit organizations, which confirms a small increase from the number privately owned in 1979 (75%) and large increase from the 1960s, when many city magazines were owned by chambers of commerce. Most of the city magazines (64%) were also published monthly, and most relied on subscriptions rather than single-copy sales. Most also cited substantial use of freelance articles (82%).

A portion of Hynds' study reported the percentages of city magazine editors who were willing to cover community issues, the frequency with which these topics appeared, whether the coverage influenced readers and how free editors felt to cover controversial topics in their publications (Hynds, 1993). What Hynds discovered was that 82% of

magazines cited covering community needs as an important function; 59% often provided information on local issues, such as government, education and crime; 93% had covered business issues in the past year; 75% had environmental coverage; and 68% had coverage of social programs. Additionally, more than half of the editors (59%) took stands on local issues through editorial columns and other labeled commentary; 45% devoted between 10% and 20% of their editorial to public affairs reporting and commentary; 46% agreed that city magazines often use hard-hitting articles that provide much new information on pertinent local issues; and 57% felt that their coverage of local issues influenced readers. Additionally, while 43% of editors polled said they felt “very free” to comment on issues, it was the editors of the magazines in smaller cities who felt they had more freedom to address controversial topics, and those magazines were more likely to take stands on particular issues. However, even with these distinctions, many city magazine editors agreed that readers enjoy reading about lifestyles, people, entertainment, travel, food and other lighter topics, and when magazines include these types of topics on their covers, they are profitable and popular with readers (Jurkowitz, 1999).

Even in the 1970s, a relatively early phase in the history of city magazines, the audience for these publications was at the upper crust of society, with high education and income levels (Fletcher, 1977). This continued to be true almost 20 years later, when city magazine editors reported that city magazines cater primarily to a readership that is well-educated, upper middle class and most often white (Hynds, 1993). These readers also boast an average household income of more than \$75,000 and an average household net worth of more than \$300,000. Fifteen percent of readers are 65 and older, with a median

age of 45 in 1985, and city and regional magazines also tend to attract more female readers than male (54% to 46%) (Schlosberg, 1986). This is a readership that is not only loyal to city magazines but also has the potential to assert influence in their communities, with some editors citing letters written to the magazine as evidence of this impact as well as instances when community changes were prompted in response to articles (Hynds, 1993).

City Magazine Editors and Publishers as Gatekeepers

As is true with any publication, city magazines are shaped by the staff members who create their content. As a result, the writers, editors and publishers who determine story topics and select articles for publication serve as gatekeepers for their magazines. Social psychologist Kurt Lewin first developed the gatekeeping theory as part of his food-consumption studies following World War II. He initially applied the concept to the influence housewives exerted in selecting which foods ultimately made their way to the family table (Lewin, 1947). However, in the course of discussing the influence of these decisions, Lewin noted that the theory of gatekeeping could also be applied to the travel of a news item through certain communication channels in a group. This statement led future scholars to apply the theory of gatekeeping to mass communications.

David Manning White first analyzed this concept in his seminal study, “The ‘Gate Keeper’: A Case Study in the Selection of News” (1950). Over the course of a week, White asked a newspaper wire copy editor (“Mr. Gates”) to chronicle the decisions he made as to which articles appeared in the publication, as well as provide reasoning for his selections. The resulting comments — ranging from “Propaganda” to “Don’t care for

suicides” — demonstrated that the selection of news is a highly subjective process.

Subsequent studies analyzed other links in the gatekeeping chain, such as the external factors that influence story selection, including a study of population and family-planning coverage in *Time* and *Newsweek* as affected by societal trends (Brown, 1979). Scholars have also assessed whether individual reporters’ characteristics or editors’ assessments of newsworthiness ultimately have the greater impact on gatekeeping decisions (Shoemaker, Eichholz, Kim & Wrigley, 2001).

Many gatekeeping studies, as applied to mass communications, have focused on newspaper, radio and television decision-making. In the print media arena, only a few studies have assessed gatekeeping decisions in the magazine field. In their study “An Examination of the Magazine Gatekeeper: Can Personal/Professional Characteristics Predict Editorial Involvement?” Fowler and Smith (1981) concluded that because magazine staffs are smaller than newspaper staffs, magazine editors exert more influence and direct control over their publications. Additionally, while newspapers aim to create content for a large, heterogeneous group, magazines reach smaller and more specialized audiences, thus leading magazine editors to become more conscious of what message readers should ultimately receive (Fowler & Smith, 1981). Through surveys of editors at consumer magazines across the country, these researchers aimed to determine whether attributes of editors predict their involvement in editorial operations. Ultimately, the study revealed that the most significant predictor was whether the editorial content met the editors’ personal standards, followed by the editors’ competence as compared to other staff members, further proving that gatekeeping decisions can be highly subjective

according to the editor involved. The authors of the study did note that further research should assess whether certain topics addressed in publications would merit more involvement, as well as the impact of perceived audience and advertiser tastes.

The editors of city magazines likely exert similar influence in determining the content that is ultimately presented to readers. As noted in the previously mentioned study (Fowler & Smith, 1981), further research should determine whether editors of specialized magazines, namely city and regional publications, have different concerns when choosing content. City magazines differ from consumer magazines in their emphasis on localism and featuring content that represents the interests of those in a particular geographic area — a city and the area directly surrounding it. This dedication has been viewed as a strength for city and regional magazines. In a 1992 article, Schultz noted, “Probably the greatest asset for city and regional magazines is their proximity to their readers. This proximity helps create a strong bond with readers that is based on an intimate understanding of local issues, interests and tastes.” This dedication is particularly important to city magazine editors and publishers, who tend to have the greatest impact on their publication’s content. Former *New York* magazine editor Clay Felker even noted in a magazine gatekeeping study (Fowler & Smith, 1981) that magazines are “peculiarly and stubbornly personal products, in which editors and publishers exert strong influence” (p. 5). In the case of city magazines, though, this influence should also reflect the interests of readers, who are turning to city magazines to learn about their cities, including news and issues, entertainment, information about local personalities and tips for living the best life within their city.

The Impact of the Internet on Traditional Media

The rise of the Internet has had an unequivocal and lasting impact on traditional print media. More than 1,300 U.S. daily newspapers now have websites, as well as 26 of the top 50 U.S. magazines by circulation (www.newslink.org), and many readers turn to the web as a source of news and information. The move toward an online media world began nearly three decades ago. An initial wave of electronic publishing experiments lasted from 1982-1992, efforts that were later overshadowed by services such as AOL and CompuServe (Pryor, 2002). In the second wave, which began in 1993, news organizations began to make their way online, followed by the third wave, beginning in the early 2000s, which Pryor (2002) called the “wireless/broadband era.” He noted that this wave would bridge the gap between large quantities of information available online and information that was customized and useful for readers, available when they wanted to access it.

Between the release of the C.E.R.N. World Wide Web (WWW) standard in 1991 and 2001, nearly 14,000 online news publications had emerged worldwide. During this period, thousands of mainstream media started websites and other individuals and special-interest organizations also began using the Internet as an outlet to share information with interested patrons. Different types of news media also began to appear online (Deuze, 2003). In his analysis, Deuze divided the types of sites that emerged during this second wave into four categories: mainstream news sites, which included editorial content and some moderated form of participatory communication, with original or aggregated content; index and category sites, which included search engines, firms or

agencies and some individually created sites; meta- and comment sites, which included sites about media and media issues; and share and discussion sites, which organized platforms for discussion of content found elsewhere on the web.

These four types of online journalism also had some defining characteristics, including the use of hypertext, the inclusion of multimedia content and interactivity for users. Another researcher (Pavlik, 1999) highlighted the impact of customization. Although online newspapers initially focused on repackaging content developed for other media, he predicted future enhancements, such as customized audio news reports and interactive features, such as hyperlinks, synthetic content (graphics or animation, for example) and video. He also described the rise of online-only content providers, or the “ultimate in vanity press” (p. 56), such as the *Drudge Report*.

The development of web journalism has had a broader impact as well. Online journalism has resulted in changes to editorial organization patterns, traditional journalistic practices and approaches to storytelling (Deuze, 2003). According to Deuze,

Different and overlapping types of online journalism may very well change what one perceives as ‘real’ journalism, as their distinctive features have implications for the way in which media production processes are focused, how news organizations are managed, and how a journalistic culture operates (in relationship with audiences and technologies). (Deuze, 2003, p. 216)

Consumer magazines have also made their way online. In a 2006 study, researchers Simon & Kadiyali found that in 1996, about one-third of magazines in their sample had a website, and by 2001 nearly all of the magazines had a website. To broaden and develop an audience, a web presence is necessary for a magazine, and increases its value to advertisers. According to a 2007 International Federation of the Periodical Press

(Consterdine, 2007) industry report, magazine websites can attract new readers to the brand who did not previously read the printed magazine. Because magazines typically have a lesser frequency than newspapers, often publishing monthly, a website extension allows for more frequent interaction with readers, with some sites encouraging regular visits to their websites (Tarkiainen, Ellonen & Kuivalainen, 2009). These researchers discovered that timely content that is regularly updated supports a relationship between website loyalty and parent-brand loyalty, and magazines that complement print editions with more timely content online can increase their brand loyalty and gain an advantage over their competitors.

The content magazines publish on their websites has taken various forms. According to the 2007 FIPP report, content that attracts new audiences includes interactive content, community-building content, timely content and searchable archives and databases. Two-way communication can be fostered using tools such as chat rooms and message boards, public debates, requests for print subscriptions, blogs, reader-submitted articles, discounts for members or subscribers, and visitor-proposed hyperlinks to external websites. Some magazines also offer e-mail newsletters, archives, videos and RSS feeds, as well as digital editions of the printed magazine. Overall, almost all of the sites in the FIPP report edited and packaged information exclusively for the web that had not appeared in the printed magazine. Thanks to this focus on online-exclusive content, FIPP reported that visitors to these magazines' websites had increased by 20% or more in the previous year for two-thirds of the websites sampled.

Although offering digital content can cannibalize print sales, the effect can vary depending on the overlap between print and online content, and content such as original content, a table of contents, article teasers and access to selected full-text articles can have a lesser impact. Overall, however, many publishers have been willing to risk losses in the pursuit of long-term success online (Simon & Kadiyali, 2006).

