

CURRICULUM CHANGE IN UNDERGRADUATE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS  
PROGRAMS: HOW STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMS ARE ADAPTING  
TO 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY MEDIA

A Dissertation submitted to the  
Graduate College  
of Marshall University  
In partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education

In  
Curriculum and Instruction  
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May 2018

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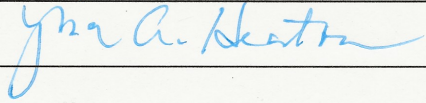
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Project Title: Curriculum Change in Undergraduate Strategic Communications Programs: How Strategic Communications Programs are Adapting to 21st Century Media

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04/17/2018

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As with any endeavor of this magnitude, the resulting work is never accomplished alone. I want to take this opportunity to thank my committee for your direction and guidance through this process and for faithfully and honestly evaluating my work. To Dr. Rudy Pauley, who can now officially retire, I am grateful that you have stuck with me. To Dr. Ron Childress, I am thankful for your dedication to procedure and detailed direction on research design and evaluation. To Dr. Chris Swindell, my colleague, I am thankful for a listening ear and encouraging words when I needed direction from someone in mass communications.

A special appreciation goes to Dr. Lisa Heaton, my committee chair. You inspire me by your energy, your brilliance and your dedication to your students. You never gave up on me, gave me explicit and organized direction and even chided me when my excuses got too long and too many. Without your belief in me and knowledge of the dissertation process, I would never have made it through this dissertation or completed this degree.

On a more personal level, I would like to thank my mother, Wanda Gay Bird. She has walked with me every step of the way providing childcare so I could attend class and work on research and excellent editing on this document as well as other research documents and presentations. Without your support, encouragement and belief in me, I could not have accomplished this task. To my husband, Mitch, who has allowed me to work numerous nights with the light on while he tried to sleep, helped manage a household and children around class schedules and research work, and tolerated much general complaining and crankiness, thank you for your love. To my three children, Danielle, Drew and especially Dianna, who were 15, 13 and 3 when I began this process and have grown up knowing no other life than a mother, who is working on a doctorate, thanks for your love, support and forgiveness.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	viii
List of Tables .....	ix
Abstract.....	x
Chapter 1.....	1
Introduction .....	1
Background.....	2
Problem Statement.....	8
Purpose of the Study.....	9
Research Questions.....	11
Operational Definitions.....	11
Significance of the Study .....	12
Delimitations of the Study .....	13
Conclusion .....	15
Chapter 2.....	17
Review of Literature.....	17
The Impact of New and Social Media on Mass Communications.....	19
The Evolution of Mass Communication Education.....	30
Status of Social Media and New Media Education .....	45
Curriculum Change.....	56

Conclusion .....	65
Chapter 3.....	67
Methods .....	67
Theoretical Framework.....	67
Research Goals.....	69
Research Design.....	70
Population and Sample .....	73
Instrumentation .....	75
Data Analysis .....	76
Limitations of the Study.....	77
Reliability and Validity.....	78
Conclusion .....	80
CHAPTER 4 .....	81
FINDINGS .....	81
Population and Sample .....	81
Research Questions.....	86
Conclusion .....	113
CHAPTER 5 .....	114
CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION.....	114
Summary of Purpose.....	114

Summary of Method .....	114
Summary of Population and Samples .....	116
Conclusions and Discussion .....	117
Implications of Study .....	134
Recommendations for Future Research .....	136
References .....	137
Appendix A .....	146
Office of Research Integrity Approval Letter .....	146
Appendix B .....	147
Content Analysis Coding Book .....	147
Appendix C .....	154
Content Analysis Coding Form .....	154
Appendix D .....	155
Interview Question Guide .....	155
Appendix E .....	157
New Media Course Titles .....	157
Appendix F .....	159
Social Media Course Titles .....	159



## LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure 1. 2012-2013 Enrollment by Sequence</i> .....	31
<i>Figure 2. Enrollment Comparison of Specializations</i> .....	32
<i>Figure 3. 2013 Enrollments by Specialization</i> .....	37
<i>Figure 4. Enrollment by Semester and Specialization</i> .....	43
<i>Figure 5. The Talent Gap</i> .....	55
<i>Figure 6. Model of Strategic Communications Curriculum</i> .....	62
<i>Figure 7. Strategic Communications Curriculum Development Cycle</i> .....	135

## LIST OF TABLES

<i>Table 1. Content Analysis Population and Sample Frequency.....</i>	82
<i>Table 2. Institution Description .....</i>	83
<i>Table 3. Number and Type of Courses Reviewed in the Content Analysis .....</i>	84
<i>Table 4. Interview Sample Description.....</i>	85
<i>Table 5. Frequency of Concept Mentions by Program.....</i>	86
<i>Table 6. New Media Course Titles.....</i>	87
<i>Table 7. Social Media Course Titles.....</i>	88
<i>Table 8. Social Media Concept or Skill Mentions in Course Titles and Descriptions .....</i>	92
<i>Table 9. New Media Concept or Skill Mentions in Course Titles or Descriptions.....</i>	93
<i>Table 10. General Social Media Skill Mentions from Interviews .....</i>	94
<i>Table 11. Specific Social Media Skills Mentions from Interviews.....</i>	97

## ABSTRACT

The year 2014 has been described by scholars as transformative in how consumers interact with technology and media. Pointing to such digital milestones as the explosion of social media and mobile technology and the decline of traditional television ratings, these scholars have described the evolution as a move from a *broadcast era* to a *postbroadcast era* of media. This mass media evolution has opened a digital talent gap between the skills needed by the industry and the abilities of current and potential employees.

Focusing on undergraduate strategic communications programs, this research discusses the current status of new and social media education and seeks to understand how programs are changing to adapt to the media shift. To understand the current curriculum status and processes of change, this study used a mixed methods two-phase research design including a content analysis of program course offerings and qualitative interviews of faculty and administrators.

Of the 115 undergraduate strategic communications programs reviewed, 90 % offered courses with new media and 68% with social media mentions in course titles or descriptions. The most mentioned concepts were general references to new/emerging media, digital/interactive media, social media and social networking, and the most mentioned skills were Internet/website, multimedia and social media content creation, engagement and analytics. Interviews described a fairly standard process of higher education curriculum change, but found that programs are still experimenting with new and social media instruction and its placement in curriculum. While programs are improving, much work is still needed to close the talent gap.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

A revolution is happening in today's mediated culture. ComScore, Inc. (2015) in a report on the United States digital market describes 2014 as a transformative year in how Americans interact with technology and consumer media. Pointing to such digital milestones as the explosion of mobile application usage and the decline of traditional television ratings, the report describes the changes as not merely incremental, but as evolutionary, and suggests that a new era of digital has arrived that will be "markedly different from its predecessor" (p. 2). In 2017, digital ad spending (\$209 billion) exceeded television ad revenue (\$178 billion) for the first time (Kafka & Molla, 2017).

Leading the change in media are entities variously described as Web 2.0, new media and social media. Today a celebrity is as likely to be a YouTube blogger as an award-winning actress. Some of the most visited news sites do not belong to newspapers, magazines or television networks, but bloggers like *The Huffington Post*, *The Drudge Report*, *The Bleacher Report* and others. Social media has become part of life and culture. According to a September 2014 study conducted by the Pew Research Center, 58% of all adults use Facebook with other social media sites including LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram and Twitter in the 20% range. While Facebook's usage showed little change from the previous year, all other social networks showed a significant increase (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Madden, 2015). This change in media culture is impacting not only the communication industry, but also institutions of higher education that train communication professionals. This study will endeavor to understand how these institutions are responding to this media shift.

## Background

Merrin (2009) describes it as a movement from *broadcast era* to *postbroadcast era* media. McQuail (2013) describes it as a shift backwards from mass communication to personal communication. The Oriella PR Network (2013) in a global study of journalists described the shift as a *new normal in news*. Oriella notes that media tactics that worked perfectly well a few years ago cannot be relied on to the same extent as before. The report equates this *new normal* with a trend to *digital first* publishing and mobile content, both of which use social media platforms to deliver news in real time. In fact, prior to the Internet evolution, mainstream news organizations could maintain something like a gatekeeper role over news, playing down or ignoring stories they deemed unfit for the public (Farhi, 2010). Merrin (2014) calls this new use of technology *me-dia*. *Me-dia* relates to the explosion of “individual horizontal, mediated interpersonal and public communication” (p. 13). *Me-dia* is changing the communication industry from a *broadcast era top-down, one-to-many* system dominated by *big media* to a *postbroadcast era*, which empowers individuals as producers and disseminators of content outside of traditional information structures.

This change, according to Merrin (2014) represents the reorientation of information around individuals and has resulted in the emergence of peer journalism. In peer journalism, individuals become *self-journalists*, who investigate and report on their own lives and deliver their news through their news-feeds to subscribed peer publics. McQuail (2013) describes this movement of mass communications as a new paradigm. He notes that 20<sup>th</sup> Century mass communication could be seen as “one-to-many, center-peripheral, simultaneous transmission” (p. 224), but today’s mediated communication has a model more like consultation and conversation.

In this model, individuals either consult a “center at their own convenience or bypass the ‘center’” and “exchange and interact with each other with self-determined content” (p. 224).

Merrin (2014) describes this new personalized media as both incorporating and replacing traditional media. In new media, content is arranged according to individual interests, decisions, attention, and choices. Hence the structural shift in communication is matched by a shift in value as the audiences own creations, messages, comments, images, and shared links become more important than anything produced by the mass media. Merrin notes that new media challenge traditional media paradigms.

‘Pull’ media challenge ‘push’ media; open structures challenge closed structures; micro-production challenges macro-production; open access amateur production challenges closed-access, elitist, hierarchical professional structures; economic and technological barriers to media production are transformed by cheap and easy to use technologies with the means of immediate global distribution; post-scarcity economics with post-production filtering challenges scarcity economics with strong industry pre-production filtering; the single expert voice is threatened by ‘the long tail’ of expertise and new modes of ‘collective intelligence;’ the ‘lecture’ is replaced with the ‘conversation;’ the individual as receiver and consumer is complemented by the individual as producer and user; and broadcasting to a mass market is transformed by niche and nano-publishing.  
(Merrin, 2009, pp. 22-23)

### **Media Shift and Audiences**

Grinnell (2009) and Hermes (2009) believe the change in media also creates a change in audience. Hermes sees the change as a movement away from “a linear distinction between consumers and producers” (p. 112). Hermes suggests that audience researchers have lost both the audience as an identifiable entity and particular genres or texts as researchable media practice.

Grinnell (2009) identifies the audience shift on three levels from pre-Internet consumers to Internet *prosumers* to Web 2.0 producers. Grinnell notes that this new, Web 2.0 media no longer casts producers on one side and consumers on the other side of the economic fence. Consumers are active participants in the creation of brand and media content as well as users of that content.

Today consumers are as likely to get the news of the day from their personal social media news feed as from a television broadcast. When buying a new product consumers will post the question of what brand to buy to Twitter rather than consult the Sunday newspaper advertisements. According to a 2013 Nielsen survey the most trusted advertising is *earned advertising* that is endorsed by a third party, such as being passed along by friends or online opinions from social media, and the second most trusted advertising is *owned advertising* in the form of content and messaging on brand websites. *Earned advertising* is trusted by 84% and *owned advertising* by 69% of online consumers worldwide, up six and nine percentage points respectively from 2007 (The Nielsen Company, 2013).

### **Personalizing Mass Media**

This makes today's mediated communication far more similar to personal communication than mass communication. Not only does the audience and media of choice change in this new communication paradigm, but also, according to McQuail (2013), "the possibility of an infrastructural center being able to keep track of all traffic of whatever type in a very large network" (p. 224). This tracking of activity on a mediated network is a key point of discussion in strategic communications fields. In these fields, clients focus on the analytics for determining return-on-investment (ROI) for communications and best practices for communicating with an organization or brand audience. This can be seen in a recent call for papers for a special issue of the *Journal of Advertising* (Li, 2015). The call asks for submissions on *big data* generated by digital environments such as the Internet, social media, mobile devices, wearable technology and other sources of digital information. The call notes that digital environments like these can produce large data sets by recording in great detail interactions between customers and brands across various phases of the buying experience (Li, 2015).

In a comparison study of advertising in 1991 to advertising in 2009, Grahame (2009) notes that old models for evaluating advertising audiences seem “increasingly inadequate to explore either the complex shifting relationships between advertisers and consumers in today's digital landscape, or the increasingly proactive profile of audiences as consumers, critics, and producers facilitated by Web 2.0” (p. 16). The researcher points out that 21<sup>st</sup> Century audiences are increasingly fragmented audiences causing advertising to operate differently. The hundreds of TV channels, TiVo, Netflix, Amazon Prime and Apple TV; the exponential growth of the Internet and social networking; and the patterns of viewing and consumption have changed so drastically that communication creators must develop a repertoire of new strategies to deliver audience eyeballs to advertisers. Grahame (2009) notes that more problematically in the migration from TV to online advertising is the growth of sponsorship packages, advertiser-funded programming, product placement, cross-platform advertising, branded websites, online advergames and competitions, and tracking software that allows advertisers to target messages to individual users. Audiences are no longer passive watchers and listeners but active participants. In this relationship, the consumers come to the producer of goods as followers and reviewers and produce their own content about brands in the forms of posts, tweets, shares, pins and likes.

Kang, Ki and Ye (2012) describe this as an expanding up of media. In this expansion, bloggers play an active role in presenting diverse viewpoints, generating and spreading popular rumors, and influencing public opinions on issues, events, and public figures. The result is a shift in persuasive power from strategic communicators and media institutions to media audiences. Strategic communicators are facing new challenges from this new media paradigm and the new audiences. The researchers note that “with the rise of social media as primary tools for



communication, the mediating role played by traditional media between companies and publics [audiences] has diminished” (p. 281). Kang, Ki and Ye also note that because the new media audience is so active, companies today must monitor individual comments 24/7 and respond promptly, especially in times of crisis.

### **Media Shift and Communication Education**

This shift in media culture from mass *broadcast era* communications to person-to-person *postbroadcast era* communications is being felt across all majors in units of journalism and mass communications worldwide (Merrin, 2009; Pérez-Latre, Portilla, & Blanco, 2011). In addition to the paradigm shift in mediated communications, units of journalism and mass communications must contend with the fluid nature of new digital media. Merrin (2009) describes the new media environment as being in a state of *permanent beta* mode saying that digital media are constantly being “re-made, reconfigured, obsolesced and revolutionized” (p. 23). Merrin suggests that the fluid, cross-platform nature of new media should cause educators to drastically rethink not only the curriculum in units of journalism and mass communications but even departmental structures. “When we consider how many lecturers have built their careers upon research into particular forms (film, television, radio, print journalism, etc.) and how many departments rely on similarly defunct and anachronistic form-based discriminations (‘Film and Television Studies’), we can see the extent of the rethink that is required” (p. 23).

In addition to organizational structures that reflect a traditional *broadcast era* view of media, the approach to course content and curriculum by faculty is also out-of-step with the digital-born students who arrive on campus. Merrin (2009) writes that at too many universities students arrive on campus to discover media courses that are ill-equipped and faculty that are unwilling to deal with the students’ media environment. These courses instead offer introductory

modules and textbooks that bear little relationship to the media experience and knowledge of the students, and the disconnect results in “a discipline that feels lifeless and anachronistic” (p. 22).

### **New Media and Social Media**

Institutions of higher education and particularly those units that train communications professionals have begun trying to address the media shift under the heading of *new media*. Yet, most researchers agree that the term *new media* is difficult to define (Iowa State University, 2014; Socha & Eber-Schmid, 2014). The Studio for New Media (Iowa State University, 2014) traces the use of the term to 1970s researchers conducting social, psychological, economic, political and cultural studies of information and communication technologies. The studio suggests that perhaps *new media* defines a family of genres that involve all digital media. Socha and Eber-Schmid (2014) agree describing *new media* as “a catchall term” used to refer to all that is “related to the Internet and interplay between technology, images and sound” (¶ 1). The researchers characterize *new media* as being non-linear networks of nested or hyper-linked images, words and sounds that is distinctly different from old linear media formats such as printed newspapers, books or magazines.

Two additional caveats that Socha and Eber-Schmid (2014) add to the definition of *new media* relate to its ability to track usage of content and allow users to write, paint, report, educate, etc. with one another outside the conventions of institutional and closed media. However, other researchers and professionals balk at the idea of comparing *new media* to old or traditional media as most traditional media also now offer *new media* formats (Iowa State University, 2014). Advertising media researchers have suggested that the term should not be used at all, proposing instead that advertisers treat new and traditional media vehicles as equals with no distinction between the two categories (ComScore, Inc., 2015).

As difficult as it has been for researchers to define new media, the 2014 shift from new media to personalized, sharable *social media* has presented more definition problems. In a review of scholarly research, Tess (2013) noted that while authors have given operational definitions for the term, there appeared to be no standard definition. Hermida (2010) also cites the definition of *social media* as a problem in the development of curriculum for schools of journalism and mass communications. Tess (2013) attributes the difficulty in defining the term to the “global, expansive umbrella” the term covers and the “ever-evolving structure and capabilities of social media” (p. 6). The most commonly cited definition by researchers is one proposed by Boyd and Ellison (2007). These researchers write that for *new media* to be considered *social media* it must:

- 1) offer the opportunity to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system,
- 2) give users the chance to articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection,
- 3) allow users to view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (¶ 6).

This definition matches closely to one of the two additional caveats that Socha and Eber-Schmid (2014) include in the definition of *new media*. Thus, social media can also be called *new media*. This research will look at new media and specifically social media, and how institutions of higher education are integrating it into the instruction of communications professionals, specifically strategic communications professionals.

### **Problem Statement**

Those in academia and the professional world are beginning to call for change in programs of journalism and mass communication. These pressures have programs scrambling to integrate social and new media instruction into an “established and packed curriculum, within an academic environment where the pace of change is slow” (Hermida, 2010, ¶ 7). The Accrediting

Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) emphasizes the importance of a curriculum that matches the current media environment. Standard two, Indicator C of nine evaluation indicators states “instruction, whether on-site or online, is demanding and *current*, and is responsive to professional expectations of *digital, technological and multimedia competencies* [emphasis added]” (Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, 2012). Pérez-Latre, Portilla, and Blanco (2011) note the need for research on the implications of putting “person-to-person communication back again at the very core of media, communications strategies, and academic conversations” (p. 70). In 2010, the “*Beyond J-School*” series published on PBS MediaShift, called for pressure to be put on “educators to demonstrate the professional value of social media to students” (Hermida, 2010, ¶ 3).