The Internet and Gatekeeping

One aspect of the journalistic culture that has felt a particularly strong impact from the rise of the Internet is the process of gatekeeping. Several researchers have studied the ways journalistic gatekeeping has evolved with the surge of the Internet and the particular means through which journalists control the content that is presented to readers. In an early online gatekeeping study, Singer (1997) suggested that with the web's seemingly unlimited space for publishing information, online journalists will be vital to making sense of the massive amounts of information, not only selecting it but also evaluating it. A later study of six Colorado newspapers (Singer, 2001) found that despite unlimited space for publication online, editors of online newspapers reduced the number of stories in the print package for the online edition, and were most likely to include locally focused content. Additionally, none of the papers had published daily content created especially for the web, although some offered archives of ongoing stories, special online packages and discussion boards.

In a fairly recent study (Dimitrova et al., 2003), researchers conducted a content analysis to assess hyperlinking as a means of gatekeeping in online coverage of the execution of an American terrorist. Hyperlinking, which developed as a way to help

readers find information among the multitude of sites on the web, has expanded to include other forms of interactivity, including bulletin boards and chat rooms. In an effort to determine how often online newspapers use hyperlinks to inform readers of outside websites, as well as the characteristics of these newspapers' hyperlinks, the researchers found that few links took readers to external sources and most connected with related material within those publications' own websites, leading them to conclude that either online newspaper editors decided to limit information provided about the story to that which appeared in their own publications or they were uncomfortable with writing in hypertext. As such, online editors may prefer to maintain their gatekeeping function by limiting the websites to which they direct readers. Possible explanations include the time involved with finding outside information that is relevant to the story or journalists' reservations that outside sites may contain inaccurate material. Overall, the researchers found that editors at online newspapers made similar news judgments as those working with the print editions, with newspapers covering even national stories through a local lens.

While studies have assessed whether the ability of the web to make nearly any user a publisher has diminished the role of journalists as gatekeepers, Boczkowski (2004) aimed to determine whether gatekeeping work practices shaped the adoptions of multimedia and interactivity in three newsrooms. Using ethnographic case studies of three online papers, *The New York Times on the Web's* "Technology Section," *HoustonChronicle.com's* "Virtual Voyager" and *New Jersey Online's* "Community Connection," the researcher found varied results. *The New York Times* made little use of

multimedia and interactivity, with staff members producing content similar to what was found in the print edition. However, “Virtual Voyager,” a multimedia magazine, published stories with still photos, text, audio, video and computer animation. “Community Connection,” a joint website of three newspapers and a local TV station, encouraged users to visit daily, offering 3,000 sites with text and still images, albeit no audio, video or computer animation. How these publications viewed their users also had an impact on their adoption of multimedia and interactivity. Those who saw users as information producers enacted multiple flows of information, while those who saw users as information consumers followed a “we-publish-you-read” mentality (Boczkowski, 2004, p. 206). Additionally, because “Community Connection” journalists viewed their role as similar to print journalists, their jobs, including copy editing and story assignment practices, did not differ from those associated with the print product.

Building on earlier gatekeeping studies focused on print journalists, more recent studies have assessed the role individual and routine gatekeeping forces play in online journalism. In a 2006 survey, Cassidy compared the two, questioning the influence of individual and routine gatekeeping forces on role conceptions of print and online newspaper journalists, as well as which of these forces exerts more influence on those conceptions. A web-based survey of journalists at U.S. daily newspapers questioned the influence of individual factors (gender, age, education, racial/ethnic makeup, political ideology, whether they voted for a 2000 presidential candidate and the number of years working as a full-time journalist) and routine factors (peers on staff, supervisors, journalistic training, news sources, priorities of prestige publications, local competing

news media and wire service budgets) on their perceptions of newsworthiness.

Ultimately, routine gatekeeping forces exerted more influence than individual forces on professional role conceptions of print and online journalists at newspapers, a finding in line with earlier studies. The results seemed to suggest that print and online journalists had more in common than some may have thought and, thus, may take a similar approach to gatekeeping.

Singer (2006) justified this claim in her study of newspaper web editors' coverage of the 2004 political campaign, a follow-up to a study conducted after the 2000 election. Generally, the size of web staffs in relation to print staffs was small and much of what was published online came from the print newspaper. However, online editors did cite informing the public as their primary goal in 2004 campaign coverage, offering quicker, more in-depth coverage than what was available in print. Editors also cited sources of pride in their coverage, such as online voter guides, candidate questionnaires and profiles, and multimedia components, as well as the web's ability to incorporate actual voters as sources. Editors also described online innovations they felt were successful in the coverage, such as personalizable content, blogs, message boards and forums, and "Ask the candidate" features, all examples of editors loosening the strings on their previously understood roles as gatekeepers. Overall, journalists may continue their roles as gatekeepers by serving as a source of credible content while also providing features that allow for reader participation and reconstruction of information in a way that is meaningful to them.

Studies of online gatekeeping practices appear to be limited when applied to magazines. In one example, researchers aimed to determine whether, with the unlimited space the Internet provides, online media offer more accurate, equitable coverage of women than the traditional press, or whether those publications mirror their print counterparts (Yun, Postelnicu, Ramoutar & Kaid, 2007). A content analysis of articles in online magazines in the United States, Britain, Korea and Mexico showed that online newspapers tended to cover women less frequently than men, and coverage was often reduced to personal features. Additionally, while women were depicted equally in stereotypical and non-stereotypical roles and images, they were described more positively than men. Additionally, articles covering women received similar placement to those covering men. All of this seemed to suggest that while women and women's issues may receive limited coverage in print media, the web offers a more flexible medium for changing this paradigm.

Future research could address gatekeeping practices as related to different types of publications, including general-interest magazines and city and regional magazines. Areas worthy of study include the types of content being published on these magazines' websites and the format of that content and how it compares to articles appearing in the print product. Additionally, scholars should address the factors affecting gatekeeping decisions, such as which staff members determine what content appears online, how they choose that content and demographic qualities of editors that could have an impact, such as ethnicity, age and gender.

Changes in Editors' Roles Online

In addressing the changing roles of journalists working with online publications, many researchers have targeted the journalists themselves. Studies, which have primarily targeted newspaper journalists, have addressed a variety of journalists' opinions, including how they see their roles in regard to the changing delivery of information online (Singer, 1997); their views about ethical challenges and changing standards in online journalism (Arant & Anderson, 2001); how online journalists view their roles and values (Brill, 2001); and how online editors perceive the Internet's impact on content delivery and audience interaction (Singer, 2003).

A study published early in newspapers' movement online (Singer, Tharp & Haruta, 1999) identified characteristics of online staff members. Many online managers earned less and worked at a lower level than their print counterparts, and many reported to supervisors outside of the traditional editorial leadership, such as advertising directors or production managers. Additionally, new college graduates were more likely to find newspaper jobs if they desired or were able to work on an online publication. In fact, a third of editors for online publications hired new graduates, although online staffs were typically much smaller than print staffs. These online staffers also tended to have experience in other outlets, such as broadcasting or software development. Although earlier online newspaper incarnations featured print content repurposed for the web, this study found that half of online staffs were publishing new content. Even so, editors and designers, at the time of the study, were in greater demand than reporters. A later study (Brill, 2001) continued these assessments, showing that more young journalists were

working online than in the industry overall, and most agreed that online journalism was not suited for all practitioners. In contrast to earlier studies, however, the journalists reported to be well compensated.

The staffs of newspapers are changing along with the evolution of electronic publishing, and those staff members' jobs are also being influenced by that technology. Even studies conducted early in the rise of online media revealed that journalists recognized the changes taking place around them. Among metro reporters and editors interviewed during three U.S. case studies in 1995 (Singer, 1997), survey subjects noted that the nature of work remained the same despite the changing method of presentation, and skills such as aggressiveness in finding information would remain important. Some also agreed that the web provided an opportunity to answer questions in depth and without space limitations, as well as provided an avenue to publish content in a more timely fashion than print products. Journalists did emphasize, however, that timeliness should not trump accuracy. Online journalists also appreciated the web's ability to provide a more open exchange of information and ideas, providing access to those who may never before have had an avenue to be heard.

Later studies support these findings. Singer (2003) followed this study with an exploratory study of online editors' opinions of online newspaper coverage of the 2000 election. Online editors maintained many of the same goals as print journalists, including disseminating information quickly to readers, a role the web serves well, and they valued the web's ability to offer unlimited space for coverage. They also saw websites as extensions of the print product, rather than separate entities, combining elements of the

newspaper with complementary online material. As a whole, “normalization” was occurring among online journalists, who continued to cite journalists’ traditional roles, despite evolving content delivery mechanisms (Singer, 2003).

Brill (2001) added that online journalists at newspapers highly valued traditional journalistic skills, such as news judgment, spelling and grammar, in addition to newer skills, such as knowledge of the Internet. However, reporting, generating story ideas and computer design skills were ranked as having lesser importance. Print and online journalists were similar in that both cited the high importance of sending out credible facts, and doing so quickly. In contrast to earlier studies, and unlike print journalists, they did not identify with journalists’ interpretive function. Rather, online journalists cited the function of allowing the public to express views, setting the political agenda and providing entertainment as more important considerations. A new function also emerged among online journalists in this study — a marketing function. The journalists considered reaching a large audience and understanding their audience as important roles.

Staff associated with magazine websites have also encountered barriers, such as resistance from print-focused employees toward the online product, insufficient funds for web development, pressure to focus on the print product, finding staff with the appropriate skills, learning the technology and low revenues from the web (FIPP, 2007). Slow acceptance by management of the need for an electronic product was also cited as a barrier.

Job Satisfaction Among Mass Communications Professionals

Naturally, with the multitude of changes and challenges affecting journalists working in the online arena, the question of job satisfaction arises. Job satisfaction has been a frequent area of study for researchers. Over two centuries, philosophers, social scientists, management specialists and other scholars aimed to understand the effects of industrial society on the human condition (DeFleur, 1992). In her assessment of job satisfaction levels across media industries, DeFleur reported that studies on job satisfaction can be traced as far back as Adam Smith's analysis of a capitalistic society's economic institution, in which he identified factors associated with workers' labor that made individuals more or less satisfied with their work. These included: income, power, prestige, autonomy and creativity. Karl Marx (DeFleur, 1992) did further work to interpret the relationship between work and the human condition, revealing the importance of autonomy and creativity as related to alienation in work environments, as well as problems of income marginality and power, which remain important factors in contemporary work environments. In the Hawthorne Studies of the 1920s (DeFleur, 1992), the "Human Relations Perspective" was born, identifying a relationship between job satisfaction and productivity, as well as recognizing the impact of personal and social characteristics of workers as intrinsic to the work process. These studies also showed the impact of high morale on productivity. DeFleur (1992) concluded that based on early literature, workers' job satisfaction levels are determined by five universal factors: income, power, prestige, autonomy and creativity.

More recently, organizational psychologists and behaviorists have studied the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance. Jex (2002), for example, identified three general approaches to the development of job satisfaction: employees' job characteristics versus expectations of their jobs, how employees process information about their jobs, and employees' dispositional approaches. The first aspect has been the most widely studied in organizational psychology. Additionally, while many definitions of job satisfaction exist, it is generally understood as an employee's attitude toward his or her job (Jex, 2002). This includes a cognitive aspect, or an employee's beliefs about his or her job or job situation, and a behavioral aspect, or an employee's behaviors or behavioral tendencies toward his or her job. Baron (1983) defined job satisfaction as the attitudes employees hold toward their work and specific aspects of it, noting that workers can readily report feelings, beliefs and behavior tendencies in reference to their jobs. Baron also reported that many factors play a role in preventing or enhancing job satisfaction, falling into two categories: those relating to events or conditions in work settings and those relating to the people in those work settings. Job satisfaction is also enhanced by work that is mentally challenging and interesting but that is not too tiring; company policies that enable promotional opportunities; rewards for workers; and favorable work conditions. Individuals have an impact on job satisfaction as well, specifically recognition from supervisors, supervisors who help employees meet work goals, good relations with co-workers and participation in work decisions. Job satisfaction has effects on workplace behavior as well. For example, low job satisfaction

can lead to absenteeism, turnover and early retirement. Outside the workplace, job satisfaction has been shown to affect physical and mental health.

Researchers have applied job satisfaction assessments to a wide variety of fields, including mass communications studies of journalists, advertising executives and public relations practitioners. Following up on a 1971 study by Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman, which found that journalists appeared satisfied with their jobs and had noticeably higher levels of job satisfaction than the overall labor force, Weaver & Wilhoit (1986) reported that results were similar a decade later, although fewer journalists reported to be “very satisfied” with their jobs. Additionally, while no significant differences existed across media (television, radio and daily newspapers), younger journalists working on magazine staffs expressed higher job satisfaction than journalists in general, possibly because they had higher incomes than other print colleagues. Also, more print journalists at larger publications reported higher levels of job satisfaction than those at smaller publications. By 1992, when asked “All things considered, how satisfied are you with your present job?” while a majority of respondents were fairly satisfied, only 27% of respondents were very satisfied, representing a considerable decline (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). Among media, wire service and weekly newspaper journalists had the highest job-satisfaction rates, with television journalists reporting the lowest rates. In 2002, journalists seemed more optimistic, with almost 84% reporting to be “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their jobs (Weaver et al., 2007). In contrast to earlier studies, those at news magazines were below average in job satisfaction, while journalists at radio stations and wire services were above average. In this survey, higher

levels of autonomy and influence, perceptions about the performance of the news organization, and managers' or owners' focus on high morale and quality journalism were associated with higher levels of job satisfaction.

Researchers have assessed the role the size of an organization plays on job satisfaction of journalists as well. Demers (1994) proposed that, contrary to some earlier research, job satisfaction is not always lower at larger newspapers, and top editors at larger daily newspapers will actually be more satisfied than those at small daily newspapers. Reasons for this could be that editors at larger newspapers have more autonomy, status and power and receive more rewards. After conducting a survey of the highest-ranking editors at 200 daily newspapers, Demers concluded that satisfaction does indeed increase as the size of an organization increases, but at a decreasing rate. Factors causing this increase include autonomy, but rank, income and age were not significantly related to job satisfaction.

Recent research has applied job satisfaction scales to particular subsets of journalists. Underwood & Bagwell (2006) conducted an e-mail survey of daily journalists at the 50 largest daily circulation newspapers in the United States to measure their job satisfaction levels by their levels of literary ambition. Through the study, the researchers learned that literary ambition may be a factor in encouraging unhappy journalists to think about leaving the business or may be a catalyst for them to actually exit the profession. Reasons cited among those who plan to leave the profession within five years included a lack of literary freedom in journalistic writing and the confines of journalism jobs. Conversely, journalists seeking a long career in the journalism field, while maintaining an

interest in literary ambitions, had more positive attitudes toward the journalism profession.

Zahler (2007) assessed the job satisfaction levels of copy editors, who typically have lower satisfaction levels than journalists as a whole. Zahler surveyed members of the American Copy Editors Society to determine the effects of increasing workloads, the experience level of copy editors and the impact of combining editing and page design duties on job satisfaction levels. The study supported previous research, finding that many copy editors were dissatisfied with their jobs, with 27 percent saying that their jobs did not meet their expectations and more than half noting that they felt their creativity had been hindered. The results also showed that workload is a significant factor in how employees feel about their jobs.

Other recent job satisfaction studies have focused on editors. Reinardy (2007) surveyed and interviewed sports editors at newspapers regarding issues influencing job satisfaction, including organizational support, or how an organization treats an employee and how employees perceive that treatment; work-family conflict, such as the challenges of balancing family responsibilities with work responsibilities; and role overload, defined as a general feeling of having too much work to do and not enough time to complete it. While the results showed that perceived support from the organization had a positive effect on overall job satisfaction of the sports editors, work-family conflict and role overload had a negative effect. For this particular subset of editors, however, while they work long hours and must often put work above family, they were generally satisfied in their jobs. A later study by Reinardy (2008) also measured job satisfaction among sports

editors, including the relationship between burnout and overall job satisfaction, among other stress factors. The results showed that sports editors suffered from moderate rates of burnout, but that editors with higher rates of support from their organizations had higher job satisfaction rates and, thus, lower burnout rates.

While job satisfaction studies of print journalists are ample, few researchers have addressed how a more emerging subset of journalists — online journalists — feel about their work. Still fewer have addressed this concept as related to online editors at magazines. However, many aspects of the previously noted studies could be applied to editors at magazines' online editions, including the effects of income, power, prestige, autonomy and creativity, as well as organizational support, workload, individual characteristics of the editor, job characteristics, perceptions of the news organization, impressions of supervisors and their priorities, and burnout.

Summary

While a significant amount of literature related to city magazines chronicles their growth, their role in the media landscape and their content, there are many questions yet to be answered. Because many city magazine-related studies were conducted in the 1990s and earlier, trends have developed that have not been addressed, particularly the rise of the Internet and its impact on this niche of publications. This topic has been applied to newspaper research in a variety of ways, including changes to journalists' roles online, the impact on journalists' gatekeeping practices and changes to journalistic standards and practices. However, much research remains to be conducted applying these questions to magazines and, in particular, city and regional magazines. The purpose of this study is to

follow up on previously conducted research by analyzing the demographics of editors of magazines' online editions, their job duties, their job satisfaction levels, their assessments of the work they have done and their roles as gatekeepers of online content. This research could also reveal demographic information regarding the number of city and regional magazine websites, the types of content being published on the sites and the success of these sites with readers.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of this study is to analyze the characteristics of editors of online editions of city and regional magazines. Specifically, the study employed a survey of these online editors to determine their demographics; characteristics of the websites they oversee; their job duties; their job satisfaction levels; and their opinions of their roles and responsibilities, their job performance and their goals and areas for improvement in their work. The definition of “online editors” as related to this study is an editor at a city or regional magazine who oversees the online edition of his or her respective publication, including duties such as repurposing printed content for the online product, conceiving and/or editing content exclusive to the online edition, assigning content to writers or photographers and overseeing the technical aspects of the website. The study builds on previous research applying the gatekeeping theory of mass communications to online journalists and their editing practices, both in newspapers (Singer, 1997, 2001, 2006; Dimitrova et al., 2003; Cassidy, 2006) and magazines (Yun, Postelnicu, Ramoutar & Kaid, 2007). However, this study seeks to fill a gap in the literature by focusing specifically on editors of online editions of city and regional magazines, who are gatekeepers of online content, and providing a profile of them.

Several studies exist that analyze online editors' and journalists' attitudes toward their role in the newsroom (Singer, 1997); their concerns about small online staff sizes, pressure to make a profit online and how they are perceived by their print co-workers (Singer, Tharp & Haruta, 1999); their potential marketing function online (Brill, 2001); and their approach to online newspaper coverage of a particular event (Singer, 2003).

This study replicated several quantitative survey questions from a 2007 study of job satisfaction among minority advertising professionals (Fullerton, Kendrick & Frazier, 2007) to address online editors' educational backgrounds and professional goals. The study also employed a job satisfaction scale adapted from Lund's (2003) assessment of organizational culture types on job satisfaction among U.S. marketing professionals to measure the degree of satisfaction with employees' work, co-workers, supervision, total pay and promotional opportunities. Additionally, a Likert scale was used to determine the frequency of particular job duties. Lastly, the researcher incorporated other original survey items to determine demographics of online editors and characteristics of their online editions.

To solicit additional feedback from these editors, the survey also took a qualitative approach, employing open-ended survey questions in addition to the close-ended questions. This is an example of a descriptive survey, which Singer (2003) used in her assessment of online newspaper editors' attitudes toward campaign coverage of the 2000 election. As in Singer's study, the close-ended questions sought to provide quantitative data regarding city and regional magazine websites and editors' characteristics and job duties, while the open-ended questions allowed editors to address

their roles and responsibilities, goals for their websites, benefits of online editions of magazines, the importance of particular articles published online, their achievements in their jobs and areas for improvement.