Advertising professionals are calling for changes in employee education to bridge the *digital talent gap* between the skills advertisers and agencies value and the talent available. The Online Marketing Institute (2013) found that 71% of employers believe their digital team is strong in some areas, but exhibits mediocrity or weakness in other areas when importance and strength are analyzed together. The institute found sizable gaps between skills needed and digital team abilities in mobile marketing, web analytics and content marketing. Merrin (2009) proposes that units of journalism and mass communications need to accept that “*broadcast era* media studies don’t work in a *postbroadcast era*” (p. 22) world.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This research will address the phenomenon of adaptation by units of journalism and mass communications to the *media shift* and *digital talent gap*. Past studies (Grahame, 2009; Kim H. , 2012; Moody & Bates, 2013; Thornton & Keith, 2009) have looked at new media instruction in units of journalism and mass communication, but few studies have considered the skills needed

for *social media*. Additionally, within units of journalism and mass communication, researchers draw lines of inquiry according to academic majors (Kim H. , 2012). Reviews of literature for this study found clear distinctions between the digital skill needs of students studying journalism (print, broadcast or online) and students studying strategic communications (advertising or public relations). All these majors focus on storytelling, but most journalism majors focus on information gathering and dissemination of news, while strategic communications majors emphasize relationship building and promotion (Clark, 2014; Online Marketing Institute, 2013; Wilcox, Cameron, Reber, & Shin, 2013).

Strategic communications is the term used by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (AEJMC) in the Annual Review of Enrollment, and by professionals in the field to refer to all disciplines that create planned activities designed to address the vision and mission of a company or organization (Becker, Vlad, & Simpson, 2014). Professionals that do this kind of work are usually found in the fields of public relations, business, advertising and marketing. Thus, public relations, advertising, strategic communications, business communications and marketing communications could all be considered as part of a category of majors that fall under *strategic communications* and to a collective curriculum that may have separate programs or one joint program in advertising and public relations.

This study describes the status of social media education for undergraduate strategic communications majors and discusses the phenomenon of change in strategic communications programs due to the shift from traditional to social media in the mass communication industry. It will review curriculum structure, course offerings, and course content. In this study, the researcher explored the curriculum change processes strategic communications programs are

using to adapt to the new social media paradigm. It explored grounded theory on the middle proposition of the media shift from *broadcast era* mass communications to *postbroadcast era* social, interactive and personal communications.

### **Research Questions**

- R<sub>1</sub> What is the percentage of undergraduate *strategic communications* programs in the United States that include *new media* and/or *social media* concepts or skills in course titles or descriptions?
- R<sub>2</sub> For those undergraduate programs that include *social media* in the curriculum, what social media concepts and skills are taught?
- R<sub>3</sub> What processes of change have been used to integrate *social media* education into undergraduate *strategic communications* programs in the United States?

### **Operational Definitions**

***Undergraduate Strategic Communications Programs:*** A program was considered an *undergraduate strategic communications* program if the curriculum plan met the guidelines identified in the content analysis code book (see Appendix B), and was determined through the research sampling plan (see Chapter 3) and content analysis coding form (see Appendix B).

***New Media:*** A course was identified as a *new media* course if it met the criteria described in the content analysis code book (see Appendix B), and was determined through analysis of course titles and descriptions using the content analysis coding form (see Appendix C) and was confirmed by interviews (see Appendix D).

***Social media:*** A course was identified as a *social media* course if it met the criteria described in the content analysis code book (see Appendix B), and was determined through

analysis of course titles and descriptions using the content analysis coding form (see Appendix C) and was confirmed by interviews (see Appendix D).

***Social media concepts and skills:*** Instruction in social media concepts and skills are defined in the content analysis coding book (see Appendix B). These concepts and skills were identified through analysis of course titles and descriptions using the content analysis coding form (see Appendix C) and were confirmed by interviews (see Appendix D).

***Processes of change:*** The process of program change used by strategic communications program administrators and faculty to adapt their programs to include new and social media instruction was identified through interviews (see Appendix D).

### **Significance of the Study**

Although journalism and mass communications are constantly changing, the move to social media is having an evolutionary impact on the fields. By evaluating the status of social media instruction in strategic communications majors, this research will help to shape changes in the recommended curriculum, suggest theoretical and philosophical approaches to curriculum change and guide units of journalism and mass communications to prepare strategic communications students for 21<sup>st</sup> Century jobs. Additionally, the research will provide knowledge of how to train students in the use of social media and how to integrate it into curriculum and courses.

This document presents a summary of research on strategic communications curriculum primarily in units of journalism and mass communications in institutions of higher education and discusses how these units are integrating social media instruction into the strategic communications curriculum.

## Delimitations of the Study

This study will describe the status of social media education for strategic communications majors and discuss the phenomenon of change in strategic communications programs due to the shift from traditional to social media in the mass communication industry.

Because the study of journalism is quite different from strategic communications, it was problematic to address both journalism and strategic communications in one study. For this reason, this study reviewed only courses required for a strategic communications degree although journalism curriculum also offers instruction in new and social media. Journalism courses were only reviewed if that course was also required for a strategic communications degree. Additionally, several studies dating to the advent of convergence in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century have considered the issue of new media instruction for journalists, but few have looked at strategic communications.

This study will focus on strategic communications programs. These programs will be identified by cross referencing both the 2015 accreditation database of ACEJMC and the 2014 booklet *Where shall I go to study advertising and public relations?* by Billy I. Ross and Jef I. Richards. This sampling design permits the inclusion of programs that are not accredited or are taught in units other than journalism and mass communications. It is possible that there are a number of programs in strategic communications that do not report to either of these sources, and therefore, were not included in this study.

This study makes a distinction between new media and social media by defining social media as a form or type of new media. Because it is possible that programs may teach social media in a new media course without identifying it in the title or course description, this study also analyzed information on new media courses. Additionally, programs may be integrating



social media into traditional courses without indicating it in the title or course description. If new media or social media were not indicated in either the title or description of a course, the course was not included in this research. Furthermore, within units new or social media courses may be considered general courses shared with other programs in the unit. These other programs might be identified as print journalism, broadcast journalism, digital journalism, radio, television, visual communications, business communications, communications studies or marketing. Every effort was made to include these courses in the analysis when the course was listed as part of the required or elective courses for a strategic communications program.

This study was limited by the choice of a mixed methods approach and the qualities of content analysis and interviewing research techniques. A mixed methods approach begins with the assumption that the integration of quantitative and qualitative research techniques will not only tell the percentage of strategic communications programs offering instruction in social media, but also offer insight into how social media is being taught and the change process programs have used to integrate the new instruction into curriculum. The use of content analysis is limited by the operational definitions of the units to be measured, the reliability of the coding process and by the content chosen for analysis. Appendix B provides a list of definitions used in the coding process and Chapter 3 explains the coding process. For the purposes of this study, the websites and online course catalogs provided by the sampled units were used for coding. This was based on the assumption that this content is the most up-to-date listing of unit curriculum and course descriptions. However, it is possible that units may have made curriculum changes since the last website update or catalog publication. If units have made unpublished changes, these changes were only used in the study if indicated in the interviews. The use of interviewing allows the researcher to provide insights into how and why programs have changed, but does not

provide data that can be generalized to a larger population. This study interviewed program faculty and administrators and was based on the assumption that these professionals have knowledge of course content as well as curriculum development. Because interviews were used to collect information on how programs have changed, the research was limited by the faculty and administrators ability to remember and describe curriculum development accurately and speak truthfully about their program. Research used triangulation with similar studies, multiple interviews and results from the content analysis to address these delimitations.

## **Conclusion**

A revolution is happening in today's mediated culture. The change has been described as a movement from *broadcast era* to *postbroadcast era* media (Merrin, 2009), as a *new normal in news* (Oriella PR Network, 2013), as a new paradigm in media (McQuail, 2013), and as individualized horizontal, mediated interpersonal, public communication or *me-dia* (Merrin, 2014). Whatever it is called, it is changing the communication industry from a mass communication, *broadcast era* top-down, one-to-many system dominated by *big media* to an interpersonal communication, *postbroadcast era* social, one-to-one system, which empowers individuals as producers and disseminators of content outside of traditional information structures.

Leading the change in media are entities variously described as Web 2.0, new media and social media. *New media* is distinctly different from old linear media formats such as newspapers, books, magazines and radio and television stations. The term refers to a family of media related to the Internet that offers non-linear networks of hyper-linked images, words and sounds (Socha & Eber-Schmid, 2014) . *Social media* is one member of the *new media* family. The term refers to a digital property that offers the opportunity to construct a public or semi-

public profile and share it with a list of users whose content can be viewed and traversed (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

This change in media culture is impacting not only the communication industry, but also institutions of higher education that train communication professionals. This research will seek to describe the status of social media education for undergraduate strategic communications majors and discuss the phenomenon of change in strategic communications programs due to the shift from traditional *broadcast era* media to social *postbroadcast era* media in the communications industry.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Noted media theorist Marshall McLuhan (2000) has said of media and change – “It is the framework which changes with each new technology and not just the picture within the frame” (p. 38). This theory of media led McLuhan to make his famous statement – “the medium is the message” (p. 38). Kostelanetz (1967) writes that one interpretation of these phrases is that "the 'message' of a medium is the impact of its forms upon society" (¶ 16). Thus, each medium or technology has a unique impact based on the kind of content it can deliver. If McLuhan's philosophy is applied to social media, it would mean that social media will not only deliver content differently than older media, but will also change the framework or culture in which it is introduced. In his book, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, McLuhan (1964) writes that when a new medium or technology is developed, it displaces or causes to become obsolete an older medium while also retrieving skills that predated that medium. McLuhan saw technology as extensions of human capacities. He developed four laws that describe the processes through which any technology moves as it scales up in quantity, power and effect. McLuhan's four laws ask the following questions:

1. What human trait or experience does the medium enhance?
2. What pre-existing technology does the new technology cause to become obsolete?
3. What past technology or system does the new medium retrieve?
4. When pushed to its extreme, what will the medium reverse into? (Bobbitt, 2011)

New and social media are having the kind of impact on society that McLuhan (1964) describes.

These media are changing not just the way messages are delivered, but how people interact with each other. As a result, the framework in which media operate has changed from a *broadcast era* one-to-many model to a *postbroadcast era* one-to-one model.

Technology has always been a driving factor in the fields of journalism and mass communication, and today is no different. Since the founding of the Internet in the 1990s, traditional or legacy media, including newspapers, magazines and radio and television stations, are being displaced by a tidal wave of new media using personal communication skills that predate legacy media. It was technology, the invention of movable type and the printing press by Johann Gutenberg in 1455 (Biography.com, 2015), that established the concept of mass media, and each new technology has caused established systems of mass communication to change. Radio changed the newspaper and magazine industries; television changed radio and now digital technology is changing television.

According to ComScore, Inc. (2015), 2014 was a pivotal year in the development of new media; it is the year that saw new media pass television in viewer ratings as a preferred source for entertainment and information by younger consumers. Additionally, ComScore (2015) predicts that 2014 will be seen as a transformative year in the development of new media because the year saw the maturation of social media and mobile technology. In 2014, the majority of all new media activity occurred through mobile applications (ComScore, Inc., 2015) and social media has become the “plumbing of the Internet” or “the pipes through which content flows and reaches an audience” (WARC, 2015, p. 2).

This chapter will review the impact new and social media are having on the field of mass communication and specifically, strategic communications. It will explain the evolution of the study of strategic communications and discuss the status of new and social media education. Finally, it will look at the concept of change and will specifically address curriculum change in higher education.

## The Impact of New and Social Media on Mass Communications

Socha and Eber-Schmid (2014) liken *new media* to the “wild, wild west” and describe it as “a catchall term” referring to any medium that is Internet related (¶ 1). The researchers suggest that new media has had a profound effect on three essential categories of society: economics, politics and the dissemination of information.

Socha and Eber-Schmid (2014) point out that it might be easier to define *new media* by describing what it is *not* rather than what it is, but other researchers balk at the idea of comparing *new media* to old or traditional media as most traditional media also now offer *new media* formats (Iowa State University, 2014). To Socha and Eber-Schmid (2014) old-style, traditional reporting and data outlets, like newspapers, television, radio and books, are now secondary rather than primary sources of information.

The driving force behind all new media is the invention of the Internet. The beginnings of the Internet can be traced to the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), a project of the United States Department of Defense established during the Eisenhower administration. Four Defense Department university research centers – University of California Los Angeles, Stanford University, University of California Santa Barbara and University of Utah – formed the first network of interconnected computers. The creation of the World Wide Web is attributed to Tim Berners-Lee, a particle physicist at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) working to connect his computer at MIT with other physicists at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, in Switzerland (CERN, 2015). Berners-Lee created the system for distributing information across a network and developed a system of addressing through the use of what he termed hypertext markup language (HTML). With the invention of the first commercial Internet browser, Mosaic, by Marc Andreessen in 1992, which allowed any computer to access the

Internet, and the opening of research networks to the general public by the United States Congress, the Internet grew rapidly (Grech, 2001).

### **New Media and Traditional Media**

The first response of traditional media to new media can be found in the concept of *convergence*. *Convergence* relates to the merging of traditional media technologies including publishing and broadcasting into one medium on the Internet. Since the 1990s, traditional media outlets including newspapers, magazines and radio and television stations have all begun operating using technology skills of other media. Today most print publications and broadcast stations also publish via new media.

Kolodzy, Grant, Demars and Wilkinson (2014) in a 12-year retrospective of the research presented at Convergence and Society conferences described *convergence* as connected to the emergence of the Internet, social media and digital technologies. The researchers found that convergence “encompassed multiple dimensions from collaboration across media outlets to the integrated use of multiple media in collecting and delivering information” (p. 197). Kolodzy, Grant, DeMars and Wilkinson also found that over the years of the conference a number of concepts and terms were used to define convergence. The first concept was partnerships between media organizations in small markets, but soon this repurposing of content, or simply uploading of stories and news packages from other media outlets, was viewed negatively and termed *shovelware*. Dailey, Demo and Spillman (2005) have defined a five-stage convergence continuum to explain how media organizations have come together to take advantage of new technologies. The five overlapping stages of the continuum are:

1. Cross Promotion – the process of using words or visuals to promote content appearing in a partner medium.
2. Cloning – the unedited displaying of a partners’ content.

3. Cooperation – the sharing of information on selected content with a partner, but competing with original content as well.
4. Content sharing – partners meeting regularly to share ideas and jointly develop special projects.
5. Convergence – partners having a shared editor and a team of workers from each organization develop multimedia content with in-depth text, photos, video, audio, graphics and databases for print, broadcast and web distribution.

While the concept of partners helped media adapt to new media demands, by the middle part of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the partnerships were beginning to disintegrate.

Thornton and Keith (2009) in a survey of editors and news directors found that only about half of the respondents said their newsroom had a convergence partnership and of that group around a quarter of respondents said they had ended or were dissatisfied with their partnership. The researchers used the term *webvergence* to describe the new model of convergence in which both print and electronic media organizations produced multimedia (text, audio and video) content for their own digital properties. Kolodzy, Grant, DeMars and Wilkinson (2014) note that the era of convergence has yielded a set of technologies, consumer behaviors and journalistic routines that has resulted in a fundamental change in journalism and mass communication. The researchers review found convergence has caused geographic boundaries to disappear, increased expectations of audiences to be able to get information anytime and anywhere, forced organizations to offer information on multiple platforms within the same organization, and called on media professionals and educators to know how to create content for all platforms and deliver it when consumers expect it.

### **The Rise of Social Media**

The next step in technology development has been called *Web 2.0* or *Social Media*. Like new media, one factor impacting any discussion of *social media* has been a definition of the term. Tess (2013) and Hermida (2010) have noted the difficulty in defining the term. The most



commonly cited definition by researchers states that for a digital or new media property to be called a Social Network Site [*Social Media*] it must:

1. offer the opportunity to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system.
2. give users the chance to articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection,
3. allow users to view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, ¶ 6).

The roots of social media have been connected to the development of chat-room software in the early 1990s. According to Khang, Ki and Ye (2012) the origins of social media can be traced to diary websites like Live Journal, early dating websites like Friendster and messaging websites like AOL Instant Messenger. Most researchers (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Khang, Ki, & Ye, 2012; Kim, Leem, Kim, & Cheon, 2013) place the origins of social media in 1997 with the “emergence of the first web diary known as a blog” and the launch of the first “recognizable social network site, SixDegrees.com” (Kim, Leem, Kim, & Cheon, 2013, p. 282). Also mentioned in discussions of the origins of social media is Classmates.com (1995), Bolt.com (1996) or in extreme cases Peace/EcoNet (1987). While all these exhibited the criteria of linking, participating and sharing, they lacked the core component for an Online Social Network of “convergence between informal and formal relationship patterns” as seen in SixDegrees.com (Kim, Leem, Kim, & Cheon, 2013, p. 209). Van Dijck (2013) divides social media, or *connective media*, into four categories:

1. Social Networking Sites (SNS) such as Facebook.
2. User-generated content such as blogs and YouTube.
3. Playing and gaming sites like World of Warcraft (WOW).
4. Trading and marketing sites like eBay.

Kim, Leem, Kim and Cheon (2013) developed a model to track the rather short lifecycle of Online Social Network (OSN) development. The researchers identified three generations of OSN technology tied to the development of digital technology:

1. First generation was PC-centric and used Web 1.0 connected technology to search for and trade information.
2. Second generation was user-centric and used Web 2.0 networking technology to publish and build relationships.
3. Third generation is data-centric and uses Web 3.0 smart and mobile technology to acquire and embed social connectivity for use anywhere and anytime.

In a recent report, ComScore, Inc. (2015) also notes the importance of Web 3.0 technology including the maturation of mobile media allowing more direct buying from applications and geo-targeting using GPS technology. The researchers cite the merging of content and technology producers and explosion of next generation wearable technology as contributing to a 2014 transformation of new media. The researchers believe 2015 will see the rise in short-form video, native advertising, high-quality long-form journalistic content and even more specific metrics measuring results on actual human viewership.

### **Social Media and Traditional Media**

Today, the new media partners of mass media are their own audiences producing user-generated content through social media. This convergence of traditional media and social media can be seen in studies by Neuberger (2013) and Mitchell, Holcomb and Page (2015). In a study of Internet users and editors of Internet news departments, Neuberger (2013) found that news producers use social media sites as research sources for stories and users of social media share stories from legacy, or traditional, news media. Mitchell, Holcomb and Page (2015) in a study of the Internet and local news in three United States cities found that between a third and a half of the residents have shared a local news story digitally and about a quarter of residents have commented on a local news website or blog. Neuberger's (2013) research showed that users of

social media attribute greater credibility to news obtained from legacy media organizations than that shared only on social networking sites. Mitchell, Holcomb and Page (2015) found that residents of all three cities rely heavily on legacy news organizations for information with local television taking the largest portion of attention.

However, Neuberger's (2013) research was not all positive for news organizations. The researcher also found that the number and amount of news choices, their availability free of charge and the interchangeability of services has diminished brand loyalty to news organizations and reduced audiences' willingness to pay for services. Neuberger noted that social media contributes to the superficial consumption of news with a quarter of respondents saying they read only the headlines and not the stories on news websites and do use social networks for information on important subjects. In all three cities, more than half of residents get their local news on a digital device and a quarter to a third of all residents' access news through a social media website. While research suggests that journalism is still important in society, it also supports the idea that media are again evolving and that evolution is due to Web 2.0 social media.

### **Social Media and Strategic Communications**

While the history of advertising can be traced to messages carved on walls announcing the sale of perfumes, fabrics and other skilled crafts in early civilizations, the codependent relationship between advertising and mass media is not quite as long. The first ads appeared in newspapers in the 1600s. They looked much like classified advertising does today and notified readers of real estate for sale, announced shipments coming to the harbor and promoted migration to America. As mass media grew in distribution and changed, the advertising industry grew, too. The first expansion of the relationship between advertising and media can be traced to

space agents, Volney Palmer and J. Walter Thompson. These agents bought space from newspapers in mass and resold it to advertisers for a commission (Moriarty, Mitchell, & Wells, 2015). Eventually, an enterprising space agent named Frances W. Ayer discovered that not only could he sell the space for the ad, but also his skills and talent at creating the content that went in the space. He established the first full service advertising agency that operated explicitly for the advertiser rather than the medium (Francis Wayland Ayer: American advertising agent, n. d.).

The marriage between advertising as a revenue generator and mass media has continued into the era of new media. Commercial enterprises were first permitted access to the Internet in 1992, so except for a few email promotions, new media was advertising free until *Wired* magazine launched its Internet publication *HotWire* on Oct. 27, 1994. The website featured a new kind of advertising – a banner ad sold to 14 advertisers (Applegate, 2012; Kantrowitz, 2014; Sigel, 2010). The first appearance of advertising in new media was a good example of converged media. *HotWired* was an online publication of a legacy media property, *Wired* magazine. Yet, the mass media operating model, which delivers a mass audience and marketers that buy ad space and time in that medium to reach an audience, is changing. Converged media offer advertisers more opportunities than ever before to reach audiences. In a qualitative study of 13 advertising professionals, Roca (2014) identified five ways new media is transforming the advertising industry. The researchers found:

1. A transformation in the traditional advertising business model. The new model requires advertisers to develop new ways to deliver sales, encourages the hiring of new workers to manage digital properties and causes agencies to merge to be able to provide a full range of services.
2. A changing relationship with consumers. Digital consumers are savvy, powerful consumers. It takes more interesting and engaging advertising to reach the new consumer. Plus, new consumers are able to generate their own content and connections with clients both positively and negatively.

3. New metrics and analytics available to clients and advertisers. New media are able to deliver much more precise measurement of customer activity allowing messages to be tailored in unprecedented ways.
4. Organizational structure of agencies and size of the client base impacts use. Respondents believed that while large clients have more money to invest in new media advertising, they are less likely than smaller clients to try new ideas and media uses.
5. The need for integration of digital and traditional methods. Interviewees noted that most clients still budget new media separately. Most advertising professionals believed that no distinction should be made between new media and traditional media, but should be included in the advertising budget as an equal to traditional media.

Siegert (2013) notes that advertising today has changed objectives, messages, formats and vehicles as a result of convergence. Advertisers today want to build word-of-mouth (WOM) advertising by encouraging consumers to recommend their products and participate in conversations about the brand. Today advertisers are creating their own media including online magazines, viral videos and blogs that blur the lines between media-produced content and advertiser-produced content. This new media advertising is known as *native advertising*, or *content marketing*. It is less obvious or intrusive than traditional media advertising. Native advertising may look like the content of the website where it is placed, but will be written and produced by the advertiser. The concept of native advertising is not new. Infomercials on television or advertorials in print have been created by advertisers for years, but its extensive use in digital media is new (Pike, 2014). Another way advertisers are addressing new media is through new media analytics and formats that provide data to target ads to consumers when it is most needed and appreciated. For example, mobile targeted advertising converges mobile and digital out of home media by delivering ads to phones when the phone is within a specified distance of a retail establishment (Future of Advertising, 2011).

Siegert (2013) identifies four new questions on which advertising decisions will be made:

1. Does the message need to reach a targeted or mass audience?

2. How can the advertising message entertain as well as sell?
3. How can the advertising message start a conversation and recommendation from consumers?
4. How can the brand interact directly with consumers?

New media is challenging advertisers to think about the content of advertising in new ways, rearrange budgets to include new media and consider advertising as more of a conversation with one consumer than a mass audience. The chief medium for starting, monitoring and maintaining these new brand relationships is social media. Social media expenditures by U.S. marketers are projected to grow from \$7.52 billion in 2014 to \$17.34 billion by 2019. In 2013, the most popular social media tactics of advertisers were branded pages on social networks and posted messages on those pages. Other popular social media tactics included buying ads on social networks, creating branded mobile applications and paying to promote content on blogs (Forrester Research & Advertising Age, 2013). These new behaviors by advertisers to reach digitally-savvy consumers move the act of advertising away from an emphasis on selling and closer to a more traditional public relations focus on building relationships.

This merging of the professions of advertising and public relations can be traced to the late 1800s and early 1900s and a common founding personality – P. T. Barnum. It was an era of unethical journalists that would do anything for a sensational story, exaggerated and often false advertising claims and press agents able to woo and manipulate the media for publicity. Wilcox, Cameron, Reber and Shin (2013) describe Barnum as a master of the pseudoevent, a planned happening that is staged for the primary purpose of garnering media attention. Barnum offered gifts to journalists to print his claims as news and charitable donations to get opinion leaders to endorse his events. Barnum was adept at creating content and journalists, who were anxious to increase audience, followed.

Following this common starting point, modern advertising and public relations took separate paths. Researchers (Luttrell, 2015; Wilcox, Cameron, Reber, & Shin, 2013) attribute the idea of public relations as a strategic endeavor to Ivy Ledbetter Lee, a former journalist and the first public relations counselor. When Lee opened his public relations firm, he issued a list of principles giving birth to the public information model of public relations practice. Lee is credited with inventing the press release, a basic tactic of public relations for years. He created the press release to provide information to journalists and state the position of his client, the Pennsylvania Railroad, following an Oct. 28, 1906 accident involving the railroad's new electric train service that killed 50 passengers. *The New York Times* was so impressed with Lee's release that they printed it word-for-word, a practice that is usually considered unprofessional by journalists today (Luttrell, 2015). Lee is credited with four contributions to public relations encouraging business and industry to align with public interest, positioning public relations as a management function, keeping open communication with news media and humanizing business and industry (Wilcox, Cameron, Reber, & Shin, 2013).

As a result of Lee's public information practice model, a love-hate relationship between public relations professionals as providers of free content and journalists as conveyers of that content was born. Today, as mass media news organizations have been impacted by the development of new media, public relations practitioners' relationship with journalists has changed. New media has enabled practitioners to:

1. Update information more quickly during major news events and crises.
2. Interact with audiences directly to provide additional information and answer questions.
3. Provide opportunities for audiences to dig deeper into information about organizations and products through the use of posts and links to other sources.
4. Eliminate space and time limits for providing information to audiences and reporters.
5. Reduce costs of disseminating information globally.

6. Make information available to media and other users 24/7 from anywhere in the world.
7. Reach audiences without the filter of traditional media gatekeepers including reporters, editors and news directors.

As the last item notes, unlike Lee's and Barnum's time, public relations practitioners are no longer solely dependent on media to provide information about organizations, products, events or crises (Wilcox, Cameron, Reber, & Shin, 2013).

Since the creation of the first web page by World Wide Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee, a page about the world wide web project for CERN particle physics lab, and the first corporate page for Global Network Navigator by O'Reilly and Associates, the creation and maintenance of new media websites has become the responsibility of strategic communicators (About O'Reilly, 2015; The birth of the web, 2013). Today, in addition to maintaining the corporate website, public relations officers maintain an array of social media websites. Luttrell (2015) describes the impact of social media on public relations as the "most dramatic paradigm shift to date" (p. 51) in the field. In a survey by Meltwater Group (2010) 68% of responding companies had a Facebook page and 55% had a Twitter page followed by LinkedIn and YouTube. Social media has presented new challenges for public relations practitioners. Social media has the power to support or destroy a brand's or organization's reputation. To be successful in the world of new media, practitioners must operate in a totally transparent manner, be good listeners and engagers with citizens and consumers (Wilcox, Cameron, Reber, & Shin, 2013). Luttrell (2015) notes that the convergence of traditional media coupled with new media technologies has combined to create a rich media environment that professional communicators cannot deny and must learn to use to adequately serve audiences.

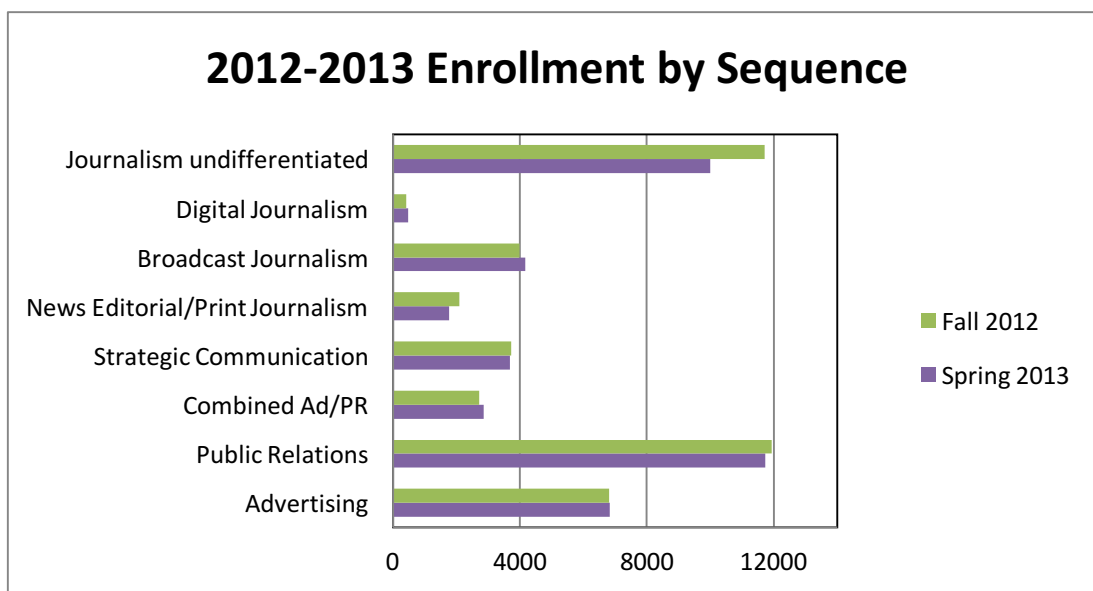


## The Evolution of Mass Communication Education

Units of journalism and mass communication, since their founding in the early 1900s, have taught students skills for use in mass media. The first course structures focused on journalism and the business of print media. With the development of each new communication technology the curriculum was expanded. By the 1960s, units of journalism were not only preparing students to be reporters and editors for media, but also to work in the production and advertising industries as well as positions in other organizations related to journalism (Applegate, 2012). Beginning in 1945, units of journalism were accredited by the American Council on Education in Journalism. This council changed its name in 1980 to the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) to respond to curriculum changes in most units of journalism which included instruction in advertising and public relations (Ross, Osborne, & Richards, 2006). It was at this time that many units of journalism added the words *mass communication* to their title. Today, of the 484 programs in journalism listed in the World Journalism Education index, 114 of them are accredited by ACEJMC (Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 2014; World Journalism Education Council, 2015).

In the Annual Survey of Journalism and Mass Communication Enrollment, Becker, Vlad and Simpson (2014) identified 480 active programs in journalism and mass communications. Of those programs, 57% offer subdivisions or sequences of specialized courses. The largest categories of program sequences were identified as advertising, public relations and journalism. In addition to offering an undifferentiated journalism sequence, some programs offered sequences in news editorial or print, broadcast and digital journalism. In addition to offering

separate advertising and public relations sequences, a number of programs offered a combined advertising and public relations sequence or strategic communication sequence (see Figure 1).

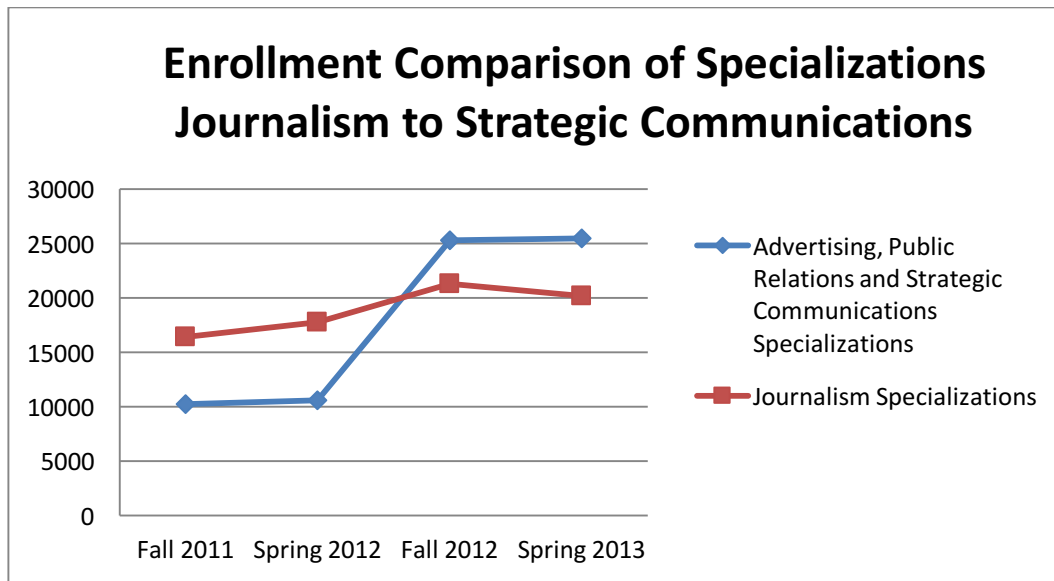


*Figure 1. 2012-2013 Enrollment by Sequence*

Figure presents a breakdown of enrollment by sequences or majors for the 2012-2013 academic year. Source for the figure is the Annual Survey of Journalism and Mass Communications Enrollments.

The merging of public relations and advertising as a curriculum of study either under a combined name or as strategic communication is a recent change in curriculum offerings in units of journalism and mass communication. Ross (2006) noted this change citing a private study by Bob Basow of the University of Kansas that found an increase from 12 to 48 combined advertising and public relations programs between the years of 1995 and 2003. The new merged curriculum included names such as Integrated Marketing Communications, Strategic Communication or used both advertising and public relations terms in the title. Founded in 1992, the leading example of a merged program is the graduate program in Integrated Marketing Communications at Northwestern University. The term strategic communication was first used as a program title by the University of Kentucky (Integrated Strategic Communication) and University of Colorado (Strategic Communication) to describe newly merged undergraduate

advertising and public relations degree programs in 1997. The Annual Survey of Journalism and Mass Communication Enrollments (Becker, Vlad, & Simpson, 2014) showed that whether listed as separate programs or an integrated curriculum, enrollments in strategic communications programs has grown as compared to enrollment in journalism programs (see Figure 2).



*Figure 2. Enrollment Comparison of Specializations*

Figure presents a comparison of enrollments for advertising/public relations or strategic communications to journalism specializations or majors over time from fall 2011 through spring 2013. Source for the figure is the Annual Survey of Journalism and Mass Communications enrollments.

### History of Mass Communication Education

As discussed earlier, both the professions of advertising and public relations trace their roots to the industrial age and the development of mass production and consumption at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The establishment of advertising and public relations curriculum is closely linked to the development of education in journalism and business. Applegate (2012) notes that concepts of advertising, particularly as it related to the newspaper industry, were first included in a college course when Joseph Johnson at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business proposed a journalism course that included advertising in 1893. While the first journalism program was proposed by Robert E. Lee, then president of Washington College (now Washington and Lee University), the first proposal to consider advertising as part of a journalism

curriculum was made by Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard University. Elliot's proposal was a response to a proposal by Joseph Pulitzer, well-known New York editor and publisher. In 1903, Pulitzer began seeking a university that would allow him to endow a journalism program according to his standards of what journalism curriculum should include. He found such an opportunity at Columbia University. Pulitzer's endowment came with the condition that the new curriculum would focus on the writing and editing of newspapers with a heavy emphasis on liberal arts education and specifically not the business of managing and operating a newspaper. Eliot proposed a curriculum in journalism that included the business side of the industry. Since Columbia got the endowment from Pulitzer, Harvard never enacted the curriculum, but universities that followed included both the journalism and business sides of the newspaper industry in their curriculum (Applegate, 2012).

### **History of Advertising Education**

Ross, Osborne and Richards (2006) and Applegate (2012) link the development of advertising education to units of business, many of which were established before 1900. These units first began offering courses that included marketing or advertising instruction in 1902. The first units to offer such courses were the University of Michigan, University of California and University of Illinois. The first full courses in marketing were taught in 1904 at the University of Pennsylvania and The Ohio State University. The first full course in advertising in a school of business was offered in 1905 at New York University, which also established the first department of advertising and marketing in 1915. The first program in advertising in a school of journalism was offered in 1908 at the University of Missouri. In 1959, Frank C. Pierson published the Carnegie Foundation report, *The Education of American Business*, recommending a curriculum for business units focusing on concepts and theories rather than skills. At the same

time Robert Gordon and James Howell supported by the Ford Foundation published *Higher Education for Business*. Like Pierson's publication, the researchers recommended a core business curriculum that included only one marketing course and no advertising courses. As a result of these reports, most units of business dropped programs associated with advertising. By 1964, units of business had discontinued more than 66 courses in advertising and dropped 10 programs. Some of the discontinued advertising programs moved to schools of journalism, and today, out of more than 100 programs in advertising, only a few are located in schools or colleges of business (Applegate, 2012; Ross & Richards, 2008).

Ross and Richards' (2014) undergraduate advertising degrees research is the most commonly cited source of program information. This research found the most commonly offered courses in advertising programs were principles/introduction and creative (copy and layout) courses. Ross, Osborne and Richards (2006) found that of the 147 reporting units the majority (n=91) described their program as a major or sequence. Other terms used were concentration, emphasis, program, track, specialization, option and area.

The most recently published research on course offerings in advertising programs studied the importance of soft employment skills in advertising curriculum. Based on 85 interviews of advertising professionals, Windels, Mallia and Broyles (2013) found that soft skills, like critical thinking, interpersonal communication, presentation and persuasion, are central to work in an advertising agency. The professionals indicated that soft skills were needed at all job levels from entry to mid to senior and varied by position with account managers and planners more likely to need interpersonal skills than creatives. The researchers recommended that advertising curriculum have course work in persuasion, negotiation and public speaking and encourage extracurricular activities that build these skills.