This data were gathered via an online survey (see Table 4), which was e-mailed to online editors at city and regional magazines that are members of the City and Regional Magazine Association (CRMA), a national organization whose purpose is to facilitate professional development and training opportunities for member magazines, as well as encourage the exchange of information and ideas (City and Regional Magazine Association, 2010). An online survey distributed via e-mail was chosen because this approach best fits the survey sample, online editors, who likely use e-mail as a primary communication vehicle (Arant & Anderson, 2001). An online survey was also ideal because the length of an Internet questionnaire has not been shown to affect response rates, as in mail surveys, and if a respondent begins the questionnaire, he or she will likely finish it (Shoemaker & McCombs, 2003). Additionally, online surveys provide quick turnaround times, respondents may give more complete responses to open-ended questions and the cost of the survey may be less than that of a mail survey. The possible disadvantages of online surveys include the fact that they can be easily ignored or deleted, which may contribute to a lower response rate than other methods. Despite these drawbacks, online surveys used in pursuit of gauging online editors' attitudes have been used successfully in several studies (Arant & Anderson, 2001; Singer, 2003, 2006; Cassidy, 2006).

Research Questions

To gauge characteristics of online editors at city and regional magazines, the following research questions were addressed:

RQ 1:

What are the characteristics of city and regional magazines' online editions?

RQ 2:

What are online editors' job duties?

RQ 3:

What are online editors' job satisfaction levels?

RQ4:

What do online editors see as their roles, goals and responsibilities?

RQ5:

What challenges do online editors face?

RQ6:

What types of content do online editors see as most deserving of pride?

Sampling

The respondents for this study consisted of online editors at city and regional magazines in the United States. The publications were limited to members of the City and Regional Magazine Association so that a census could potentially be achieved. Efforts were made to create a comprehensive list of these city and regional magazines. This resulted in a possible sample of up to 67 publications. The sample included magazines in markets of varying sizes located in cities around the country.

Initial research through the City and Regional Magazine Association determined basic attributes of the publications, such as frequency, circulation, median age of readership, average household income of readership, education of readership, subscription price and cover price.

Once the magazines were identified, their websites were accessed to determine the name and contact information for the editorial staff person tasked with managing the publication's online edition. This information was used to compile a listing of e-mail addresses to target for the survey.

The survey period was four weeks. Respondents received an online survey via a link embedded in an introductory e-mail. After two weeks, respondents received a second e-mail, providing an additional opportunity to participate in the survey.

The sample size was 24 valid responses out of a possible population of 67 online editors, for a response rate of approximately 36 percent. Singer (2003) received survey responses from 57 online editors, resulting in a response rate of just over 71 percent, while Arant and Anderson (2001) received responses from 203 editors, for a 30 percent response rate.

Survey Instrument

SurveyMonkey.com was used to create and host the online survey for this study. Some open-ended survey items were replicated from a previous study (Singer, 2003). The survey instrument contained two sections, closed-ended questions and open-ended

questions, and five categories: profile questions, characteristics of website, job duties, job satisfaction and final questions.

The first set of items, partially adapted from the Fullerton, Kendrick & Frazier (2007) study, measured characteristics of online editors, including aspects of their education, gender, age, race/ethnicity, post-collegiate plans and career expectations in the coming years. The second set of items identified qualities of city and regional magazine websites. Editors identified their magazine's print edition circulation, the age of their magazine's website, the number of online users, the size of the online staff and number of freelancers who contribute content, types of content present on their website, how often the site is updated, how much of the magazine's print content is published online and the amount of unique content published online.

The third set of items provided a list of duties typically associated with online editors at newspapers and magazines. Using a five-point Likert scale for frequency, ranging from "Always" to "Never," the online editors identified how often they perform certain duties, ranging from preparing copy from the print edition for the online edition to managing social media efforts to web design and layout to preparing online advertising.

The fourth section of the survey included the job satisfaction survey. Replicating a job satisfaction survey present in Lund's (2003) study, respondents answered five questions regarding their work, co-workers, supervision, pay and promotional opportunities. They ranked their responses to each question on a scale from 1-7, with 1 designating "Strongly disagree" and 7 designating "Strongly agree."

Following the first four sets of survey questions was a section of open-ended questions. These questions, which partially replicated those of Singer (2003), allowed respondents to elaborate on topics such as their ideal job, their current roles and responsibilities, goals for their website, benefits of an online magazine product, the content they see as most important to their online editions, the content about which they are most proud, online successes and areas for improvement.

Data Analysis

The survey was hosted at SurveyMonkey.com, which also collected the data. Once data were collected, the responses were imported into a Microsoft Excel document for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to address RQ 1-3.

To answer RQ 3-6, the open-ended questions were analyzed for common themes related to online editors' job satisfaction, roles and responsibilities at their publications, goals for their websites, content achievements and areas for improvement. To identify these major concepts, the researcher grouped the open-ended responses based on each question and identified common or related ideas.

Limitations

Because the sample size for this study was limited, there was potential for a small response rate, in which case, results could not be applied to the overall population.

Summary

This study aims to assess characteristics of online editors associated with city and regional magazines, who are gatekeepers of online content. The study employed an e-mail survey of these editors to determine their demographics,

characteristics of the websites they oversee, their job duties, their job satisfaction levels and their assessments of their work. The survey for this study consisted of both closed- and open-ended questions to provide general information about demographics, job duties and job satisfaction levels, as well as more detailed explanations of editors' goals, perceived roles and responsibilities, areas for improvement and particular achievements in their work.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Respondent profile

A total of 24 out of 67 online editors and other magazine staff members responsible for overseeing city and regional magazines' digital editions completed an online survey, representing a 36% response rate. This is comparable to a meta-analysis of web- or Internet-based surveys conducted by Cook et al (2000), who reported a mean response rate of 39.6% for 68 surveys reported in 29 studies and 34.6% for 56 surveys reported in 39 studies with no missing data on 16 variables. Fifteen of the respondents were female, two were male and seven did not designate a gender. They ranged in age from 23 to 59, with an average age of 31.6 (eight did not designate an age). The 16 respondents who reported their race/ethnicity were Caucasian.

Nearly half (47.6%) of the respondents were college graduates, with 14.3% attending some graduate school and 33.3% earning a graduate degree. Graduate degrees cited included Master of Science in journalism; Master of Arts in journalism; Master of Science in web design, development and programming; Master of Arts in communication; and graduate certificate in business aspects of publishing. Most (75%)

respondents were recent graduates, having graduated from college in 2002 or later. Fifteen percent of respondents graduated in the 1990s; 5% graduated in the 1980s; and 5% graduated in the 1970s. About half of the respondents (52.4%) majored in journalism in college; 47.6% of respondents did not major in journalism.

Reporting their initial career goals, nearly half (47.4%) of respondents said they planned to work in magazine journalism, followed by 15.8% who planned to work in online journalism, 15.8% who planned to work in newspaper journalism and 5.3% who planned to work in television journalism; another 15.8% of respondents were unsure what they wanted to do after graduation. Additionally, when they first began their careers, 40% of respondents worked in magazine journalism; 30% worked in newspaper journalism; 15% worked in online journalism; 10% worked in television journalism; and 5% worked in public relations. Looking to the future, 47.4% of respondents plan to continue to work in magazine journalism and 47.4% plan to continue to work in online journalism; conversely, 5.3% said they planned to work in newspaper journalism.

Respondents' titles included web editor, associate editor/web editor, managing editor, associate managing editor, digital media director, assistant editor/web editor, online editor, director of online content, food editor/online editor, editor-in-chief, multimedia director and online managing editor. Respondents represented publications of varying sizes in cities and regions around the country. Half (50%) of the respondents represented magazines with a circulation of 50,000 and under, followed by 100,000 and under (27.8%), 200,000 and under (16.7%), and 5,000 and under (5.6%). The time of employment in their current position ranged from six months to six years, with a median

time of employment of 3 years. Annual salaries for respondents ranged from \$19,000 to \$56,000, with an average annual salary (including bonuses) of \$34,850.

Results

Research question 1: What are the characteristics of city and regional magazines' online editions?

Most of the publications represented in the survey (36.8%) have had an online edition for three years or less, followed by more than five years (31.6%), five years or less (21.1%), and one year or less (10.5%). Most of these online editions (38.9%) receive more than 100,000 page views per month, with others receiving 1,000 and under (16.7%), 50,000 and under (16.7%), 100,000 and under (16.7%) and 10,000 and under (11.1%). Most (55%) of these online editions are updated daily, followed by multiple times per day (20%), weekly (15%) and monthly (10%). Additionally, in the majority of cases (84.2%), three or fewer full-time staff members, including editors, advertising sales and technical staff, work strictly on these publications' online editions, followed by six or less (10.5%) and 15 or less (5.3%). Freelance writers also contribute to these online editions. For half of the online editions (50%), three or fewer freelance writers contribute, followed by six or less (35%), 10 or less (10%) and 15 or less (5%).

Table 1 contains a summary of the types of content present on the online editions these editors oversee, with 95% of publications including content repurposed from the traditional publication on the online edition. More than half of respondents (55%) said 50% of the content from their print publications is repurposed for the online edition, with 30% citing that 100% of content is repurposed, followed by 30% (10%) and 10% (5%).

Most respondents (55%) reported that changes are made to print content that is repurposed for the online edition. The online editors also help produce online-exclusive content, with 42.1% of respondents reporting 30 or less articles published each month that are unique to the online edition, followed by 10 or less (31.6%), 50 or less (21.1%) and 100 or less (5.3%).

Research question 2: What are online editors' job duties?

Table 2 contains a summary of the responses regarding online editors' job duties. A total of 94.8% of respondents repurpose copy from the print edition for the online edition. A total of 94.8% of respondents also copy edit content written solely for the online edition, and 88.9% of respondents fact-check content for their publication's online edition. A total of 89.5% of respondents devise and assign articles for the online edition, and 79% of respondents write blogs for the online edition.

Job duties also included managing social media efforts for the publication (100%); managing reader comments on the online edition (89.6%); archiving content from the print edition (89.4%); and tagging articles (89.6%) for search-engine usage.

Duties also extended beyond writing and editing: 83.3% of respondents assist with web design or layout; 72.2% take photos for the online edition; 84.3% edit photos; 47.3% shoot video; 42.1% edit video; 94.9% manage technical details of the online edition; and 89.5% track metrics of the online edition, such as the number of online visitors and readership of certain articles. A total of 42.1% of respondents reported that they help prepare online advertising.

Research question 3: What are online editors' job satisfaction levels?