Ross, Osborne and Richards (2006) noted that the required courses in advertising have remained basically the same since 1989. This research and the research of others has led to the establishment of a stable curriculum for undergraduate advertising majors in the United States and includes the following courses with only slight variations between programs:

1. Principles/Introduction to Advertising
2. Creative (copy and layout)
3. Media Strategy (print and broadcast)
4. Advertising Campaigns
5. Advertising Research

### **History of Public Relations Education**

Public Relations Education traces its roots to Edward L. Bernays, often called the “Father of Modern Public Relations” (Cutlip, 1994, p. 222). Bernays used research and scientific theories of persuasion and advocacy to change people’s perception and encourage certain behaviors. He is credited with professionalizing the field of public relations, promoting the establishment of professional societies, encouraging the development of ethics codes, supporting the licensing of practitioners and establishing formal education (Wilcox, Cameron, Reber, & Shin, 2013).

Bernays believed education was important to the development of public relations as a profession. As part of promoting his new book, *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, Bernays persuaded New York University's Department of Journalism to let him offer a course in public relations, the first such course to be offered (Cutlip, 1994). Bernays taught the course for two years in 1923 and 1924. However, this was not the first university course to offer instruction in public relations. The first course to include instruction in “publicity techniques” (p. 119) was offered at the University of Illinois in 1920 and taught by Joseph P. Wright, the university's newly appointed publicity director. Bernays advocated for public relations education throughout his life serving as an adjunct lecturer at Boston University in his later years, establishing fellowships and scholarships

for students and advocating for separate schools or departments of public relations in university curriculum.

In recent years, following concern among professionals about ethical standards and inconsistencies in instruction in the field, 12 professional societies came together and established a commission (Commission on Public Relations Education, 2006) to provide guidelines, recommendations and standards for public relations education. The commission issued its first report in 1975. Since that time the commission has published four revisions with the most recent coming in 2006. *The Professional Bond: Public Relations Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, based on five separate research studies, found substantial agreement between educators and practitioners on what public relations undergraduate students should learn. The 2006 commission report found little change from reports in 1989 and 1999, respectively, in the courses needed for entry-level skills in public relations. Based on this research, the commission proposed an ideal list of seven undergraduate courses for public relations majors. The seven recommended courses are:

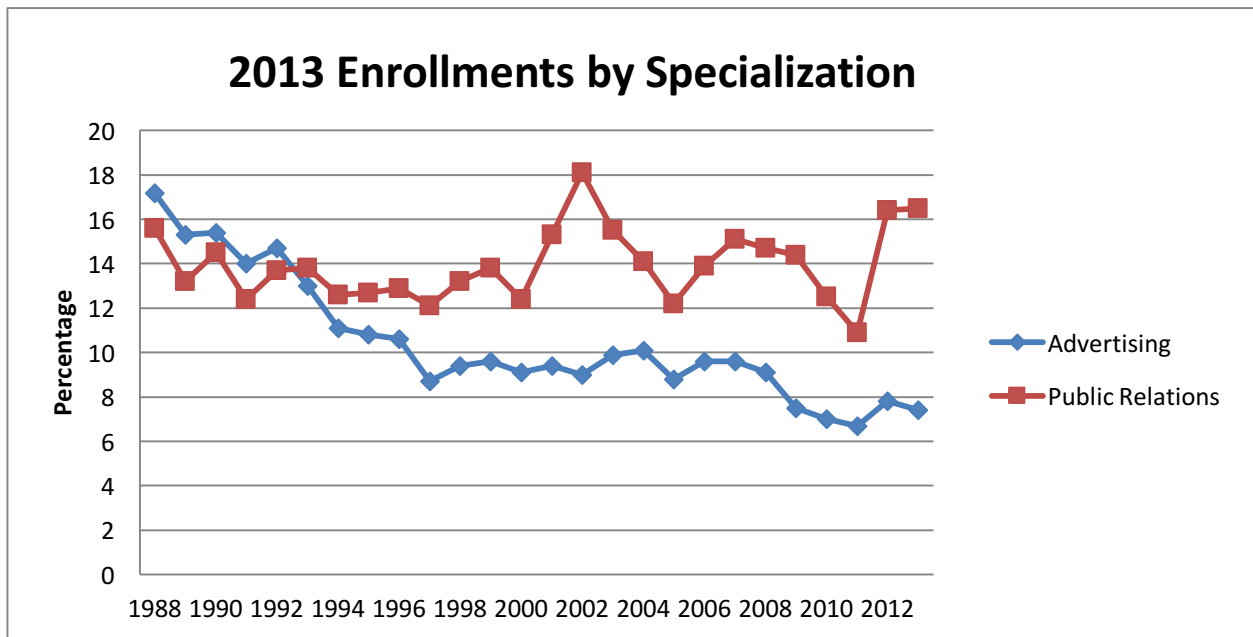
1. Introduction to Public Relations including theory, origin and principles
2. Case studies in Public Relations that review professional practice
3. Public Relations research, measurement and evaluation
4. Public Relations law and ethics
5. Public relations writing and production
6. Public relations planning and management
7. Public relations campaigns

Research by the Commission on Public Relations Education (2006) also found several trends for which public relations students must be prepared including transparency and accountability in ethics; more public relations research; understanding of global organizations and markets; adaptation to changing media and technology; importance to internal audiences and top management and need for integration of all communication functions. In 2015 the commission

held a summit of 50 public relations industry professionals and educators to explore industry needs for entry-level undergraduate public relations professionals (Commission on Public Relations Education, 2015). The commission identified the following knowledge areas as important to undergraduate public relations education now:

1. Role and value of public relations
2. Measurement, data analytics and insights
3. Communication and public relations theories
4. Cross-cultural and global communication
5. Understanding influence and how it operates today
6. Business processes, planning and acumen
7. The newest techniques

Today, while advertising program enrollments have declined since 1988, public relations program enrollments have steadily increased and are now among the fastest growing programs in units of journalism and mass communications (See Figure 3).



*Figure 3. 2013 Enrollments by Specialization*

Figure presents a comparison of enrollments for advertising and public relations specializations or majors over time from 1988 through 2012. Source for the figure is the Annual Survey of Journalism and Mass Communications Enrollments



Recent studies on public relations curriculum have compared curriculum in various academic units, looked at the teaching of ethics and studied international public relations curriculum. Auger and Cho (2016) compared public relations curriculum in journalism and mass communications, liberal arts and humanities and business or other units with the skills listed by employers in job descriptions. The researchers found that the majority (57.3%) of public relations programs were located in liberal arts and humanities institutions followed by journalism and mass communication (27.8%) units. An overwhelming majority (85%) offered the program in a department that did not contain the words public relations in the title and less than 10% were offered either in independent public relations departments (7.7%) or combined departments such as advertising and public relations (7.3%). The number of courses offered in a public relations curriculum ranged from three to 24 with an average of 11.7. The kinds of courses offered in a public relations curriculum differed across the three types of units. A greater percentage of liberal arts and humanities programs offered communication techniques courses such as organization communication, interpersonal communication, persuasion, public speaking and rhetoric than did journalism and mass communications or business programs. Journalism and mass communications were more likely than liberal arts or business to include advanced courses such as public relations management, public relations research and public relations campaigns. The skills most frequently sought by public relations employers at both the entry and advanced level were writing, advanced public relations such as strategy and planning, new and social media, public speaking and media relations.

Chung and Choi (2012) and Austin and Toth (2011) compared curriculum structures in the United States to public relations curriculum in other countries. The researchers found that the most required courses for the public relations major in the United States were:

1. Public Relations Principles
2. Public Relations Writing I
3. Public Relations Campaigns
4. Internship
5. Public Relations Production I

Comparing this curriculum to curriculums in the United Kingdom and Korea, Chung and Choi found variations reflective of each country's culture, economy and media systems. While public relation programs in the United States blend theory, skill and practical experiences, programs in the United Kingdom have a much stronger theoretical business, marketing and management perspective with little skill instruction or practical experience, and Korean programs offer significant skill and practical focus but little theory.

Austin and Toth (2011) also conducted an international study of public relations curriculum reviewing programs in 39 countries. The study focused on the teaching of public relations ethics. This research found agreement among educators regardless of country of practice on the importance of an ethics component in public relations curriculum. Most educators believed it should be integrated throughout the curriculum, even among those educators that advocated for a special public relations ethics course. Consistent with the study by Chung and Cho, the researchers also found that educators valued a balance between theory and application. Additionally, the educators were concerned about the difference between ethics experience in the classroom and the profession and emphasized the importance of instruction students to balance the focus on financial gain with the importance of building social capital.

The research by the Commission on Public Relations Education and others has led to the development of a relatively stable undergraduate public relations curriculum in most universities and colleges in the United States. That curriculum has changed little since the early 1990s and includes the following courses with only slight variations between programs:

1. Principles/Introduction to Public Relations
2. Public Relations writing and production
3. Public Relations Management or Case Studies
4. Public Relations Campaigns
5. Public Relations Research

### **Rise of Strategic Communication Education**

By the 1990s, the curriculum for advertising and public relations programs had settled into a standard list of classes. Both the studies by Ross, Osborne and Richards (2006) and the Commission on Public Relations Education (2006) found little change from reports in 1989 and 1999, respectively, in the courses needed for skills in advertising or public relations. By the 1990s, mass media had become cluttered with advertising and public relations messages and the number of media outlets was so great that brands and organizations were finding it hard to communicate with anyone. Larson and Len-Rios (2006) noted that programs for marketing and advertising found a solution to the problem with a concept known as *integrated marketing communications*.

Schultz (1993) defined *integrated marketing communication or IMC* as “a concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic rolls of a variety of communications disciplines (for example: general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations) and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communications impact” (p. 17). For an organization, the IMC philosophy meant that all marketing communications should carry the same basic message allowing an organization to speak to various audiences with one voice. Schultz is recognized as the pioneer of integrated marketing communication concepts, research and curriculum. As a professor at Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism, Schultz established the first Integrated Marketing Communications program in 1991 (Larsen & Len-Rios, 2006). The program was developed as an interdisciplinary graduate-level program

consolidating the school's marketing, advertising and public relations curricula (Northwestern University, n. d.). Undergraduate programs have followed Schultz's lead including units of journalism and mass communications at the University of Colorado in 1996 and University of Kentucky in 1997 (Larsen & Len-Rios, 2006; University of Kentucky School of Journalism and Telecommunications, 2011). Some of these integrated curriculums have been titled integrated marketing communications (IMC) while others have taken the term strategic communications. Ross, Osborne and Richards (2006) note that at the University of Kentucky the program organizers discussed both creative and media titles for their program, but chose *Integrated Strategic Communication*. The title was chosen to keep the focus on the importance of strategy in advertising and public relations, avoid internal problems on campus with the word *marketing* and create a proper home for students interested in both advertising and public relations careers.

At its core IMC or strategic communications is a process for developing a strategy to solve communications problems within an organization. A number of researchers have proposed formulas for the steps in the strategic communication processes. In the areas of advertising, public relations and marketing, the most commonly cited strategy formulas include RACE (Research, Action, Communication, Evaluation) (Marston, 1963); RAISE (Research, Adaptation, Implementation, Strategy, Evaluation) (Kendall, 1997); ROPES (Research, Objective, Program, Evaluation, Stewardship) (Kelly, 2001); MOST (Mission, Objective, Strategy, Tactics) (Henderson, 2000), and RPIE (Research, Planning, Implementation, Evaluation) (Public Relations Society of America, 2013).

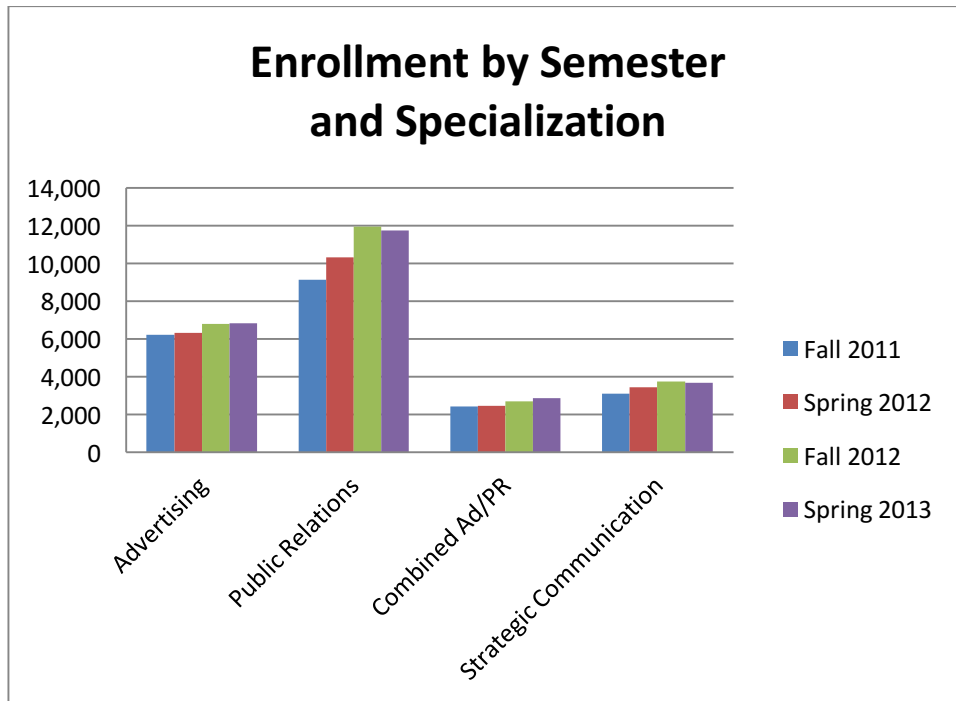
More recently, this merging of the disciplines of marketing, advertising and public relations can be seen in trade book titles like *The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR* (Ries & Ries, 2002), *The End of Marketing as We Know It* (Zyman, 2000) and *The End of Advertising as*

*We Know It* (Zyman, 2002). These writers note that public relations is closely tied to other forms of organizational communication such as advertising, marketing, branding, lobbying, issues management and social responsibility initiatives, and that in today's globalized and commercialized culture, the overlaps blur into other forms of organized and professionalized promotional communication. Wilcox, Cameron, Reber, and Shin (2013) see the move toward integration of advertising, marketing and public relations professions as accelerating since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in response to the emergence of new media. They note three industry trends that have fueled the move toward integration including:

1. downsizing and reengineering of organizations resulting in merged departments doing a greater variety of tasks
2. tightening of organization budgets forcing marketing and communication departments to find alternative communication techniques to offset high cost advertising
3. growing realization that advertising with its high cost, clutter of messages and lack of credibility with consumers is not the "silver bullet it used to be" (p. 17).

In his editorial, *Rethinking PR*, Greenberg (2009) urges journal readers to see the overlaps between advertising, marketing and public relations "as symptoms of a social world in which communication plays an increasingly strategic role in responding to contending and contentious forces of social change" (p. 185). One of the key factors contributing to integration is fragmentation and a more diverse and mobile audience that requires communicators to adapt (Larsen & Len-Rios, 2006). Also contributing to the growth of integrated curriculum programs is budget shortfalls, declining program and course enrollments in advertising and concerns by administrators of program duplication. Larsen and Len-Rios (2006) found that senior faculty members and administrators were more likely than younger faculty to agree that integration solved budget shortfalls. As can be seen in the Annual Survey of Journalism and Mass Communications Enrollment, the concept of integration of advertising and public relations

curriculum is still not fully accepted on campuses. The majority of enrollment still exists in separate advertising and public relations programs (see Figure 4).



*Figure 4. Enrollment by Semester and Specialization*

Figure presents enrollments by specialization or major over time from fall 2011 through spring 2013. Source for the figure is the Annual Survey of Journalism and Mass Communications enrollments.

As of Larsen and Len-Rios' 2006 study, only 13% of respondents described their program as *highly integrated* and less than half believed their current program was *somewhat or highly integrated*. Larsen and Rios also found a problem with the definition of the term integration among advertising and public relations educators with some educators defining integration not as the fusion of advertising, marketing and public relations concepts, but as a curriculum that required students to take courses in the humanities and business. Additionally, Larsen and Len-Rios (2006) found that programs did not agree on the name of the new integrated program with some opting for the title *strategic communications* over integrated *marketing communications*. Briones and Toth (2013) in a study comparing curriculum in public relations graduate programs to the recommendations of the 2006 Commission on Public Relations

Education report found a lack of adherence to the report and lack of uniformity across the 75 programs studied. The researchers found programs listed on websites under a variety of names and in a variety of academic homes. The most common program names were public relations (24%) and strategic communications (15%) and the most common academic home was communications (25%).

Public Relations educators responding to the Larsen and Len-Rios (2006) study were slightly more likely than advertising educators to support single-emphasis programs or separate programs in Advertising and Public Relations. The researchers note that “public relations, as a profession, has worked hard to gain a seat at the management table” (p. 44), and that an integrated curriculum may not “address the full scope of activities public relations professionals play in an organization since significant responsibilities exist that are unrelated to marketing” (p. 44). Research by the Commission on Public Relations Education (2006) supports the idea of separate public relations programs. The council’s report urges college administrators to create separate, independent programs for public relations instruction.

Despite the concerns of public relations educators and professionals, a number of units of journalism and mass communications have established integrated programs. Ross, Osborne and Richards (2006) found that the curriculum for integrated programs varied greatly. In their report rather than give a recommended curriculum, the researchers presented the curriculum of several programs as examples. Of the programs listed in the study the most commonly mentioned courses in both undergraduate and graduate programs included:

1. IMC/Strategic Communications media and database analysis
2. IMC/Strategic Communication research methods
3. IMC/Strategic Communication campaigns and/or management
4. IMC/Strategic Communication introduction or principles
5. IMC/Strategic Communication writing
6. IMC/Strategic Communication creative strategy
7. IMC/Strategic Communications ethics and/or law

Ross, Osborne and Richards (2008) found a higher percentage of the integrated or merged programs offered at the graduate level than at the undergraduate level. Of the 41 institutions that reported offering graduate programs, 16 (39%) offered a joint advertising and public relations master's degree. These joint programs had various titles including: Integrated Communication, Integrated Marketing Communication, Strategic Communication and Public Communication. Whatever the title, the trend toward integration is growing. The most recent enrollment report by the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communications (Becker, Vlad, & Simpson, 2014), recognizes strategic communications along with program titles that use both advertising and public relations in the name, and finds an increase from 2014 in programs with these names.

### **Status of Social Media and New Media Education**

Because of the newness of new and social media the number of scholarly articles addressing new and social media curriculum is limited. Moody and Bates (2013) note this research challenge pointing out that articles abound in trade publications, blogs and corporate websites, but few scholarly articles have been published. Additionally, social and new media research to date has been mostly anecdotal. Literature reviews point out that studies lack generalizability and control, cannot be used to make inferences about populations in different contexts and rely heavily on self-reported data (Pérez-Latre, Portilla, & Blanco, 2011; Tess, 2013).



Khang, Ki and Ye (2012) identified four phases of social media research development that coincide with the development of the medium.