Online editors completed a job satisfaction scale, adapted from Lund's (2003) assessment of organizational culture types on job satisfaction among U.S. marketing professionals. The scale measured respondents' degree of satisfaction with their work, co-workers, supervision, total pay and promotional opportunities. Respondents ranked their responses to each question on a scale from 1-7, with 1 designating "Strongly disagree" and 7 designating "Strongly agree." Nineteen of the 24 respondents completed the job satisfaction scale.

Table 3 contains summaries of the online editors' responses to the items on the job satisfaction scale. The respondents' overall job satisfaction score, an average of the five items on the seven-point scale, was 4.81.

Providing further insight into their perceptions of their jobs, online editors completed the statement, "My "ideal" job would be one that ... " Responses varied, but three respondents noted that their current jobs resemble or are their ideal jobs.

Other respondents noted an interest in writing more features and participating in other print-focused duties.

... Allows me, as web editor, to focus on conducting more interviews, research and writing and less technical maintenance/production of the site. My goal is to oversee a staff of web editors, designers and producers with the creative direction of the site, using my skills to advance the site while overseeing its maintenance.

... Promotes creativity and is in an environment open to new ideas. Especially in online journalism, it's important to be flexible in changing the content you're producing – adding new content, getting rid of what isn't working. Also, as an online editor, it's

nice to also be included in some of the magazine's operations. I will occasionally write for the print magazine and copy edit almost all of the magazine layouts every month alongside the print editors. This helps me not get lost in my “online world” and stay attuned to our readers and the magazine.

... Working a specific section online and print at a web-inclusive company.

Managing the social media for that section as well (as) editing, writing and assigning for the print magazine in addition to blogging on that topic and creating online-only content to complement print content.

Other respondents aimed to move up the ranks of the print staff, and one desired to eventually serve as a magazine editor-in-chief. One editor expressed a desire to teach grammar and journalism at the high school or college level.

Online editors also responded to the question, “What are three words that you would use to describe working in online journalism?” Seventeen of the online editors responded to the question. More than half (58.8%) of the respondents described working in online journalism as fast or energetic; 47.1% described it as innovative; and 41.2% described it as ongoing. Other descriptions respondents used to describe working in online journalism included: fun (29.4%); challenging (29.4%); connected (23.5%); interesting (17.6%); misunderstood (17.6%); and technical (11.8%).

Research question 4: What do online editors see as their roles, goals and responsibilities?

Respondents provided open-ended responses to the question, “What do you see as your primary role(s) and responsibilities regarding your magazine’s online edition?” and “What are your goals for the online edition of your magazine?”

More than 73% of respondents cited driving traffic to the website as a goal. Respondents noted specific means for encouraging website visits, such as e-newsletters and social media; “making it exciting”; “keeping the site fresh aside from monthly posts of the print edition”; and “giving them (readers) reasons to return to our website often.” Other respondents said the focus on increasing traffic was to drive sales and lead to more revenue via online advertising or sponsorships. One editor also cited the online edition’s role in attracting a new, younger audience.

Other respondents took the focus on traffic a step further with their desire to develop a “destination site” with a regular visitor base.

In the near future, I hope to lead my organization in developing a website that is largely independent of its print publication, offering readers more exclusive information – and on a more daily basis (as opposed to monthly, which corresponds to our print publication’s release). More daily blogs, more daily articles, more photo galleries – more updates to satisfy the web reader’s increasing hunger for material!

To be able to be a part of our readers’ lives more often than once a month, to become a bigger part of the life of this city, to lead and be led toward a good future for this city and its people.

Three respondents also noted the importance of reflecting the print edition of the magazine in the online edition and maintaining the standards of the print publication in its online format.

One major goal is to keep the same standard of content online as we do in the magazine, including writing substantial, creative content; fact-checking; and copy editing everything that goes online.

Other respondents listed more broad-based, strategic responsibilities, such as helping fellow staff members understand and embrace the online format, as well as developing better ways of communicating and collaborating with their co-workers.

My job is to lead our whole staff as we learn to distribute our content in new formats.

Streamlining workflow for both editorial and sales departments.

Reaching out to a younger audience that is less inclined to read the traditional dead-tree edition, interacting more immediately with readers and building brand awareness for all of our titles and the website itself.

Since we are newly moving into what I think of as a “real” website, as opposed to the thin shell we were able to add to what was basically a link to buying a subscription online, I see my role and responsibilities as helping the move from vision to reality as a lively, engaging website and as guiding the changes to our workflow (the same people do the online as do the print work) that will enable us to do more with the same amount of resources.

Research question 5: What challenges do online editors face?

Respondents provided open-ended remarks to the questions, “What are the challenges of an online magazine edition?” and “What would you like to improve?” Respondents listed a variety of challenges they had faced in their work. Several editors mentioned lack of resources as a problem, including staffing issues and publishers’/owners’ unwillingness to fund online-exclusive content. One editor commented, “The web is treated almost as an afterthought.” The fast pace of the web was also noted as a challenge.

Others cited the dynamic between the print and online editions as raising issues. One editor focused on the challenge of maintaining the same standards online as in the print edition. For others, the online edition could potentially discourage readers from purchasing a print edition; conversely, advertisers do not yet see the value in purchasing online advertising.

Information placed on the web is currently (usually) free, a tough sell when it comes to a company’s sister print publications. Why spend \$4.99 at the newsstand when the information is free? Conversely, advertisers find it difficult to justify spending on web advertisements when the click-through ratio is low (and given the philosophy that the “web is free,” why pay so much for a web ad?).

Some editors felt that the online edition is not valued as highly or understood as well as the print edition.

Sometimes you feel like the employees on the print side don’t understand the value or role that an online edition should play. To convince them that it is not just a place to post every story ever written but that the role of an online magazine site has

really changed and people go to it for more than just another way to view the print edition.

Working with print-focused co-workers who are unwilling and/or unable to fully embrace the web. A web editor's day can become completely encompassed by dealing with minutia that section editors can and should be managing as they take ownership of their own verticals. In the same vein, online-only content is often treated as second-tier, which can lead to lesser-quality content being published.

One editor also noted the importance of increasing technical knowledge throughout the staff.

While one editor cited increasing advertising revenue on the web as an area of improvement, another editor expressed frustration with the advertisements that appear on the online edition.

Limit advertisements to a specific size and specific place on the website. Make our logo — not the banner ad — the most prominent thing on our site. ... Stop creating landing pages on topics uninteresting to our readers just because we have an advertiser who is willing to place an ad there.

In 25% of cases, editors commented that they would like to improve the design and functionality of their online editions to better serve readers.

Research question 6: What types of content do online editors see as most deserving of pride?

Respondents provided open-ended remarks to the questions, “What content do you see as most important in your magazine’s online edition?” and “What do you consider your biggest achievement in working with the online edition?”

Overwhelmingly, online editors value online-exclusive content as most important to their magazines’ online editions. Forty percent of editors cited blogs as being popular with readers, with a focus on such topics as local news, style, culture, food and weddings. Blogs were valued among the editors for their ability to regularly attract readers to the online edition, foster a community feel among readers and provide content that is timely and well-written and reported.

As one online editor commented:

Our blogs and regular opinion columns portray a distinct personality — readers can associate with the person behind the article — in a brief, easy-to-read format. It’s uncomfortable to stare at a computer screen for hours, so a 200-word blog post written in a conversational style is much more valuable to a reader as opposed to the lengthy 2,000-word history feature, which requires more time and commitment (and uncomfortable staring-into-the-screen). Readers are more likely to connect with (and respond to) a controversial blog post than to a drawn-out article; the more they converse with the personality behind the opinion, the more they check in to review the ensuing dialogue, and the more likely they are to continue following the blogger. Regularly updated material fosters regular readers by nature.

More than 26% of online editors also cited reader-service articles, such as event and restaurant listings, city guides and dining articles, as being important content on their

online editions.

Service pieces are extremely important because it becomes evergreen content that readers access again and again.

Nearly 43% of online editors reported that they have increased traffic to their online editions through such means as increased coverage of local news published in a more timely fashion than the print edition; online articles that bring broader perspectives to content in the print magazine; videos; daily newsletters; and connecting with readership and building community through social media.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Summary

This study aimed to determine a profile of online editors at city and regional magazines. Respondents, who completed an online survey, represented a purposive sample of online editors at magazines that are members of the City and Regional Magazine Association. The results from the survey were used to determine some of the characteristics of these magazine staff members, including demographic information; the types of content published on their online editions; their job duties; their job-satisfaction levels; and their assessments of their primary roles and responsibilities, goals for their work, challenges they face and the content about which they are most proud and which is most important to their online editions.

The survey revealed much demographic information about online editors at city and regional magazines. Fifteen of the respondents were female, two were male and seven did not designate a gender. They ranged in age from 23 to 59, with a median age of 27.5. All respondents who designated a race/ethnicity were Caucasian. Respondents had a variety of job titles, from web editor to digital media director to multimedia director.

They also represented publications of varying sizes in cities and regions around the country, and many had been in their jobs for only a few years.

Assessing their education profile, nearly half of the editors were college graduates, and more than half had majored in journalism; additionally, more than 30% had earned graduate degrees, most in journalism or related fields. These editors were also primarily recent college graduates, with 75% reporting to have graduated from college in 2002 or later. Editors shared their initial career goals upon graduating from college as well, with nearly half desiring to work in magazine journalism. Some of the editors also planned to work in online or newspaper journalism. Once they began their careers, 40% of the editors began working in magazine journalism immediately, and some began with careers in newspaper, online or television journalism. Considering the future, nearly half of the editors plan to continue to work in magazine journalism.

While nearly 40% of the publications represented in the survey have online editions that are less than three years old, 55% of the online editions are updated daily. Even with this consistent workload, in more than 80% of cases, three or fewer full-time staff members work exclusively on the magazine's online edition. Overall, these editors tended to be young and low-paid, with an average annual salary (including bonuses) of \$34,850. This is consistent with literature related to online editors at newspapers (Singer, Tharp & Haruta, 1999; Brill, 2001), which reported that online publications tended to hire new graduates, although online staffs were typically much smaller than print staffs, and more young journalists were working online than in the industry overall.

Many online editions represented in the survey are continuing the focus of early manifestations of city and regional magazine websites, which were largely limited to repurposing content from the print editions on their online editions (Kinsman, 2007). These online editions have also evolved, however, offering online-exclusive content, such as blogs, a digital edition of the print magazine, videos, photo galleries and databases or directories.