1. The budding stage was from 1997 to 1999 during which many community tools began to support combinations of profiles and publicly articulated friends. Research in this phase focused on “social media itself” (p. 291).
2. The mainstream stage from 2000–2003 was characterized by the emergence of popular social networking sites (e.g., LinkedIn, MySpace). Research in this phase addressed “uses and users of social media” (p. 291).
3. The developing stage from 2004–2006 witnessed the emergence of YouTube and Facebook. Research in this phase emphasized the “effects of social media” (p. 291).
4. The advance stage began in 2007 when Twitter first gained popularity. Research in this phase considered “improving social media” (p. 291).

Social media researchers have noted a change not just in media behavior, but also in the culture and thought processes of media audiences. Pérez-Latre, Portilla and Blanco (2011) propose that social media does not only represent a change in communication delivery, but also a fundamental shift in the theories and concepts that underly mass communications and recommends that research must consider a change from mass to personal communication. Crook (2008) agrees suggesting that social media research needs to embrace a broader view by considering “*Web 2.0 mentality* rather than *Web 2.0 ‘technology’*” (p. 56). Crook argues that Web 2.0 technology is symptomatic of a fundamental change in cultural norms emphasizing participation, collaboration and self-confident creativity along with informality and irreverence.

In a review of social media research between 1997 and 2010 in advertising and public relations journals, Khang, Ki and Ye (2012) found a steadily increasing number of articles with the largest portion occurring between the years of 2005 to 2010. The researchers found that public relations journals had a higher percentage of social media research articles than advertising journals. Research topics in both advertising and public relations journals focused on social media usage, issues impacting use and its use as a communication tool. Articles in public relations journals demonstrated a more solid theoretical framework than those in advertising

journals. The most commonly used theoretical frameworks were “relationship management theory” and “agenda setting or framing theory” (p. 287).

Pérez-Latre, Portilla and Blanco (2011) note that studies on social media to date indicate a need for more research on:

1. differences between social media and the rest of online media
2. strategic communicators use of the Internet to better understand audiences
3. media operations’ monetization of social media delivery
4. how the “new normal” in journalism and mass communications is changing the relationship between communicator and receiver
5. implications the “new normal” has for journalism and mass communications education

Kolodzy, Grant, DeMars and Wilkinson (2014) note that despite the changes brought on by new technologies, mass media are successfully adapted, but the researchers call on mass communication educators to keep pace and implement sustainable innovation in curriculum.

Pavlik (2013) proposes that the problem for journalism and mass communication education is how to prepare future journalism and media professionals for an industry in radical transformation. Pavlik recommends that future media curriculum should emphasize innovation and digital media entrepreneurship and expand the interdisciplinary nature of digital storytelling by collaborating with other campus programs like information and computer science. He suggests that journalism and mass communication education should not simply add new programs, course offerings or interdisciplinary undertakings, but should undertake disruptive innovation like the kind that led Apple to reinvent the music industry with the introduction of the iPod.

## **Current New and Social Media Curriculum**

Research on social media instruction in units of journalism and mass communication is also limited, but some research exists for instruction in new media and technology skills and makes references to social media instruction and curriculum. The Annual Survey of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communications (Becker, Vlad, & Simpson, 2014) reported that 90% of schools are teaching the use of social media and 81% reported teaching how to create and use blogs. A high percentage of units (a range of 73% to 92%) also reported instruction in other new media skills including using the web in public relations and reporting; editing, writing and designing for the web; using video, audio, graphics, photos and slideshows on the web and doing digital storytelling. Less than 50% of the units (a range of 24% to 49%) reported instruction in using animation and citizen/audience produced content; assessing web analytics; driving traffic to websites; optimizing websites for search engines; managing online and web publishing; selling and creating advertising for the web and instruction in digital entrepreneurial start-up skills.

In content analyses of websites, researchers H. Kim (2012) and Auxier (2012) found that some units of journalism and mass communication are offering course work in new media. Auxier in a review of 188 Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communications (ASJMC) websites, found that only three (2%) of 187 programs offered undergraduate degrees and five (4%) of 124 programs offered graduate degrees in social or new media. The number of academic units offering sequences or tracks in new media or multimedia was greater, 41 (22%) undergraduate and 21 (17%) graduate programs. The researcher found more programs offering at least one course in new media, 81% of undergraduate and 64% of graduate programs. While most of the schools 52% had social media sites for the program (Facebook and Twitter were the

most popular platforms), in a closer analysis of ten top journalism programs as defined by Education-Portal.com, Auxier identified social media specific courses in only three. Of the three listed, the researcher mentioned blogging most and only listed social media in the title of two courses offered at Columbia University. Auxier's research reviewed only journalism degrees and did not consider other degree programs at the schools.

H. Kim (2012), in a review of 185 communication school websites, found that 50% of digital media courses were offered as general communication rather than courses specific to a particular discipline such as telecommunication, journalism, advertising or public relations. Kim suggests this may be reflective of the cross-disciplinary quality of digital media. Over half (55%) of digital media courses were skills courses including instruction in digital production, website design and multimedia presentation. The remaining courses taught conceptual content such as digital media management, law and cultural implications or used an integrated model for teaching concepts of communication with practical digital applications. Lin (Digital journalism, 2012) in an examination of over 500 journalism and communications program websites found 111 (22%) programs identifiable as digital or multimedia journalism.

When reviewing studies on new and social media education for strategic communications majors, research was limited to a few studies that found interest in the importance of new media instruction. The Professional Bond report issued by the Commission on Public Relations Education (2006) and the more recent Industry-Educator Summit on Public Relations Education (2015) note the importance of new media education in the public relations curriculum. These studies suggest that some colleges and universities are beginning to develop courses to teach skills necessary to use new technological tools. Among a list of 11 core skills, Larsen and Len-Rios (2006) note that strategic communication technology skills received a 4.02 mean score on a

5-point scale of importance, ranking it near the bottom of the list of skills. Additionally, the researchers found a statistical difference in the importance of technology instruction between advertising and public relations educators. Public relations educators placed slightly more importance on technology skills than advertising educators. The importance of new media education was also noted by Stacks, Botan and VanSlyke Turk (1999). A survey of educators and professionals rated new media instruction highly in a list of skills required for public relations majors with a mean score of 6.03 on a 7-point scale.

### **Structure of New and Social Media Curriculum**

Some researchers have considered what new media education in units of journalism and mass communications should offer. Merrin (2009) says that new media studies programs need to be “radically receptive to the present and informed about the past, following and deciphering the media worlds our students live in” (p. 27). He gives several guidelines for what the new curriculum in mass communications should **not** be:

1. It should not be a rejection of “broadcast era” media such as print, radio, cinema and television, but rather a discussion of their transformation in economics, production, distribution, reception and use.
2. It should not be a celebration of new media, but should recognize, confront and explore the changes caused by digital technologies.
3. New media studies should not be taught as a separate entity from media studies because one cannot exist without the other.
4. New media history should not be separated from other historical teaching. New media forms such as computing, digitability, networked communications, mobile telephony, gaming and more have separate histories that in some cases pre-date *broadcast era* media.
5. New media studies should not just be a study of western culture, but should consider the global history and culture of media.

A key question in the implementation of new and social media curriculum is whether the new content should be integrated into existing courses or taught separately in independent courses. Shumow and Sheerin (2013) found trends that suggest multimedia pedagogy may hold

the potential to bridge the divide between technical and critical thinking in mass communication education.

Kim (2012) suggests that much new media education stresses technology skills over fundamentals and critical thinking. The researcher recommends invisibility in the teaching of new and social media curriculum in journalism and mass communication favoring an integrated model of instruction in courses that blend skills with critical and theoretical understanding of the discipline. In a review of 87 digital journalism programs, Lin (2012) identified programs as:

1. *Fully integrated* – Students are required to take digital and multimedia courses along with courses in reporting and production for both print and broadcast platforms.
2. *Partly integrated* – Students are required to take digital and multimedia courses and can choose a focus or concentration in either print or broadcast platforms.
3. *Siloed* – Students choose a concentration/track that is focused on digital/multimedia journalism separate from concentration/tracks in print or broadcast journalism.

The researcher found that 46% of the programs reviewed were *fully integrated* programs. In a further analysis *fully integrated* programs, Kim found two curriculum structures. The first was divided into two parts, required and elective courses, and the second was divided into foundation, basic skills, advanced skills and topical cluster courses.

Bor (2014), in a qualitative case study of integration of social media teaching in a broadcast journalism course, found several themes that should be considered when adding social media to a course including instruction in ethics as it applies to social media; emphasizing the potential of engaging audiences; focusing on employability beyond the classroom; technical instructing on how to proficiently use social media programs; and explaining the differences between social media for personal versus professional use.

In a content analysis of new media courses, Kim (2012) found a more balanced emphasis on skills and conceptual knowledge in strategic communication curriculum than in journalism, telecommunication and business/marketing curriculum. Journalism and telecommunication

curriculum tended to offer more skills based courses while business/marketing curriculum offered more conceptual courses. Kim suggests that the results indicate the challenge of teaching integrated courses that blend digital skills instruction with conceptual concepts. The researcher also notes the need for further research to understand the intent and philosophy underlying the curricular structure of new media education as well as trends in the level, discipline type and conceptual/skills blend of digital course content.

Quesenberry (2016) in an article on revamping curriculum in an advertising program noted the importance of specialized skills courses and allowing students room in the curriculum to specialize. In the revamped program, Quesenberry reduced core requirements, added flexibility that makes room for and requires student specialization and made a structure for future growth.

### **Social/New Media as a Teaching Tool in Mass Communication**

Some literature in journalism and mass communication reviews social media as a tool for teaching rather than the instruction of students in how to use social media in journalism and mass communications. In a comparison of online discussions using social media for classroom discussion, Clayton, Hettche and Kim (2014) found that students' online engagement mirrors their offline discussion behavior. McCorkle, McCorkle and Payan (2014) tested the use of blogging in an eMarketing and study abroad courses and found students enjoyed the assignment and felt they had gained knowledge of social media skills that would be helpful for their career. Hickerson and Kothari (2017) surveyed the use of social media in the classroom among journalism and communications students and faculty. The researchers found that students and faculty agreed about the importance of incorporating social media-based activities in journalism or communications courses because it is expected in the industry, but faculty and students

differed on their concerns about the practice of social media in the classroom. Faculty noted the difficulty of getting students to produce professional content and students felt that using social media for course work imposed unfairly on their strictly social networks.

Casteneda (2011) found that most units of journalism and mass communications were offering some technology-enhanced learning opportunities, but only 9% of respondents offered online certificates or degree programs. Of those offering online degrees, 78% were master degree programs. Of units offering or planning to offer online degrees, 86% indicated use or plans to use blogs, 71% podcasts and 64% social media. At the time of the research, a number of respondents indicated plans to increase online learning offerings including certificate and degree programs. In interviews, the researcher found the main reason for developing an online program was to reach a broader pool of students. Other frequently cited reasons for program development included receiving a directive from the state, university, school or department administrators to expand online offerings and a history of offering distance or auxiliary campus learning. Casteneda also found that the most important factors needed to establish an online learning program were faculty commitment, technological know-how and administrative support.

Tess (2013) reviewed empirical studies of social media use by faculty and found that scholarly studies of social media use in the classroom have been mostly action research, content analysis or surveys. The researcher attributes the lack of strong empirical studies to the fact that some professors are “not willing to accept the tool (social media) carte blanche preferring theoretical or pragmatic reasons for an implementation” (p. 3) and are “likely in an experimental stage of implementation” (p. 3). Tess recommends research that considers “not only the practical integration of the tool into course goals, but also (and more importantly) the theoretical framework for implementing the technology as a learning resource” (p. 3).



Davis, Deil-Amen, Rios-Aguilar and Canche (2012) found that most studies on the use of social media technology in higher education focused on four-year institutions, traditional student populations and used self-reported data. Research has focused heavily on racial/ethnic ties and privacy settings on networks and not on the meaning-making aspect of student social media use. The researchers found that most use is stand-alone. Social media is used by institutions, colleges and departments. It is used by alumni and recruitment offices and by individual faculty, but most institutions have no systematic plan for its integration.

### **Professional Expectations for Social/New Media Education**

Research among advertising and public relations professionals related to new and social media skills show a gap between course offerings and skills needed. Beachboard and Weidman (2013) found that small agencies professionals want strategic communication graduates that have multiple types of expertise including computer and new media skills. Several survey respondents called on educators to provide students with more interactive work including Search Engine Optimization (SEO), paid search display advertising for local web and mobile applications and new media analytics.

Auger and Cho (2016) in a study of university websites and public relations job announcements found a statistically significant difference in the percentage of university programs that offered new media courses and the current job listings that expressed a need for those skills. Only 25% of public relations curricula include a course in new or online media while 53% of job descriptions require knowledge and experience in the area. Especially significant was the need by employers for social media skills with 68% of employers requesting experience in social network sites, blogs and microblogging.

Recently researchers (Capgemini Consulting, 2014; Moses, 2014; Online Marketing Institute, 2013) have identified a *Digital Talent Gap* between the digital needs of organizations and the talent available both within the organization and among the pool of new hires. Key areas of weakness include social media, mobile, content marketing and digital analytics. A gap of as much as 37% (see Figure 5) was found between what professions believed their organization needed and the talent available.

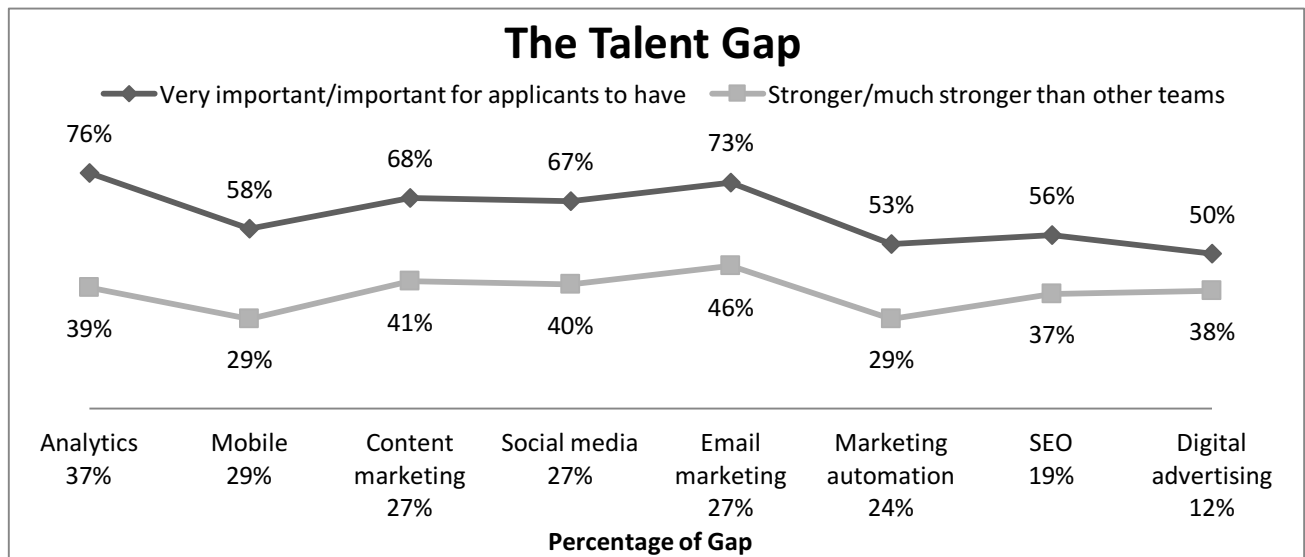


Figure 5. The Talent Gap

Figure presents results of a survey of industry professionals; Source for the figure is the State of Digital Marketing Talent, Online Marketing Institute.

Neill and Schauster (2015) in a comparative study of 29 advertising and public relations executives also identified shortfalls in the digital education of strategic communications students particularly in the area of new services and roles of recent graduates. Neill and Schauster said research participants noted the need for skills in social listening, online community management, native advertising, social media analytics and programmatic buying. In referring to the pace of change in the industry and the knowledge of faculty, Neill and Schauster quoted one strategic communications executive as saying that faculty cannot stay “abreast of, on top of, have access to, etc. the technologies like agencies can” to adequately prepare students for the software, service-based tools and platforms that are driving the industry today.

Moody and Bates (2013) found that students have some understanding of basic characteristics of SEO, but do not know how to apply it to public relations or crisis management situations. Additionally, students understand the importance of SEO for an organization, but do not feel prepared to produce or use the technique. Shumow and Sheerin (2013) found that while students enrolled in a multimedia course knew they would be expected to have digital skills when they graduated, they were not sure what skills they might need or how to get them. Students in the courses noted that it was challenging taking courses in a field where so much was constantly changing.

The researchers note that this gap between skills needed and course offerings may be temporary as programs adjust to the demands of the profession, or it may be the skills are being taught in courses that do not include new or social media in the title or course description.

### **Curriculum Change**

Change has been part of media and strategic communications from the beginning. Technology created the industries and technology is constantly changing the industry. In his explanation of modern media as the extension of man, McLuhan (1964) describes new media as displacing or causing to become obsolete older media. Consider for example the impact of radio on newspapers in the 1920s or television on radio in the 1950s. In both cases, the medium continued to exist even after the displacing technology became common, but the new technology forever altered the old. For decades the mass communication industries have managed to either cram new technologies into their existing process or adapted to accommodate the technology. Because of the invention of radio, readers no longer felt the need to receive two newspapers a day and many evening newspaper companies merged with their morning competitors. It did not mean that newspapers were not needed rather that newspapers had to alter their delivery system

to remain viable. The newspapers adapted to the change and managed to continue in a new state delivering only one newspaper daily to local markets. Because of the invention of television, radio changed its content to focus on music rather than drama. The radio industry continued to exist, but it adapted and found a new market for its medium by connecting with the music industry. Today the technology is causing evolution in media and communications industries again. The Internet is changing how communication is received and media industries are again evolving to adapt to change. Thus, for decades, media and communications industries have been examples of change theory. To begin to understand how this change is impacting higher education, it is helpful to understand how change theory has been applied in studies of technology impact.

### **Using Change Theory**

Although researchers have used a number of change theories to explain media evolution, two commonly cited theories are Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation and Lewin's Change Model. Castaneda (2011) on the development of online education programs in units of journalism and mass communication and Thornton and Keith (2009) on the adoption of media convergence by newspaper and television organizations represent two examples

Castaneda (2011) applied Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovation theory with Christensen's (2008) expansion on disruptive innovation. The researcher found that a little more than 13% of accredited journalism schools and programs had adopted or soon plan to adopt online degree programs. This would place these schools in the *innovators* and *early adopters* stage of Rogers' continuum of adoption. Castaneda noted that this percentage of adoption puts online learning in units of journalism and mass communication within the 10% to 20% range that Rogers identified as needed for an adoption to *take off*. Castaneda predicted that there would be a

surge of online programs in the near future and these *innovators* and *early adopters* would be better positioned than the *early majority*, *late majority*, and *laggards* to capture the potential market for online students. Using Christensen's expansion of Rogers' theory, Castaneda found reasons for identifying online learning as disrupting the market of education by targeting non-traditional students who cannot or do not want to attend classes in a residential setting, or simply offering a sustaining innovation that will outpace what the market is ready to accept.