Discussion

In many cases, online editors are similar in the types of duties they undertake, such as repurposing copy from the print edition, editing online-exclusive content, fact-checking content, devising and assigning articles for the online edition and writing blogs. Online editors also embrace roles beyond those of their print counterparts, such as web design and layout, photography, videography and even preparing online advertising. Even with these diverse job functions, a few editors noted the importance of maintaining the same standards of excellence in the online edition as in the print magazine. This is consistent with research related to online editors at newspapers (Singer, 2003), who maintain similar goals as print journalists but also focus on creating complementary online material.

Respondents also provided insight into their levels of job satisfaction. Considering the work of their job, most respondents provided generally favorable responses. More than half of the respondents also reported to be satisfied with their co-workers and supervisors. The levels of job satisfaction dipped slightly in regard to salary and promotional opportunities. However, in their open-ended responses to questions

regarding job satisfaction, a few of the editors reported that they are currently working in their ideal jobs. Others shared such desires as writing more features, focusing more on writing and research than on the technical aspects of the website, being included in aspects of the print magazine operations and moving into higher editorial positions at their publications.

These generally positive responses in regard to job satisfaction seem to support the literature (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986), which reported that while no significant differences in job-satisfaction levels existed across types of media, such as television, radio and daily newspapers, younger journalists working on magazine staffs reported higher job-satisfaction levels than journalists in general. The researchers attributed this trend to the fact that these young magazine journalists had higher incomes than their print journalism colleagues. Later research by Weaver & Wilhoit (2002) reported an increase in job satisfaction among journalists, with almost 84% reporting to be “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their jobs. This study appears to support this finding, as, in the areas of satisfaction with the work of their jobs, co-workers and supervisors, respondents provided generally favorable responses. It was only in the areas of salary and promotional opportunities that satisfaction decreased somewhat, with mean scores of 3.74 and 4.32, respectively. Weaver & Wilhoit also found that journalists’ perceptions that their managers or owners focused on quality journalism was a factor in higher levels of job satisfaction. The open-ended responses to this survey seemed to support this finding, as several editors cited the importance of their editors, owners and print-focused co-workers understanding the value of the online edition and their work to make it viable.

These online editors also face a variety of pressures. They are focused on driving increased traffic to their online editions and, in some cases, aim to make their online editions “destination websites” that readers will visit again and again. With this goal also comes a focus, sometimes from publishers and sometimes from the editors themselves, on earning revenue from the site via online advertising and sponsorships. However, while some editors focus on increasing traffic to their online editions, others worried that a dynamic online edition could attract readers away from the print edition. This is a concern reflected in the literature (Simon & Kadiyali, 2006), although researchers have concluded that online editions can serve as complementary products to print editions, rather than cannibalizing content from the print editions. Alongside these challenges, editors also face technical difficulties, pressure to create timely and fresh content, small staff sizes and print counterparts who may not see the value in the online edition, challenges also facing online editors at other general-interest magazines (Consterdine, 2007).

Ultimately, online editors place value in content that is published exclusively in their online editions, such as blogs, which can create a sense of community among readers and present information on a variety of topics. This content can also be more timely than content in the print edition while remaining as well written and reported as print articles. Online editors also appreciate the opportunity the web offers to provide service editorial that readers want, such as dining reviews and restaurant and entertainment listings. Similarly, Singer’s 2003 assessment of online newspaper editors found that they appreciated the opportunity the web offered to answer readers’ questions

in depth without space limitations and provide more timely content than the print edition. These editors also valued the ability of the web to create an open exchange of information with readers. For the online editors in this study, blogs and social media provide a further opportunity to connect with readers and encourage the development of an online readership community.

Implications

Online editors are a new breed of magazine editor whose job duties and responsibilities combine those of the print journalists who preceded them and new duties that are changing and evolving on a daily basis. While newspaper staff members have been working to develop online versions of their publications for several years, magazines are fairly new entrants into the online arena. As such, the editors tasked with managing these publications' online editions must employ the traditional skills of print-focused magazine editors, such as devising engaging editorial and maintaining high-quality editing standards, with a new set of responsibilities, such as managing their publications' social media efforts and crafting blogs. City and regional magazines, in particular, are just beginning to explore the potential of their online editions, which offer opportunities to engage with readers on a more consistent basis than a monthly magazine allows, as well as create a platform for entirely new content not appearing in the print editions.

While much research related to city and regional magazines exists, it has largely been limited to the roots of these publications, their growth and development and their attributes. City and regional magazines' entry into the online medium presents an entirely

new realm of research potential, including the ways city and regional magazines are using the web to reach readers and expand their brands, the types of content they are publishing online and the success they are having with their online pursuits. The editors who oversee these publications are also worthy of study. While the impact editors and publishers have on their city and regional magazines has been assessed, online editors are likely to exert an equally significant influence on the publications they oversee, in this case, the online editions. In many ways, these editors serve as gatekeepers of content, with most of the online editors in this study reporting that they copy edit and fact-check content written exclusively for their online editions, as well as devise story concepts and assign articles to writers for the online edition.

Online editors also perform reporting and writing duties for the online editions, with most writing blogs — a key means of sharing content, as online editors also cited their online editions' blogs as sources of pride. These blogs cover a variety of topics, from news to dining to weddings, and, the editors reported, serve as a more consistent way for readers to interact with the publications. Editors also noted that they value quality journalism in their online content, articles that are well written and reported and enlighten and engage readers. Beyond traditional articles, however, the editors see the potential for social media as a means of connecting with readers, and many cited social-media posts, such as Facebook or Twitter, as sources of pride as well. These results could potentially indicate the types of content city and regional magazine publishers, as a whole, value on their online editions — exclusive articles that do not appear in the print edition, thereby attracting readers beyond the printed page to the online realm, and social-

media accounts that encourage readers to interact with the publication on a consistent basis, providing feedback and insight.

It appears from the findings of this study that online editors of city and regional magazines share many similarities. The editors participating in this study tended to be female and Caucasian. They were also young with college degrees, with some earning graduate-level degrees. They have many of the same job duties and oversee and create many of the same types of content for their online editions. They also see themselves as having similar roles and responsibilities in their workplaces, with goals such as increasing traffic to their online editions and creating a sense of community among their readers. They also value the opportunity to create content that will entice readers, whether by repurposing print content for the web or creating web-exclusive content. These results imply that although “online editor” represents a fairly new position at a city and regional magazine, there is consistency in how these positions have developed. Magazines seem to be seeking out similar types of professionals with similar types of skills and backgrounds. These online editors are also coming to their publications with a defined interest in magazine and, in some cases, online journalism, giving them additional insight into a new arena for this genre of publications.

The similarities in these editors’ demographic qualities could have an impact on how they perform their jobs. Because they are young and many are fairly recent college graduates, they may still be developing their writing and editing skills, which may affect the content that is ultimately published. Additionally, because many of these editors work with small online staffs, they may be making many of the final decisions related to their

online editions, despite their relatively few years of experience. Unlike younger counterparts on the print side of magazines, who benefit from upper levels of editors who make decisions related to content, online editors may have more freedom to determine how content is ultimately presented. Lastly, as the research revealed many of the same types of content presented on city and regional magazine online editions, online editors may be looking to one another's products for ideas on features that will be most appealing to their readers. Or, conversely, because print versions of city and regional magazines, particularly those that are members of the City and Regional Magazine Association, include many of the same types of content, their online editions could simply be reflecting that trend.

These online editors are also similar in the challenges they face. Many have small staffs and limited resources. They face pressure to accommodate advertisers, as their publications work to determine how to earn revenue from an online edition. Some have frustrations with print counterparts who do not understand the value of the work they are doing and impact of offering an online edition. They also desire to create online editions that are well designed and functional, in the midst of advancing technologies, and are exploring new advancements, such as mobile applications, to share their publications' content, extend their brands and reach new readers. These pressures pose risks for online editors.

One study (Reinardy, 2007) showed that role overload (a general feeling of having too much work to do and not enough time to complete it) can affect job satisfaction negatively among newspaper sports editors. Additionally, the same

researcher (Reinardy, 2008) in a later study found that burnout and stress can also affect job satisfaction; however, higher rates of support from the overall organization can help to lessen these negative effects. While online editors at city and regional magazines have different job duties and focuses than newspaper sports editors, they face similar high-pressure situations — more immediate deadlines than their print counterparts; fewer staff members working on the online product than the print product; and job duties that range from writing and editing to web layout to managing social media to editing photography and even video. As such, while many of the editors in this study are new in their careers, they may face stress and burnout in later years. In particular, several of the editors in this study cited frustration with publishers or print editors who do not understand the value of the online product, which could contribute to stress, burnout and low job satisfaction. While these editors appear to be self-driven and passionate about creating dynamic online editions, they also appear to value the input and support of their print-focused peers in creating an online edition in which the entire magazine staff can take pride.

Online editors seem to have generally favorable views of their jobs, including the work they do, their co-workers and their supervisors. More variation in satisfaction existed, however, when editors considered the areas of their jobs with which they were less satisfied — their pay and promotional opportunities. Some editors desired opportunities to move into higher editorial positions — including editor-in-chief of a magazine — or to at least take on additional editorial-oriented responsibilities. Additionally, the fact that many of these editors are young and/or recent college graduates could contribute to that fact that they desire more pay and additional

opportunities for advancement. Overall, it is encouraging that while editors cited a variety of pressures and challenges associated with their jobs, they also seemed to be generally satisfied, which may result in an increased effort to improve in their jobs and create high-quality, exciting content that will attract readers and increase the public's interest in their respective publications.

As the Internet continues to affect the magazine industry, online editors will take on an even more important role. Currently, these editors appear to be carving out a niche for themselves, performing many of the traditional duties of journalists while also taking on entirely new duties never before seen in magazines. Yet, while their duties continue to evolve, these editors have many of the same goals for the digital editions they oversee. They aim to drive traffic to their sites through e-newsletters, social media and online-exclusive content, with some desiring to create "destination sites" that existing readers and new readers alike will seek out to learn more about their cities.

However, while they are focused on new journalism trends such as social media, blogs and video, they are also dedicated to reflecting the standards of the print edition through a commitment to accuracy, fairness and high-quality writing and reporting. Beyond their responsibilities to the online edition itself, these editors are dedicated to sharing the benefits of the online edition with their co-workers, as well as developing more efficient ways to communicate and collaborate with others on their staffs. Because these editors are dedicated to seeing their online editions succeed, they have much to teach print-focused magazine journalists about what may become the future of their publications. As the Internet becomes an increasingly accepted mechanism for delivering

information, online editions may take on even greater roles for city and regional magazines. As such, the knowledge these editors possess could be vital in helping magazines make the transition to a digital-only era.

Despite their ideas for improving their online editions and attracting more readers, online editors have faced challenges. Specifically, some cited their publishers' and owners' unwillingness to fund online-exclusive content. Some feel that the online edition is treated as an afterthought. Additionally, some editors are concerned that a continually updated online edition could dissuade readers from reading the print magazine. Additionally, the advertisers on whom magazines are partly dependent to continue publishing may not yet see the value of advertising online, creating a further divide between the print and online editions. If these challenges continue, online editors run the risk of becoming disillusioned and frustrated in their positions. This could be exacerbated if they are not provided with advancement opportunities or salary increases to match their experience levels and contributions to their publications. As such, these online editors may seek to use their skills elsewhere or invest their abilities in print-focused jobs or other fields entirely.

To prevent this from occurring, magazine staffs may need to work to better connect their print and online divisions, enhancing communication and relationships between the two parts of their staffs and ensuring they complement each other. Because online editors are focused on repurposing print articles, implying reader demand for this content, while also developing online-exclusive features, they are dependent on the print editors. Likewise, the print editors can potentially attract even more readers to their work

if the online edition is successful. Additionally, online editors can enhance this work by putting it in an online-friendly format, adding links and videos, and promoting it via social media, e-newsletters and other means. Thus, an environment promoting mutual respect is paramount. Reassuringly, although they face pressures and challenging aspects of their jobs may affect their levels of job satisfaction, 47.4% of respondents in this study said they planned to continue to work in magazine journalism, and 47.4% planned to continue to work in online journalism, indicating that these editors are dedicated to magazine and the online format and plan to continue to use their skills there.

Online editors are also dedicated to creating a community among their readers. While, in the past, reader feedback may have come to magazines via letters to the editor or direct contact with staff members, readers can now interact with magazine staff members and one another via an online edition. They can comment on and respond to articles, take online polls and communicate via Facebook and Twitter. Additionally, online editors cite blogs as a way for readers to get to know a writer through his or her subject matter and then react to that commentary by commenting online and responding to one another's comments. Increasingly, these readers seem to appreciate the opportunity to interact with their favorite magazines, commenting on the writing, sharing articles with friends and, in some cases, sharing story ideas with the magazine. Online editors also cite the value of reader-service articles, such as event and restaurant listings and dining articles, which become features on online editions that readers access over and over and use to more effectively navigate their cities.

Online editors' focus on serving readers has the potential to positively affect their publications. While many of these magazines have dedicated readership bases for the print editions, they may have the potential to attract an entirely new demographic through their online editions. Some online editors espoused the potential of their online editions to attract younger readers, and their focus on reaching readers through blogs, social media and other means could satisfy this goal. In 1993, Hynds reported that city magazines cater to a well-educated, upper-middle-class and most often white readership, and Schlosberg, (1986) reported that 15% of city magazine readers are age 65 and older, with a median age of 45 in 1985. Accordingly, a dynamic online edition could help to broaden these demographics, attracting younger and potentially more diverse readers. These readers, because of the online edition, may also seek out the traditional magazine product, whether in print or a digital format, such as an online digital edition or mobile-application edition.

Lastly, as many of the publications targeted for this study employed online-specific editors or even multiple online-focused staff members, there appears to be potential for colleges and universities to train this type of journalist. These editors value and use many traditional journalistic skills, such as news judgment, writing and editing, but they also must learn new technologies, such as the technical aspects of web pages, web design, photography and video, social media and other skills. As such, related classes in university journalism programs could help prepare aspiring journalists for online opportunities in magazine, particularly city and regional magazines, as jobs in this genre of publications have the potential to grow.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study presents only a narrow portrait of the online editors who are working at city and regional magazines. Much research remains to be done in reference to this subset of magazine editors. Future studies could focus on these editors' roles as gatekeepers of content for their publications' online editions, including the potential influence they exert via their decision-making when selecting content to repurpose for the print edition and how they edit that content so that it is effective in an online format. They also make decisions related to the types of online-exclusive content they choose to assign to freelance writers, and future research could reveal how they edit and prepare that content for publication and whether differences exist between editing this content and editing content from the print edition. Additionally, research is merited in the area of ethical challenges these editors face when working with an online-focused product. These editors have to make many quick decisions that perhaps their print counterparts do not face in an attempt to present continually changing content on their magazines' online editions. As such, they may face different and faster-paced decision-making processes than print-focused magazine editors.

Additionally, as these editors have a variety of job duties, many are involved with the advertising presented on the online edition, which presents ethical questions related to the separation of advertising and editorial in a journalistic environment. Future research could also focus on characteristics of online editors at city and regional magazines that are not members of the City and Regional Magazine Association.

Limitations

While this study attracted a response rate of 36%, it represented just 24 editors, a fairly small sample. Additionally, the respondents were limited to online editors associated with magazines that are members of the City and Regional Magazine Association, representing a purposive rather than random sample, so findings cannot be applied to online editors at all city and regional magazines in the United States.

Additionally, respondents were not required to complete all of the questions on the online survey, resulting in some gaps in the information collected. In particular, only 19 of the respondents completed the job-satisfaction survey. As a result, the researcher was unable to use statistical tests to determine whether a relationship exists between editors' job-satisfaction levels and job duties and whether job duties and job-satisfaction levels vary significantly according to different sizes of city and regional magazines and other demographic variables, as outlined in the introduction to this study.

Concluding Statement

As the web continues to affect traditional media, its impact on magazines will remain an area of interest. Although city and regional magazines are just beginning to explore the potential of the web to expand their publications' influence and brand, the editors who oversee these online editions have significant goals and ambitions for ways the Internet can positively influence their publications. While these editors face challenges, they are also learning skills that will remain important in the coming years, and their work is having a distinct influence on their publications and the readers dedicated to learning more about their cities and regions.

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Table 1
Content Present on Online Editions

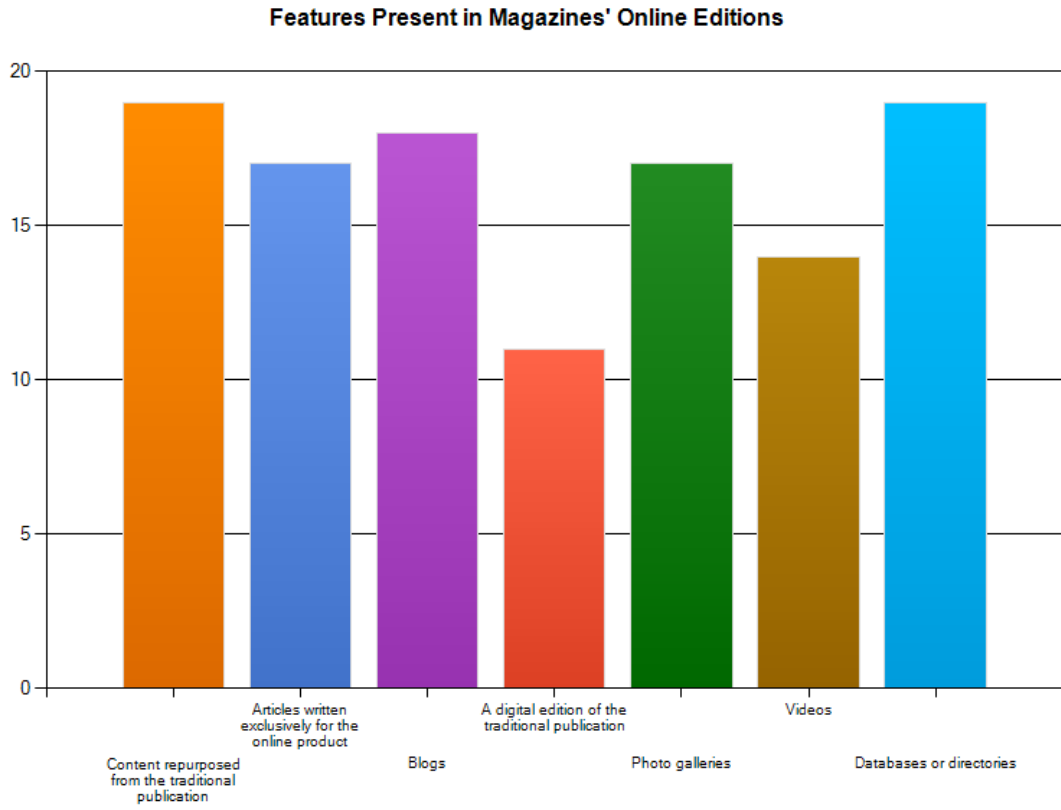


Table 2
Job Duties of Online Editors at City and Regional Magazines
(n=24)

Does your job involve ...*

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very Often	Always
Manage social media	0**	0	2	3	14
Copy edit content written for the online edition	1	2	1	3	12
Tag articles	2	0	4	4	9
Manage reader comments	2	1	3	4	9
Repurpose copy from the print edition	1	3	3	3	9
Write copy for the online edition	1	1	3	6	8
Blog	4	0	4	3	8
Devise and assign articles for the online edition	2	2	4	3	8
Archive content from the print edition	2	2	5	3	7
Fact check content for the online edition	2	2	4	3	7
Track metrics	2	2	4	5	6
Web design and layout	3	2	6	1	6
Manage	1	4	6	4	4

technical details						
Edit photos	3	5	3	4	4	4
Edit video	11	1	3	2	2	2
Prepare online advertising	11	1	2	3	2	2
Take photos	5	6	6	0	1	1
Shoot video	10	2	3	2	2	2

* The scale ranged from Always to Never.