Thornton and Keith (2009) applied Lewin's Change Model with Schein's expansions to the study of convergence in media. The researchers found that the failure of convergence collaborations between print and television organizations was consistent with Lewin's three stages of change – unfreezing, changing and refreezing. Thornton and Keith identified three possible reasons for convergence collaboration failures linked to the Lewin/Schein model. The first reason was that the converged partnerships did not complete the third stage of Lewin's change model – refreezing. Secondly, the researchers note that it is possible that the change to convergence was not yet the drastic situation that the Lewin model notes is needed for change to happen. Finally, they note that the participating organizations may have simply changed direction at stage two of Lewin's model and moved from a convergence partnership to webvergence ownership. Also they found that journalists in the converged partnerships lacked Schien's expansions of the unfreezing process including a belief gap and both survival and learning anxieties. Thornton and Keith note that only further research and time will tell if the move by media to webvergence will have the sustainability to create the equilibrium Lewin identifies as necessary for refreezing to occur.

Like these previous studies of change in mass communications, this research will draw on change theories and models, specifically the work of Lewin and Schein, to explain the processes

of curriculum change driven by the disruptive technologies of social media in strategic communications programs.

### **Kurt Lewin and Change Theory**

Lewin (1947) proposed a three-stage model of change commonly referred to as *Unfreeze, Change, Freeze (or Refreeze)*. The first phase of Lewin's change model, Unfreezing, requires the participant to become aware that change is needed or wanted. Burnes (2004) notes that Lewin believed human behavior has a basis in a "quasi-stationary equilibrium supported by a complex field of driving and reinstruction forces" (p. 985). Lewin (1947) says that the process of unfreezing varies according to the case. He notes that "to break open the shell of complacency and self-righteousness it is sometimes necessary to bring about deliberately an emotional stir up" (p. 35). It is this destabilization or unfreezing that Burnes (2004) says is needed before old behavior can be discarded and new behavior adopted.

Schein (1995) expanded on Lewin's three-step theory illuminating Lewin's process by identifying the steps in the process of unfreezing. Schein divided the unfreezing stage of Lewin's model into three processes, each of which has to be present to some degree for readiness and motivation to change to happen. Schein's three processes include:

1. Individuals encounter disconfirming information that leads to dissatisfaction.
2. Individuals accept the disconfirming information leading to survival anxiety or the feeling of a need to change. This change can then be thwarted by learning anxieties such as defensiveness and resistance.
3. Individuals seek the creation of psychological safety or overcoming of anxieties to change. Wirth (2004) writes that "it is necessary to move past the possible anxieties for change to progress. This can be accomplished by either having the survival anxiety be greater than the learning anxiety or, preferably, learning anxiety could be reduced" (p. 1).

The second phase of Lewin's (1947) change theory involves moving or changing. After becoming sufficiently dissatisfied with the current conditions, the individuals gain a real desire to change. Schein (1995) describes the moving or changing as a process of "cognitive restructuring" (p. 5). Schein notes that imitation of role models and looking for personalized solutions through trial-and-error learning aid change. The third and final stage in the process of change is refreezing. Lewin (1947) describes behavioral change as a slow process.

Relating Lewin's theory to curriculum change in strategic communications, the driving forces are the disruptive technological changes brought about by the development of social media and the resinstruction forces are the established structures in programs and institutions of higher education for curriculum change. Strategic communications programs have achieved a state of equilibrium with a curriculum structure that has changed little in over 10 years (Commission on Public Relations Education, 2006; Ross, Osborne, & Richards, 2006). The time has come for change.

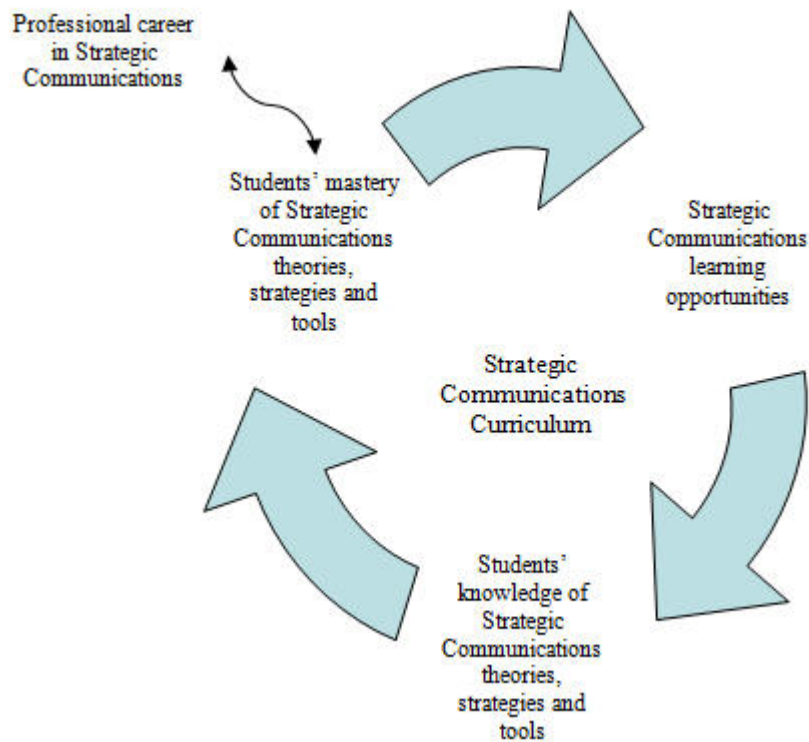
### **Organizations and Change**

Organization change theorists, Fullan (1995) and Senge (1990) question the third stage of Lewin's model, refreezing. Both theorists believe change is a circular rather than linear process. Fullan (1995) notes that to manage the dynamically complex world of change, an organization must become a constant learner. Fullan proposes that organizations must embrace change and see it not as a problem, but as a friend. He notes that organization change lives in a world of paradox between individual development and collaborative growth and between top-down leadership change and bottom-up learner-centered change. Fullan points out that every person in an organization can be a change agent, and true change happens not from organization mandates but by allowing individual change agents to act.

Senge (1990) suggests that improvement, learning and perspective should also be considered as part of any organization's growth. Senge agrees with Fullan proposing that learning is important for organization improvement, but notes that for learning to happen, the organization must change perspective. Senge suggests that changing perspective requires an organization to become a *learning organization*. Learning organizations are able to step back and look at underlying mental models, learning problems and limitations to growth. Senge identifies the technologies necessary to create a *learning organization* as systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision and team learning. Senge identifies systems thinking as the key discipline to success on which others are built, calling this technology the fifth discipline. Systems thinking requires organizations to consider the whole rather than its parts. The key to systems thinking is what Senge calls a shift of mind or *paradigm shift*. Senge uses *paradigm shifting* to help people see organizations as circular rather than linear.

Applying Fullan (1995), Lewin (1947) and Senge (1990) to curriculum change in strategic communications would require strategic communications programs to unfreeze from a broadcast era curriculum structure, embrace the idea of change, become a learning organization, use systems thinking to change and refreeze into a model of continuous change. Applying Senge's ideas to curriculum change requires organizations to view curriculum as circular rather than linear. Thus a curriculum model for strategic communications might look like this (see Figure 6):





*Figure 6. Model of Strategic Communications Curriculum*

Figure presents a model of the cycle of curriculum change in strategic communications programs; In this model, curriculum change is viewed as an ongoing process fed by knowledge from the industry and constantly reevaluated and changed by educators.

### **Curriculum Change in Higher Education**

Curriculum change in higher education, like Lewin said of any change, is a slow process. Castaneda (2011) notes this issue in research of online learning programs in units of journalism and mass communications. The researcher found that how faculty members behave, what they embrace, and what they reject related to curriculum and program changes depends on the atmosphere in the educational organizations where they work. Describing change at educational institutions as moving at a glacial pace, Castaneda found that journalism educators will have to “profoundly rethink decades of fairly standardized reporting and writing pedagogies” (p. 370) to adopt online education. Other authors (Crook, 2008; Faison & Montague, 2013; Greenberg, 2009; Hermida, 2010; Louvel, 2013; Merrin, 2009) have also noted the slow pace of change in higher education curriculum.

Every change requires the approval of curriculum committees beginning at the department level and extending through school or college and university levels. It requires collaboration with administrators, faculty and accrediting organizations. Unlike curriculum in secondary and elementary schools that is determined by the state, curriculum in higher education is determined by individual faculty as they prepare to teach a course. Generally, higher education curriculum does not work from a prescribed list of outcomes set down by a governing organization, but evolves from institutional history, faculty knowledge of professional standards and departmental evaluations. In a look at curriculum change, Faison and Montague (2013) describe it as a dynamic process involving rigorous review and frequent adjustments. Faison and Montague discuss the three-year process experienced by a college nursing program. The process began with an extensive literature review, a comprehensive analysis of program strengths and weaknesses, consultation with a nursing education specialist and professional development workshops that addressed such issues as program vision, mission, philosophy, organization framework, outcomes and objectives. The emphasis throughout the process was on the need for on-going evaluation.

Louvel (2013) analyzed academics strategic behavior in curriculum development of 20 post-graduate programs in nanotechnology and at three university campuses. The researcher found that the programs used a bricolage rather than an engineer approach to curriculum change. Academics in these programs developed curriculum without following any predetermined plan by combining available resources rather than assessing the problem and then gathering resources needed to create a solution. The researchers found that academics allowed these new programs to evolve gradually as participants interacted and final configurations were modified by trial and error.

Louvel (2013) identified two types of actions taken by academics in program change. In the first action, academics identified their existing resources including existing courses, academic colleagues, equipment, financial and institutional support and reputational assets. Secondly, the academics designed programs by assembling courses, experimenting with various combinations and associating elements with each other in new course contexts.

Louvel (2013) found that curriculum development in these programs took three forms. In the first form, academics acted pro-actively using manipulation strategies to craft a specialized product that used their existing network of research colleagues to overcome local obstacles to their projects. Academics in the second form created inter-disciplinary programs using compromise strategies to amalgamate dispersed courses and available resources from multiple departments. Academics in the last form also used compromise strategies to renew or reorient existing programs. These programs added modules that reinforced subjects already taught and utilized repertoires of scarce existing resources. The researchers found a great variance in renewed programs between research- and vocational-oriented institutions. Vocational programs benefited from partnerships with industry while research programs struggled to provide adequate resources and facilities for majors and were sometimes forced to limit enrollment. In some cases, academics in the renewed programs used avoidance strategies by composing programs that benefited from the new label without making significant content changes.

Louvel's (2013) research describes a number of pressures placed on higher education academics participating in curriculum change. The researcher noted that academics faced *contradictory strategies* such as institutional requirements, the competitive marketplace, rules and norms of disciplinary organizations, local politics, the lack of clear models, shortages of resources and professional interests. While academics expressed mixed feelings of pride,

autonomy, pro-activity, adaptability and flexibility, Louvel found that the change process was time-consuming, required many interactions between participants and involved several rounds of experimentation.

## **Conclusion**

McLuhan (2000) proposes that new media technologies cause changes not only in media content, but also the framework or society into which the new media are introduced, thus, proving his statement that “the medium is the message” (p. 38). The technologies that have driven the development of new and social media are good examples of McLuhan’s theories. These technologies have changed and are changing the way people, industries, governments, organizations and other institutions are communicating.

This chapter has demonstrated that communications industries have always been at the forefront of technological changes, and thus, are usually the first to be impacted. Thus, new media technologies are causing evolutionary changes in communications industries in the United States. Today, communication’s content is not controlled by an elite group of gatekeepers in media industries, but is open to all. This chapter has demonstrated that new and social media are moving media industries from the traditional, one-to-many, closed *broadcast era* to a new, one-to-one, open *postbroadcast era* communications system.

These evolutionary changes in the communications industry are impacting not only the industry, but also industry professionals and institutions of higher education that train professionals. The changes to how people communicate impacts all types of communications professionals including those who work in media industries directly, such as journalists, and those who use media properties to communicate for others, identified in this study as strategic communicators.

The development of strategic communications education has paralleled the development of the communications industry. Development of education programs have been spurred by industry leaders, including Joseph Pulitzer and Edward Bernays. It has also been directed by reports sponsored by such notable organizations as the Ford and Carnegie foundations, the Commission on Public Relations Education, the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications and more. These influences have led strategic communications education to a curriculum within primarily journalism and mass communications units.

By 2006, strategic communications curriculum had stabilized with only slight changes to an accepted list of courses. With the development of social media, researchers, professional organizations and accrediting agencies have noted a widening talent gap between industry skills needed and abilities within the workforce. These groups have called for higher education programs to keep pace with the evolutionary change in the industry, but as curriculum change researchers (Castaneda, 2011; Crook, 2008; Faison & Montague, 2013; Greenberg, 2009; Hermida, 2010; Louvel, 2013; Merrin, 2009) have found, change in higher education is notoriously slow.

Lewin (1947) described change as a 3-step process – unfreezing, changing and refreezing. Researchers (Fullan, 1995; Schein, 1995; Senge, 1990) have added interpretations and modifications to Lewin’s theory including steps to the unfreezing process and recommendations that the whole process should be seen as circular rather than linear.

This study will seek to describe the status of social media education for strategic communications majors and discuss the phenomenon of change in strategic communications programs due to the shift from traditional *broadcast era* media to social *postbroadcast era* media in the communications industry.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS

Silence – that is where Bogdan and Biklen (2007) say a phenomenological inquiry should begin. It should begin with the researcher acting as if they know nothing about the idea being studied, and then studying the idea to learn what it actually is. This study will examine the phenomenon of change in strategic communications programs due to the shift from *broadcast era* mass communication to *postbroadcast era* social, interactive personal communication. It will look at the idea of change and how programs have done or are doing it. This chapter describes how the researcher will study the idea of change. It provides a description of the plan to begin action. The researcher did not know how the participants would perceive the changes that are occurring in academic programs, or if they even would believe that a change is occurring. Thus, the researcher began from a point of silence, not knowing what would be learned about the change experience. This chapter explains the theoretical framework for the research, identifies the goals of the research, outlines the research design, introduces the instruments used, explains how collected data was analyzed and addresses the known limitations of the study.

#### Theoretical Framework

Because this research will seek to understand the phenomenon of curriculum change and social media instruction integration in strategic communication programs, it will use a phenomenological theoretical framework. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) note two paradigms for research theory: the positivist approach of Homans (1967) and the interpretivist approach of Geertz (1979). For Homans, positivist theory relies on a set of interrelated, ordered propositions where some propositions may be deductible from others permitting explanation of a phenomenon. Glesne and Peshkin state that the ultimate goal of a positivist is the development of

universal human behavior and societal functioning concepts. Geertz's (1973) interpretivist theory is centered on the concept of making sense out of social interaction. Glesne and Peskin see interpretivist theory as proceeding from *thick description*.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) define *thick description* as going beyond just basic reporting of an act, which is thin description, and probing intentions, motives, meanings, contexts, situations and circumstances of action. Glesne and Peshkin state that the goal of interpretivists is "providing understanding of direct 'lived experience' instead of abstract generalization" (p. 19). Bailey (2007) notes that "research undertaken with an interpretive paradigm in mind focuses on social relationships, as well as the mechanisms and processes through which members in a setting navigate and create their social worlds" (p. 53). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) describe this focus on the meanings and interactions of people as a phenomenological approach to qualitative research. Brennen (2013) describes this approach to qualitative research as a constructivism orientation saying that constructivists "lean towards an anti-foundational understanding of truth, rejecting any permanent standards" (p. 9). This research will take a phenomenological, interpretivist, constructivist approach to understanding curriculum change in strategic communications programs.

In addition to these paradigms, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) note four types of theoretical frameworks. The researchers identify the types as empirical generalizations, causal or theoretical models, middle range propositions and conceptual frameworks. Both empirical generalizations and causal or theoretical models are more commonly used by quantitative researchers. Middle range propositions, according to Glesne and Peshkin, can be used to explain a whole class of phenomena and provide a larger focus than the empirical or model frameworks. Glesne and Peshkin describe the conceptual theoretical framework as referring to the entire process of

qualitative inquiry. In conceptual frameworks, the theoretical concept provides the theoretical framing as well as the methodology and other substantive aspects of the study. This research will use a middle proposition framework to study the phenomena of change. It will begin with the middle proposition of industry change from *broadcast era* mass communication to *postbroadcast era* social, interactive personal communication, and study how that change has caused changes in curriculum and course content. It will seek to understand what changes have been made, how they are perceived and how they occurred.

### **Research Goals**

The goal of this research is to address the phenomenon of adaptation by strategic communications programs to the *media shift* to social media and the *digital talent gap* this shift has caused. This study will evaluate the status of social media education and discuss the phenomenon of change in undergraduate strategic communications programs. It will review curriculum structure, course offerings, and course content. In this study, the researcher will explore the processes of curriculum change that strategic communications programs are using to adapt to the new social media paradigm. It will also explore grounded theory on the middle proposition of the media shift from *broadcast era* mass communication to *postbroadcast era* social, interactive and personal communication. The study will address the following research questions:

- R<sub>1</sub> What is the percentage of undergraduate strategic communications programs in the United States that include new media and/or social media concepts or skills in course titles or descriptions?
- R<sub>2</sub> For those undergraduate strategic communications programs that include social media in the curriculum, what social media concepts and skills are taught?



R<sub>3</sub> What processes of change have been used to integrate social media education into undergraduate strategic communications programs in the United States?

### **Research Design**

To understand the changes and the process of change in strategic communications curriculum, this study used a mixed methods research design. Mixed methods research involves collecting, analyzing and interpreting both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a series of studies investigating the same phenomena (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). Terrell (2012) states that many social science researchers now believe that no major problem area should be studied exclusively with one research method. He notes that quantitative studies provide researchers with the answer to “if” questions and qualitative studies to “how or why” questions. This study will use a content analysis to determine *if* strategic communications programs are offering instruction in social media and interviews to determine *how* programs have changed instruction to include social instruction and *why*.

According to Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009), mixed methods research design has risen in popularity since the 1960s and is now poised to become a leading paradigm for research. However, the researchers point out that one of the major problems in mixed methods research has been the plethora of research designs within the methodology. Leech and Onwuegbuzie cite a number of researchers that have attempted to develop typologies, but describe most systems as either too complicated or oversimplified and inconsistent. Leech and Onwuegbuzie offer a typology that divides research into eight designs according to a continuum based on the level of mixing from partial to full, time orientation from concurrent to sequential and emphasis from equal to dominant status. Terrell (2012) identifies six approaches for conducting mixed-methods research based on the theoretical perspective of the research, priority of strategy, sequence of

data collections and point at which data from the two methods will be integrated in a study. This study used Terrell's sequential explanatory strategy. In this strategy quantitative data is collected and analyzed first, and then qualitative data is collected and analyzed. Both phases of the research are given equal priority and data from the two phases is integrated during interpretation of results. This strategy focuses on using qualitative methods to explore quantitative results in greater detail. Terrell's sequential explanatory is consistent with the fully mixed sequential equal status design proposed by Leech and Onwuegbuzie. Both designs include quantitative and qualitative objectives and use quantitative and qualitative data collection, analysis and inference techniques equally and in sequential order.

The content analysis phase of this research was an analysis of university and college websites to determine curriculum offerings in new and social media and the percentage of a sample of programs with new and social media offerings. Riffe, Lacy and Fico (1998) identify three main purposes for conducting a content analysis as – describing messages, inferring meaning about messages or inferring context of production or consumption from the messages. This analysis described curriculum messages for social media courses and concepts in strategic communications programs. The list of colleges and universities for analysis were drawn from the 2014 publication *Where Shall I go to Study Advertising and Public Relations?* (Ross & Richards, 2014) and the 2015 list of accredited units found on the ACEJMC website (Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, 2015). For the content analysis a sample of college or university websites was drawn from the list and were reviewed to determine the presence and type of strategic communications program(s) and results were recorded using spreadsheet software. On the website for each unit with a strategic communications program, the

researcher reviewed the program home page, curriculum requirement pages and course description pages for undergraduate programs in strategic communications.

From the content analysis, the researcher identified a sample of programs for interview. The interview phase of the research sequentially followed the content analysis phase and focused on understanding the phenomena of change in strategic communications programs through the use of interviews. Patton (2002) distinguishes qualitative samples from quantitative samples by the sample size and the technique for selection. Patton notes that qualitative samples are small to permit in-depth inquiry of a phenomenon and advocates for selection of information-rich cases that offer data important to the central purpose of the study. The interview phase of this study used a proportionate stratified sampling technique. The researcher endeavored, as much as possible from available information, to select information-rich strategic communications programs that had a high number of social or new media mentions and/or have recently made curriculum changes to add new or social media instruction. Following sample selection, the researcher attempted to interview at least one administrator and faculty member in the selected programs. Interviews can be classified as one of four types – informal, unstructured, semi-structured and structured (Berger, 2000; Brennen, 2013). This research used semi-structured interviews to describe what processes programs have or are using to unfreeze, change and refreeze into a new curriculum or process of continuous change. A flexible interview guide was used to provide consistency for all interviews. The guide served as a *conversation starter* to make sure that certain broad topic areas were addressed (Berger, 2000). All interviews were conducted between April 2016 and April 2017. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, coded and analyzed. Themes and metathemes were derived from the data using Bogden and

Biklen (2007) coding categories including codes for setting/context, situation, perspectives held, processes, activities, events and strategies.

Following data collection and analysis for the interview phase, results of both phases were interpreted using descriptive statistics and gestalt analysis to derive a holistic perspective of the phenomenon of curriculum change and the influences of the transition from *broadcast era* to *postbroadcast era* media on strategic communications programs.

### **Population and Sample**

When conducting content analysis research, Davis (1997) recommends operationally defining the sample universe and specifying a sample plan. The sample universe for the content analysis phase of the research was compiled from the units identified on the 2015 ACEJMC accredited units website (Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, 2015) and the booklet published by the American Academy of Advertising *Where Shall I Go to Study Advertising and Public Relations?* (Ross & Richards, 2014). This yielded a sample universe of 160 programs. This universe was analyzed to determine the presence of a strategic communications program, and all units not offering a strategic communications program were eliminated resulting in a population of 154 schools. The population was stratified by type of curriculum program. The first two curriculum groups combined advertising and public relations into one major, but one group offered specializations in both advertising and public relations and the other group offered no specializations. The third curriculum group offered two separate majors in advertising and public relations. The last group offered majors in only one area either advertising or public relations. A stratified random sample of 115 programs was drawn from the population. The content analysis then examined strategic communications program websites published between July 2015 and March 2016. On unit

websites, the researcher viewed and evaluated the content of available Internet pages that related to that program's required curriculum and that described program courses such as curriculum guides, course catalogs and program checklists. The content was analyzed using a coding book and coding form (see Appendixes A and B) to record data for each program.

For the interview phase of the research, the results of the content analysis was divided according to curriculum group. The resulting groups of institutions were analyzed according to the number of mentions of new or social media concepts in course titles and descriptions as identified by the content analysis. Using indexing, programs were ranked according to the number of new and social media mentions. The researcher contacted institutions from the content analysis sample within each of the four curriculum groups and with the highest index ranking for the interviews.

Careful attention was given to choosing institutions other than the author's own institution so the researcher avoided the backyard problem of qualitative research discussed by Glesne and Peshkin (1992). Additionally, attention was given to the relationship of the researcher to participants. Both Bogdan and Biklen (2007) and Glesne and Peshkin make reference to the participant-observation continuum in qualitative research. This research falls into the complete observer range of the continuum. The data-gathering technique was interviews. The researcher endeavored to contact and interview both administrators and faculty members at the institutions to obtain a balance between the two perspectives on curriculum. Efforts were made at each sample institution to contact participants whose primary responsibilities involved oversight or instruction in strategic communications and social or new media instruction. Interviews explored social media instruction and changes in the strategic communications program using an interview guide (see Appendix D).

## Instrumentation

Two instruments were used for this research. The first, a content analysis coding form (see Appendix C) was used to evaluate program websites. The coding system was divided into 7 categories and 29 dimensions (see Appendix C). Davis (1997) notes that content analysis categories and dimensions should be clearly labeled, directly related to research questions and flow from prior research. This coding form addressed the first two research questions, and provided information to select the sample of interview participants for the third question.

The first two categories on the coding form provided demographic information on Carnegie classification, accreditation, size and degree structure of the strategic communications program. The next two categories were used to determine the presence of social media and related new media programs and courses offered by the academic unit. These categories addressed R<sub>1</sub> on the percentage of courses in strategic communications programs that include new media and/or social media concepts or skills in the title or course description. The next three categories addressed R<sub>2</sub> on what social media concepts and skills the academic unit is teaching. The first category was used to identify social media and related new media keywords. The second two categories used a standardized list of concepts drawn from research studies on the skills needed by media professionals and curriculum content by Auger & Cho (2016), Beachboard and Weidman (2013), Becker, Vlad, and Simpson (2014), Moody and Bates (2013), Online Marketing Institute (2013), Shumow and Sheerin (2013), and Van Dijck (2013).

The second instrument was a guide for interviews of program administrators and faculty members (see Appendix D). The interview questions were based on the general literature about social media learning, the processes of curriculum change and change theories by Lewin (1947), Fullan (1995), Schein (1995), and Senge (1990). Brennan (2013) divides interview questions into

icebreaker, probing and difficult questions. This interview guide used one icebreaker question on the participant's responsibilities in the program. Probing questions are structured along the theories of change proposed by Lewin and expanded by Schein. The next set of questions probe the unfreezing step in Lewin's theory and the disconfirming information needed to motivate change proposed by Schein. The last set of questions probe the change step in Lewin's theory and address the learning anxieties or resistances to change that must be overcome for change to happen added by Schein. Finally, the ending questions seek to determine if the academic unit has begun Lewin's refreeze step or if they are following a more circular, continuous view of change as proposed by Fullan and Senge. Additionally, questions also probe the degree of social media integration based on research by Kim (2012), and the process of academic change based on research by Louvel (2013). The final questions provide demographic information on the program.

These instruments were reviewed by a panel of experts and revised. The instruments were presented for additional review to the institutional review board before use.

### **Data Analysis**

Content analysis was evaluated using descriptive statistics and emergent themes. Units were sorted according to the degree of integration of advertising and public relations curriculum in the strategic communications program – dual, combined, combined with specializations or single program. Davis (1997) notes that all content analysis is measured at the nominal level, so only descriptive statistics were used for data analysis. Count and percentage statistics were used to evaluate program and concept categories. For keyword analysis, the researcher used frequency statistics, count and percentage. REMEMBER to comment on the work of your classmate. I won't grade until Friday. Try to comment so you won't lose comment points.

Interviews were coded using an evaluation of emergent themes. Brennan (2013) describes interview data analysis as a series of steps beginning with data review and theme identification. Following the initial data review, themes were identified and a theme coding sheet developed. Then data was reviewed again and coded according to theme categories on the data coding sheet. Davis (1997) recommends the addition of a second identification of themes known as metathemes. Following analysis for metathemes, relevant quotations that support the theme categories were listed and where possible numerical counts of themes were recorded.

Results of data analysis was presented using tables, charts and detailed descriptions.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study has several limitations. While using two sources for the content analysis universe and interview population allowed the study to reach both ACEJMC-accredited and non-accredited programs, the study does not include all strategic communications programs in the United States. Thus, the sample is not completely representative. While programs were randomly selected from the population, the sample is not a random sample. It is worth noting that ACEJMC-accredited programs must undergo a rigorous self-study and three-day site visit from accreditation teams every six years to ensure ongoing improvement in the quality of strategic communications instruction. However, financial and time constraints prohibit the inclusion of more non-accredited programs in the study.

The content analysis phase of the study is limited by the content available on unit websites. The content of these websites may not be the most current information on a program's curriculum due to a lack of diligence by a unit in maintaining its website content and the length of time necessary to make changes to higher education curriculum. It is possible that programs



may have changed curriculum or course descriptions that are not reported on the unit website or may be in the process of changing curriculum.

Content analysis is limited by the operational definitions established by the researcher and the reliability of the coding. Operational definitions, content analysis categories and dimensions, interview interpretation and theme analysis reflect the theories, views and beliefs of the researcher. Interviews are limited by respondent's ability to answer truthfully, remember accurately, and share useful information (Berger, 2000).

### **Reliability and Validity**

Most researchers (Berger, 2000; Brennen, 2013; Merriam, 1995; Patten, 1997) agree that seldom, if ever, can a research study be perfectly valid. Patten describes validity as having degrees. Berger notes that even when statistics are used, the interpretation of those statistics is open for disagreement. Merriam points out that human behavior is never static. Patton recommends the use of content, face and empirical approaches to validity tests and inter-observer, test-retest or parallel-forms approaches to reliability tests in qualitative research. Brennen recommends the verification of interview information from other sources and from subsequent respondents. Given the constructed view of reality held by quantitative researchers, Merriam recommends that reliability and internal validity be tested using triangulation of data from multiple sources, the use of member and peer checks, submersion in the research situation and statements of researcher processes and biases.

The internal validity and reliability of this research study was determined in several ways. First, the content analysis coding system and the interview guide were reviewed by a committee of experts to reduce researcher bias in question wording, verify operational definitions for coding categories and dimensions and establish content and face validity as described by Patten (1997).

Second, the content evaluation coding sheet and semi-structured interview guides were standardized. This insured that all websites were evaluated using the same operational definitions and coding system, and interviews were conducted using the same interview guide. This allowed subsequent interviews and analysis to verify information found in previous research as described by Brennan (2013).

Finally, content analysis and interview data were triangulated using the instrument from the opposing research phase to establish parallel-forms reliability as described by Patten (1997). Content analysis data was compared to data collected on the interview guide, and interview guide data was compared to data collected on the content analysis coding sheet.

Since there was only one content analysis coder, no inter-observer variance has been calculated, but coder reliability was determined by the test/retest method as described by Patten (1997) using a sample of school websites from the sample universe and then verifying that the school websites were coded the same at a different point in time.

The nature of interview research limits the degree of external validity. Additionally, because this study does not use a model comparison, standard measure of criteria or a professional rating system, empirical criterion-related approaches of predictive or concurrent external validity using correlation coefficients as described by Patten (1997) cannot be used. To provide a degree of external validity, Merriam (1995) recommends the use of thick description of the phenomenon under study, a multi-site design of several cases or situations and sampling within the defined universe. This study has used thick description of results and the interview sample was drawn from the content analysis universe with respondents from multiple situations. These techniques were used to strengthen the rigor of the research.

## Conclusion

Merriam (1995) writes that rigor is “as valid a concern in qualitative research as in any other kind of research” (p. 59). The trustworthiness of any study is dependent on the researcher’s diligence and attention to design. The design of this study uses multiple methods, situations, sources of data, and perspectives to provide insight for educators into the phenomenon of curriculum change in higher education.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

This chapter looks at how higher education curriculum in mass communications programs is changing to meet the needs of industry evolution. Focusing specifically on curriculum for the strategic communications industry and the fields of advertising and public relations, this chapter describes the results of a content analysis of curriculum websites and interviews with faculty and administrators in strategic communications programs. It describes the sample of institutions reviewed and interviews conducted, and presents the results for both the content analysis and interview phases of the research.

#### **Population and Sample**

The content analysis phase of the research included an analysis of website curriculum descriptions of strategic communications programs stratified and then randomly selected from a list of 154 institutions. The institutions were stratified according to the degree of integration of advertising and public relations curriculums in the strategic communications program resulting in four curriculum groups – dual (33%), combined (29%), combined with specializations (21%) and single (17%) programs (see Table 1). Dual programs offered both advertising and public relations as separate majors or areas of concentration in a larger major like journalism or communications. The combined programs merged the advertising and public relations curriculum into one major sometimes called strategic communications or integrated marketing communications. The combined program with specializations offered a merged major with the opportunity to emphasize usually in advertising or public relations, but sometime also in other areas of strategic communications such as health communications. The single program offered one program in either advertising or public relations but not both programs of study. Following

stratification, a random set of institutions was chosen from each list of programs resulting in a sample of 115 institutions (see Table 1) with a proportionate distribution across the four groups consistent with the population distribution.

*Table 1. Content Analysis Population and Sample Frequency*

Program Type	Population		Sample	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Dual	55	35.71	38	33.04
Single	42	27.28	33	28.70
Combined	30	19.48	24	20.87
Combined with specializations	27	17.54	20	17.39

Note. Population n=154; Sample n=115; Table presents a number and percentage comparison of sample programs for the content analysis research phase to the population of strategic communications programs; Table divides the population and sample by type of strategic communications curriculum program.

The majority (see Table 2) of the sample institutions for the content analysis research phase hold a Carnegie ranking at the R1 Doctoral/Highest Research (33%), M1 Master's/Larger Program (30%) or R2 Doctoral/Higher Research (20%) level. Since the sample of institutions were drawn from the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) institution list and supplemented with other listings, the majority of institutions in the sample are ACEJMC accredited (60%). Most program unit names are either a college (47%) or school (40%) and most unit titles include the words communications (39%) and/or journalism (25%).

Table 2. Institution Description

Description	f	%
Carnegie Classification		
R1 - Doctoral/Highest Research	51	33
M1 - Master's/Larger Programs	46	30
R2 - Doctoral/Higher Research	31	20
M2 - Master's/Medium Programs	11	7
R3 - Doctoral/Moderate Research	9	6
M3 - Master's/Smaller Programs	3	2
BC – Bachelors/diverse and arts focus	3	2
Accreditation Status		
ACEJMC	92	60
None	55	36
Other	7	5
Unit Name		
College	73	47
School	62	40
Department	19	12
Unit Title		
Communication(s)	60	39
Journalism	39	25
Journalism and Communication(s)	30	20
Media	23	15
Mass Communication(s)	21	14
Other	16	10
Strategic Communications	7	5
Arts	4	3
Public Relations	5	3
Advertising	3	2

Note. n=154 Institutions; Table presents a description of strategic communications programs for the content analysis research phase; The table gives the number and percentage of programs by Carnegie classification, accreditation status, name and title for the institution and unit where the program is housed.

In the content analysis research phase, each sample institution website was visited, courses required for an undergraduate strategic communications major were identified and course catalog titles and descriptions were reviewed for mentions of new or social media concepts and skills. After website review, 624 courses with mentions of new or social media were identified (see Table 3). Of the 624 courses, 51% of the courses had new media titles, 11% had social media titles and 40% were general mass communications course titles that included mentions of new or social media concepts or skills in the course description. Of the 62% of courses that had new or social media titles, 8% were courses with titles that specifically focused on new or social media for strategic communications.

Table 3. Number and Type of Courses Reviewed in the Content Analysis

Type of courses	f	% of all courses
Number of courses with new or social media emphasis		
New media courses	308	51
Social media courses	68	11
General mass communications courses with social/new media emphasis	248	40
Relationship of new and social media courses to strategic communications program		
Social/new media courses specific to strategic communications <sup>a</sup>	50	8

NOTE: n=624; <sup>a</sup> Strategic Communications course descriptions and titles were counted in new and social media courses. This number shows what number of new and social media courses were specifically strategic communications courses; Table presents the number, percentage and type of courses reviewed in the content analysis research phases; Table divides the courses into three categories and also gives the number of courses reviewed that were specifically for strategic communications programs.

To identify participants for the interview research phase, institutions in the four curriculum groups were ranked according to a social media/new media index derived from the content analysis. The index included the number of mentions of new and social media concepts in course titles and descriptions, the presence of a social media program and the likelihood that the institution had recently changed curriculum. Institutions were selected for participation in the interview research phase based on curriculum category and ranking in the social media/new media index. The resulting sample included nine institutions.

The interview sample (see Table 4) included equivalent representation of the four curriculum groups. The participant institutions were located primarily in the Midwest and South regions of the United States. Based on Carnegie classification, most of the institutions in the interview phase were doctorate granting at the R1 Doctoral/Highest Research or R2 Doctoral/Higher Research levels. The institutions had an average program enrollment of 543 with a range of 125 to 1,000 and employed a mean of 11 fulltime faculty members with a range of 3 to 25. Institutions also utilized part-time faculty with one institution reporting 60 part-time faculty members under contract to be called as needed.

*Table 4. Interview Sample Description*

Type of program	Gender	Position	Region	Carnegie
Combined with specializations	Male	Faculty	Midwest	R1
	Female	Faculty	South	R3
	Male	Administrator	South	R3
Combined no specializations	Female	Administrator	East	R2
	Male	Faculty	East	R2
	Male	Adjunct	East	R2
	Male	Administrator	Midwest	R1
Dual	Male	Administrator/Faculty	Midwest	R1
	Female	Administrator/Faculty	Midwest	R2
	Male	Administrator/Faculty	South	M1
Single (Ad)	Male	Administrator	Midwest	R1
	Female	Adjunct	Midwest	R1
Single (PR)	Female	Faculty	South	M1

Note. n=13; Table presents a description of participants in the interview research phase; Table presents gender and occupation. It also gives the geographic region and Carnegie classification for participant institutions.