** Numbers are respondents.

Table 3
Job Satisfaction of Online Editors at City and Regional Magazines
(n=24)

	Strongly Agree	6	5	4	3	2	Strongly Disagree	Mean
All in all, I am satisfied with the work of my job.	31.6	36.8	21.1	5.3	5.3	0	0	5.84
All in all, I am satisfied with my co-workers.	26.3	31.6	0	26.3	0	5.3	0	5.42
All in all, I am satisfied with the supervision.	15.8	21.1	15.8	26.3	10.5	10.5	0	4.74
All in all, I am satisfied with my pay.	10.5	10.5	21.1	10.5	10.5	21.1	15.8	3.74
All in all, I am satisfied with the promotional opportunities.	15.8	21.1	10.5	15.8	10.5	21.1	5.3	4.32
Overall Job Satisfaction								4.81

Appendix A Survey Instrument

1. INTRODUCTION

Graduate Research Study
Mass Communications/ Media Management Program
Primary Researcher: Joy Jenkins, Oklahoma State University

Study Purpose

The purpose of this research is to assess the characteristics of online editors at city and regional magazines.

Procedure

Proceeding with the web-based survey will imply your consent to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you will be directed to the survey page upon confirming your consent.

The questionnaire will ask for information including your demographic information, characteristics of your magazine's online edition, your job duties, your job satisfaction level, your professional achievements, your professional goals and what you see as areas for improvement.

The online questionnaire will take about 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

Risks of Participation

There are no known risks associated with the project that are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits

The body of research associated with online editors and their attitudes has largely been limited to studies associated with newspapers. This study seeks to add to the literature associated with online editors and apply it to city and regional magazines. Additionally, much of the literature associated with city and regional magazines has explored the content and influence of their print editions. Conversely, this study aims to address characteristics of their online counterparts and describe the editors of these online editions, thus filling a gap in the literature and providing insight into the continued evolution of this genre of publications. Research participants can also view the completed research project, if they so choose.

Confidentiality

All data collected during this study will be completely confidential and will be stored by the researcher on a personal computer. Data will be initially collected via the online survey provider SurveyMonkey. The data will be transferred to an Excel spreadsheet for analysis; the spreadsheet will reside on the researcher's personal computer and be destroyed after 18 months. Although quotes from research participants may be used in the final report, they will not be attributable to the participants.

Access to the data will be given only to the researcher and individuals responsible for research oversight. Data will be reported using statistical analysis of the information.

The OSU IRB has the authority to inspect consent records and data files to assure compliance with approved procedures.

Contacts

Joy Jenkins
Primary Investigator, OSU Graduate Student
918-398-3330

Dr. Jami Fullerton
Professor, OSU
918-594-8579

Please direct questions about this research to Joy Jenkins or Dr. Jami Fullerton.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research volunteer, please contact Dr. Sheila Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or at irb@okstate.edu.

Participant Rights

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may discontinue your involvement at any time without reprisal or penalty.

Consent: I have read and fully understand the consent form. I understand that my participation is voluntary. By clicking below, I am indicating that I freely and voluntarily agree to participate in this study and I also acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

It is recommended that you print a copy of this consent page for your records before you begin the survey by clicking below.

1. Please indicate whether you agree or do not agree to participate in this survey.

- Agree to participate
- Do not agree to participate

2. EDUCATION

1. Highest level of education you have achieved:

- some college
- college graduate
- some graduate school
- graduate degree (please specify degree type and graduation date)

Graduate degree

2. Name of the school/university you attended:

3. When did you graduate from college?

Graduation year Year

4. Were you a journalism major or minor in college?

- Journalism Major
- Journalism Minor
- I did not study journalism

5. If journalism was not your major, in which academic area was your major?

- marketing
- business
- arts
- public relations
- advertising

Other (please specify)

3. CAREER GOALS

1. When I first began my career, I planned to (check one):

- work in the field of newspaper journalism
- work in the field of magazine journalism
- work in the field of online journalism
- work in the field of television journalism
- work in the field of public relations
- work in the field of advertising
- I really wasn't sure what to do

Other (please specify)

2. When I first started my career, I did:

- work in the field of newspaper journalism
- work in the field of magazine journalism
- work in the field of online journalism
- work in the field of television journalism
- work in the field of public relations
- work in the field of advertising

Other (please specify)

3. In the coming years, I plan to:

- work in the field of newspaper journalism
- work in the field of magazine journalism
- work in the field of online journalism
- work in the field of television journalism
- work in the field of public relations
- work in the field of advertising

Other (please specify)

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF ONLINE EDITION

The following questions assess your current job and duties.

Note: For this study, "online edition" is defined as a website associated with your publication, not a digital edition of your publication.

1. Name of company/organization:

2. Job title:

3. City:

4. Number of years at this job:

5. What is the latest figure on average circulation for your traditional magazine product?

- 5,000 and under
- 50,000 and under
- 100,000 and under
- 200,000 and under
- more than 200,000

6. How long has your publication had an online edition?

- 1 year or less
- 3 years or less
- 5 years or less
- More than 5

7. How many page views does your online edition attract each month?

- 1,000 and under
- 10,000 and under
- 50,000 and under
- 100,000 and under
- More than 100,000

5. CHARACTERISTICS OF ONLINE EDITION CONT.

1. How often is your online edition updated?

- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily
- Multiple times per day

2. How many full-time staff members work strictly on your online edition (including editors, advertising sales and technical staff)?

- 3 or less
- 6 or less
- 10 or less
- 15 or less
- More than 15

3. How many freelance writers contribute to your online edition?

- 3 or less
- 6 or less
- 10 or less
- 15 or less
- More than 15.

4. Which of the following features are present in your magazine's online edition (choose all that apply)?

- Content repurposed from the traditional publication
- Articles written exclusively for the online product
- Blogs
- A digital edition of the traditional publication
- Photo galleries
- Videos
- Databases or directories

Other (please specify)

5. Approximately how much of your magazine's print content is repurposed for the online edition?

- 10 percent
- 30 percent
- 50 percent
- 100 percent

6. Are changes made to repurposed print content?

- Yes
- No

7. How many articles do you publish each month that are unique to the online edition?

- 10 or less
- 30 or less
- 50 or less
- 100 or less
- More than 100

6. JOB DUTIES

The following statements address the particular duties you complete as part of your job. Please answer each question using the following scale: Always, Very Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never.

Does your job involve:

1. repurposing copy from the print edition for the online edition

Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

2. writing copy for the online edition

Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

3. copy editing content written solely for the online edition

Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

4. fact checking content for the online edition

Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

5. devising and assigning articles for the online edition

Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

6. blogging

Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

7. managing social media efforts for your publication (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

8. managing reader comments on the online edition

Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

9. archiving content from the print edition

Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

10. tagging articles

Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

11. web design and layout

Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

12. taking photos for the online edition

- Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

13. editing photos for the online edition

- Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

14. shooting video for the online edition

- Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

15. editing video for the online edition

- Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

16. managing technical details of the online edition

- Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

17. tracking metrics of the online edition

- Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

18. preparing online advertising

- Always Very Often Sometimes Rarely Never

7. JOB SATISFACTION

1. The following statements describe your feelings toward certain job-related issues regarding the organization for which you currently work. For each, please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the statement by checking the appropriate number on the scale.

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
All in all, I am satisfied with the work of my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All in all, I am satisfied with my co-workers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All in all, I am satisfied with the supervision.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All in all, I am satisfied with my pay.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All in all, I am satisfied with the promotional opportunities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. My "ideal" job would be one that ...

2. What are three words that you would use to describe working in online journalism?

3. What do you see as your primarily role(s) and responsibilities regarding your magazine's online edition?

4. What are your goals for the online edition of your magazine?

5. What are the benefits of an online magazine edition?

6. What are the challenges of an online magazine edition?

7. What content do you see as most important in your magazine's online edition, and why?

8. What content are you most proud of, and why?

9. What do you consider your biggest achievement in working with the online edition?

10. What would you like to improve?

9. FINAL QUESTIONS

Final demographic questions to end the survey.

1. Sex:

- Female
- Male

2. Age:

3. Race/ethnicity:

- White
- Non Hispanic
- Hispanic
- Native American
- Asian American
- Pacific Islander
- African American

Other (please specify)

4. Annual salary (include bonuses):

Appendix B IRB Approval Letter

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Thursday, January 20, 2011
IRB Application No AS116
Proposal Title: Characteristics of Online Editors at City and Regional Magazines

Reviewed and
Processed as: Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 1/19/2012

Principal
Investigator(s):

Joy Jenkins	Jami Armstrong Fullerton
1221 N. Aster Ave	OSU-Tulsa 700 N. Greenwor
Broken Arrow, OK 74012	Tulsa, OK 74106

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Joy Michelle Jenkins

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: CHARACTERISTICS OF ONLINE EDITORS AT CITY AND REGIONAL
MAGAZINES

Major Field: Mass Communications

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on Dec. 27, 1980, the daughter of Jim and Gayle Morris.

Education: Graduated from Putnam City High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in May 2000; received Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism from The University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, in May 2004. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Mass Communications at Oklahoma State University in May 2011.

Experience: Served as an intern in the features department of *The Oklahoman*, May to August 2003; served as copy editor of the *Oklahoma Gazette*, May 2004 to March 2005; served as assistant editor and city editor of *TulsaPeople* Magazine, April 2005 to May 2009; currently serving as senior editor of *TulsaPeople* Magazine, May 2009 to present.

Professional Memberships: Society of Professional Journalists, Association for Women in Communications.

Name: Joy Jenkins

Date of Degree: May 2011

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: CHARACTERISTICS OF ONLINE EDITORS AT CITY AND REGIONAL MAGAZINES

Pages in Study: 101

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Mass Communications

Continually updated websites have become necessary additions to traditionally print publications, such as newspapers and magazines. In recent years, a particular subset of magazines, city and regional magazines, has followed this trend, creating online editions with much of the same content as found in their print editions. Many of these magazines have also hired web-focused editors to oversee their online editions. This study profiles online editors at city and regional magazines that are members of the City and Regional Magazine Association. A survey of these online editors reveals that they share many similarities. Their online editions have many of the same types of content, including articles repurposed from the print edition, blogs and directories and databases, and these online editors have many of the same job duties, including managing social media, copy editing articles and writing blogs. They are also satisfied in their jobs and see themselves as having similar roles and responsibilities in their workplaces, such as increasing traffic to their online editions. These online editors are similar in the pressures they face as well, with small staff sizes, limited resources and pressure to accommodate advertisers. Overall, these online editors aim to create online editions that are well-designed and functional and present exclusive, dynamic content that will attract readers.