The interview phase of the research included 13 interviews of program administrators (7) and faculty members (6) from nine institutions. The faculty included both full-time and part-time employees holding the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior lecturer and adjunct professor. The administrators included directors, department chairs and program coordinators. Three of the administrators served as both administrators for the program and full-time faculty members. Only one participant was a full-time administrator and did not teach any courses. Most of the administrators taught at least one course (4). The teaching load for faculty members ranged from two to four classes per semester. Teaching assignments included advertising (4), public relations (5) and other communication (5) courses. Eight participants taught at least one social media course. Most of the participants (5) had been in their position between 4 and 6 years with four participants holding their position for 1 to 3 years. The remaining participants (4) held their position for over nine years. The participants were housed in communication (4), advertising and public relations (3), journalism (2), journalism and mass communications (3) and business (1) units.



## Research Questions

In this section, the researcher will explore the status and processes of curriculum change that strategic communications programs are using to adapt to the new social media paradigm. It will review results of the content analysis and interview phases of the research.

***R<sub>1</sub> What is the percentage of undergraduate strategic communications programs in the United States that include new media and/or social media concepts or skills in course titles or descriptions?***

The content analysis showed that of the 115 strategic communications programs sampled 90% offered new media concepts and 68% social media concepts based on mentions in course descriptions. Less strategic communications programs offered courses in new media (81%) and social media (43%) based on course titles, and even less offered new or social media courses specific to strategic communications (26%) (see Table 5).

*Table 5. Frequency of Concept Mentions by Program*

Concept location	<i>f</i>	% of Programs
Number of programs with new media concept mentions		
Course descriptions	103	90
Course titles	93	81
Number of programs with social media concept mentions		
Course descriptions	78	68
Course titles	49	43

Note. n=115 programs; Table presents the number and percentage of courses reviewed for the content analysis research phase; Table identifies number of mentions of new media in course titles and descriptions and social media in course titles and descriptions.

Titles for courses in new and social media varied by institution. The most common titles in strategic communications curriculum for new media courses included the words digital (23%), multimedia (19%) and Internet or web (15%) (see Table 6). The top titles were Internet and Web Page Design (n=26), Digital Content Production (n=17) and Multimedia Storytelling (n=15) (see Appendix E for a complete listing of titles).

Table 6. New Media Course Titles

Title Categories	f	% of titles
Digital Media titles	71	23
Digital Content Production	17	
Digital Media Literacy	11	
Digital Media Writing	9	
Digital Media and Culture	9	
Digital Advertising	8	
Multimedia Titles	58	19
Multimedia Storytelling	15	
Multimedia Journalism	10	
Multimedia Communication	6	
Internet/Web Titles	46	15
Internet and Web Page Design	26	
Internet Marketing	8	
New Media Titles	25	8
New Media Literacy	10	
Entrepreneurial Media	6	
Emerging Media in Advertising and Public Relations	5	
Online Titles	25	8
Online Journalism	11	
Online Writing and Design	5	
Interactive Titles	23	7
Interactive Advertising	9	
Interactive Media Design	7	
Technology Titles	38	5
New Communication Technologies	7	
Web Design and Interactive Digital Media	10	
Media Convergence	7	
Applications of Mobile Technology	7	
Interactive Digital Communications	7	
Miscellaneous	20	

Note. n=306 Titles; Table presents a description of new media course titles from the content analysis research phase. Table divides the titles into eight board categories and gives the most common titles in each category; For a complete list of titles see Appendix E.

The number of programs offering new media courses was nearly double the number of programs offering courses in social media. Of the 49 programs offering social media courses, the top titles for social media courses (see Table 7) were Social Media (12%), Social Media Marketing (12%), Social and Emerging Media (12%) and Social Media and Society (12%) (see Appendix F for a complete listing of titles).

Table 7. Social Media Course Titles

Title Categories	f	% of titles
Social Media	8	12
Social Media Marketing	8	12
Social and Emerging Media	8	12
Social Media and Society	8	12
Social Media Strategies	5	7
Social Media and Public Relations	5	7
Social Media Management	4	5
Advertising Strategy and Social Media	4	5
Advanced Social Media and Analytics	3	4
Strategic Branding and Social Media	3	4
Social and Mobile Media	3	4
Miscellaneous	8	

Note. n=68 Titles; Table presents a description of social media course titles from the content analysis research phase. Table gives the 12 most common titles; For a complete list of titles see Appendix F.

Related to the questions of how many courses included instruction in new or social media concepts or skills is the degree of integration of new and social media instruction in the course. In the content analysis, whether a program offered instruction in new or social media was only evident if the new or social media concept or skill was listed in the title or course description. Using Lin's (2012) three possible approaches for instruction in new and social media of fully integrated (new or social media in general skills courses only), partly integrated (new or social media in general skills and specialized courses), and siloed (new or social media in specialized courses only), participants in the interview phase of the research were asked about the degree of integration of new and social media instruction in their curriculum. Of the nine institutions where participants were housed, three programs were fully integrated including the social and new media instruction throughout the curriculum, three institutions were partly integrated offering stand-alone courses as well as content integrated into other skills courses, and three programs were siloed offering primarily stand-alone courses focused specifically on social media instruction.

When discussing whether social media instruction should be integrated into existing or core courses in the program or taught separately in a course of its own, participants offered a number of reasons for the approach of their institution.

### **Social media instruction should be fully integrated**

When discussing integration of instruction in new and social media several participants supported the idea of invisibility or integration.

*Most of my courses incorporate social media and I don't think they [new or social media concepts] are in the title. It is more in the content. I'm not even sure if it is reflected in the syllabus to be honest with you. It does come out in class discussions, in class presentations and it is used for examples of good campaigns and bad campaigns and things of that sort. – faculty member*

*They [the faculty] are doing that [new and social media] all the way through [curriculum] now. So we have reporting and writing classes. Those have been around forever. I don't know if we would change the title, but then the problem becomes how would we change it. We don't want to get into jargon and we don't want to rename them the word-of-day and then have to change it again in five years. So we just kind of kept the same titles. – administrator*

Some participants indicated that the lack of visibility of new and social media instruction was a result of program size and access to resources such as faculty knowledge and comfort with the subject matter and access to offerings from related programs.

*We are fully integrating because we are still not there [when it comes to adding new and social media instruction]. Advertising on social media is discussed in all classes as part of course content. In the media planning class, for example, the students put web and social media in their media plans and in the capstone course where appropriate students are expected to have social media in their plans books. In the marketing department, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ developed one of the first social media marketing classes in the country and it was available to my students. A lot of my students took it. – administrator/faculty member*

*Since our faculty is so versed in social media skills they are incorporating it in all classes. So if you are taking crises communications you are learning about social media in that class. [If you are taking] writing, you are writing for social media platforms. So even in our core classes, it may not be in the title; it is in the curriculum. – administrator*

*There was some social media in courses before I came, but I put it in every course I teach. So in some courses I would incorporate social media more than others depending on the population. In some courses I have added one unit on social media in the PR theory and strategy class. In PR Case Studies and in corporate communications, we discuss how to manage crises, especially social media crises. In an intro [to PR] class, I would tailor my discussion to the population, but I would still teach social media in the course. In Case Studies, if we are looking at a case that relates to social media, it would become part of the discussion. More recent cases have a social media component. – faculty member*

### **Social media instruction should be partially integrated**

Some participants noted that the proliferation of new and social media in the industry necessitated its integration into core curriculum as well as offering stand-alone courses.

*We noticed a number of years ago when we were still calling things internet marketing and such that it [the industry] was going in a little bit different direction and that if our students didn't get a digital background in multiple places, they were going to be in trouble. So it is not just enough to say there is a digital class, and we do have digital marketing, and we have social media marketing, but they also needed to get it in their basic classes. – administrator/faculty member*

*What is interesting I think is that this [the social media course] was a 4000-level course, and probably it ought to be a 2000-level course. Sort of reflecting that what seemed strange at the time, a few years ago, is now really common place. And it should be done earlier in the curriculum process rather than later. – administrator*

Some participants supported the idea of varying levels of instruction with integration of social media in core and skills courses, but also offering siloed or stand-alone courses for students interested in new and social media specifically.

*So in our lower division where we introduce and reinforce skills and then in our upper division is where we make students proficient in these skills. So a lot of times they are going to take let's say a writing class, but that class will be called a writing class and really be a cross platform content production class and that is where we start to make them proficient. Then, if they have a specific interest let's say multimedia or social media, they can take an additional class that focuses specifically on that content. I would say about our curriculum we have a few classes . . . that are specifically about these topics, but at this point our students can't take a skills-based class and not have that structure [new and social media] be a part of it. – administrator*

*When it comes to [new or social media] content, I think it is important to start with the more general courses to understand why and understand the strategy behind everything. I can see where you are coming from. It [integrated or siloed] could kind of go either way. So the things I do could really tie into strategy. – faculty member*

### **Social media instruction should be in a stand-alone course**

When talking about why their program offered a siloed or stand-alone course, participants discussed the amount of content that needed to be taught and the degree of connection between the content and job opportunities in the industry.

*That is why we have a stand-alone course because there is so much more that we can do than when integrating it across the curriculum because of all the other things that have to be taught, too. – administrator/faculty member*

*The reason this course is its own course is because the thing that I am teaching is a career path on its own, social media monitoring and social media analysis. My original job title was Social Media Analyst. If it was a class that was just teaching a couple of technical skills that are probably going to change in a year or two, I would throw those into an existing class, but I think there is more of a longevity with this particular area. There are a lot of career opportunities. Entire departments are being created around this area. So it makes sense for it to warrant its own special class rather than just barely touching on it. – faculty member*

### ***R<sub>2</sub> For those undergraduate strategic communications programs that include social media in the curriculum, what social media concepts and skills are taught?***

A total of 332 social and 1,092 new media concept or skill mentions were found in courses required for strategic communications majors. Of the 332 social media mentions (see Table 8) found, most (53%) referred to social media in general terms. The most common specific concepts or skills mentioned in course descriptions were social networking (15%) followed by social content (9%), social engagement (8%) and social media analytics (7%). The least commonly mentioned concepts or skills were social audio/video (6%) and social media advertising (3%).

*Table 8. Social Media Concept or Skill Mentions in Course Titles and Descriptions*

Social media concept	<i>f</i>	% of mentions
General instruction in Social Media	177	53
Social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Pinterest)	48	15
Social content (Blogging/content marketing/brand journalism/native advertising)	31	9
Social Engagement (Viral Marketing)	25	8
Social media analytics or metrics (Social monitoring/listening)	22	7
Social Audio/Video (Podcasting/VOD/slideshow)	20	6
Social media advertising/marketing	9	3

Note. n=332 mentions; Table presents a list of social media concept and skill mentions in course titles and descriptions from the content analysis research phase; Table provides concepts and skills from most to least mentioned.

Since social media is a form of new media, new media concept and skill mentions (see Table 9) were also identified in the content analysis. Of the 1,092 new media mentions in course descriptions or titles, the most common mentions were general references to new or emerging media (27%) and digital or interactive media (27%) for a combined 53% of all new media mentions. The most commonly mentioned specific new media concept or skill was Internet websites (21%) or multimedia (15%). Mobile technology (4%) and Internet advertising or e-commerce, along with analytics (2%) and search engine optimization (.8%), were the least mentioned new media concepts or skills. Mobile technology, the main platform for social media interaction, was the new media concept or skill mention most closely related to social media.

Table 9. New Media Concept or Skill Mentions in Course Titles or Descriptions

New media concepts	f	% of all mentions
General instruction in new or emerging media (Internet, Online)	286	27
Digital or Interactive (Technology/Computer-aided)	286	27
Internet websites (Design; Information Architecture; Web; WWW)	220	21
Multimedia (converged, multiple platforms, cross platform)	164	15
Mobile technology	47	4
Internet advertising/E-commerce (Email)	40	4
New media analytics or metrics (database)	23	2
Search engine optimization (SEO or SEM)	9	0.8

Note. n=1,092 mentions; Table presents a list of new media concept and skill mentions in course titles and descriptions from the content analysis research phase; Table lists concepts and skills from most to least mentioned.

In the interview phase of the research, faculty and administrators were equally knowledgeable about social media concepts (see Table 10) and skills (see Table 11). Of all the concepts and skills mentioned, administrators mentioned general concepts (58%) more than specific skills (42%), while faculty mentioned specific skills (58%) more than general concepts (42%). The most mentioned general new or social media concept (see Table 10) was metrics/analytics/monitoring (30%), and the most mentioned specific social media skills (see Table 11) were social media platforms Facebook (18%) and Twitter (15%).

### **Curriculum should address general social media concepts**

In the interview phase of the research, participants discussed the importance of instruction in 12 general social media concepts (see Table 10).

*I want them to know the general concepts that I teach, and that once you know the general you can accomplish it in [social media]. – faculty member*



Table 10. General Social Media Skill Mentions from Interviews

Concept	Fac.	Adm. <sup>a</sup>	f	% of all concepts
General Social Media Concepts				
Metrics/analytics/monitoring	4	6	10	30
Content Creation	1	3	4	12
Platforms	2	1	3	9
Cross-platform training	2	1	3	9
Digital/Interactive	0	3	3	9
Strategy/Planning	1	1	2	6
Engagement	0	2	2	6
Virtual reality	1	1	2	6
Networking sites	1	0	1	3
Blogging	1	0	1	3
Podcasting	1	0	1	3
Programmatic	0	1	1	3
<i>f</i>	14	19	33	
% of all skills	42	58		

Note. n=13; Fac.= Faculty; Adm.=Administrators; <sup>a</sup> Includes participants who identified as both faculty and administrator

Table presents a list of general social media skills mentioned by participants from the interview research phase.

Table lists skills from most to least mentioned and provides a comparison of faculty and administrator responses.

The general social media concept mentioned most by participants was the need for more instruction in metrics/analytics/monitoring (30%).

*Analytics is another one. The industry is all about analytics. You can't be any part of advertising or public relations without having an understanding of analytics. And we need our students to be conversant in that. Not that they will be doing the computer science of analytics, but they do need to know how to use analytics to ask the right questions and get the answers they need. –administrator*

*With social media monitoring, you can get real-time monitoring of where the brand is being mentioned online. That is important for anyone who is in public relations. – administrator*

*They [students] also learn a couple of [social media monitoring] tools that they can apply right away . . . There are tons of people out there looking for analysts. I get inquiries all the time from people who say "Oh my gosh, you teach this, I am looking for someone with the exact skills your students are getting. I think it is preparing them to take their knowledge to an area where there is a lot of job opportunity and job growth. –faculty member*

Of all concepts mentioned by faculty or administrators, the next highest general concept mentioned was content creation (12%).

*In the social media class particularly, we make them do an entire visual campaign. It is all about making sure you have the right content and the right contact for the right audience. – administrator*

Other general concepts that were mentioned by more than one participant were related to the technologies of social media including platforms, cross-platform training and digital/interactive (9% each). As one administrator/faculty member points out, strategic communications instruction has always been connected to technology.

*Then the last part focuses on social media platforms and marketing from setting campaign objectives to coming up with specific strategies before jumping to the specifics of social media platforms. I treat social media platforms as part of the tactical mix. – faculty member*

*Historically, especially advertising, but both advertising and PR, have been closely connected to changes in technology. The program in advertising started in mid 70s. Pretty much from the start, we were involved with technologies that were popular at that time. Then as technologies changed in the 80s and 90s, we as a faculty felt it was important to stay abreast of the changes in advertising related to technology. –administrator/faculty member*

*Not so much in straight up agencies, but in a lot of in-house agencies and organizations, like Marriott, want these really specialized [digital] skills. – administrator*

The next most mentioned general concepts were strategy/planning, engagement and virtual reality (6% each). When asked specifically about what social media core concepts were important, more than one participant emphasized the importance of instruction in strategy or planning as the heart of all good strategic communications social media.

*At the core, I will probably continue to teach the core concepts [of strategy and planning] - setting objectives, learning keywords, carry out which tools you want to use and that once they have done the project, they understand why they do it. – faculty member*

*. . . but also strategy is an important thing. You can get all caught up in thinking you have to be here or you have to be there. – administrator*

*From a tool stand point – they are actually taught to research; they are taught how to use the tools and how to apply them. I try to concentrate on these skills so they know in the future what it takes to do the job. – faculty member*

Engagement was another social media concept identified specifically as important by 6% of participants.

*I would say the core concept is social engagement. It used to be you could write things for an audience and you wouldn't have much of a relationship with that audience except for the content that you write. You could try to guess at the impact, but the measurements that you had were very gross, abstract measurements. Today, you can know exactly how well you are impacting your intended audience. You have to have a bigger connection to them than simply pushing material out to them. So part of what we are trying to do here is re-imagine the audiences that both news people and strategic communications people are involved with. – administrator*

Virtual reality (6%) along with networking sites, blogging, podcasting and programmatic buying (3% each) rounded out the list of social concepts mentioned by interview participants.

*[In class] we learn about the different platforms – whether it is blogging, networking, photo-sharing, or virtual reality. All these are incorporated, and [students] learn if this would be a good fit for my organization. Same thing with virtual reality – is this something that my organization could use. – faculty member.*

*So in our media planning and buying course, I have digital and I added programmatic. We are so closely tied to industry that something like programmatic, even though it is something we have always done as media planners, it is the idea of it being on something like a large scale big data. We have always had data, but now it is a billion times larger. – administrator/faculty member*

### **Curriculum should offer instruction in specific social media skills**

In the interview phase of the research, participants identified 19 specific social media skills (see Table 11) as important to social media instruction. Of the 19 skills mentioned, 13 were references to specific social media platforms.

Table 11. Specific Social Media Skills Mentions from Interviews

Skill	Fac.	Adm. <sup>a</sup>	f	% of all skills
Specific Social Media Skills				
Facebook	2	4	6	18
Twitter	2	3	5	15
SEO	2	1	3	9
Video/audio production	0	2	2	6
Writing	0	2	2	6
Instagram	1	1	2	6
html coding	0	1	1	3
Keywords	1	0	1	3
Photo sharing	1	0	1	3
LinkedIn	1	0	1	3
Snapchat	1	0	1	3
Pinterest	1	0	1	3
YouTube	1	0	1	3
Vine	1	0	1	3
Periscope	1	0	1	3
Swarm	1	0	1	3
Slack	1	0	1	3
Google+	1	0	1	3
Whatsapp	1	0	1	3
Total of specific skills	19	14	33	
% of all skills/concepts	58	42		

Note. n=13; Fac.= Faculty; Adm.=Administrators; <sup>a</sup> Includes participants who identified as both faculty and administrator; Table presents a list of specific social media skills mentioned by participants from the interview research phase; Table lists skills from most to least mentioned and provides a comparison of faculty and administrator responses.

Participants emphasized the importance of digital skills or tools instruction saying knowledge of the technology to produce content and social media platforms is important. Of the platforms or networking sites identified, Facebook (18%) and Twitter (15%) were mentioned by more participants.

*So what I started to do was teach all the platforms and the mechanics of how to apply them. As we progress through the semester, they learn about sites like Facebook and Twitter, the larger sites. And they learn for my [assigned] organization would this be a good fit – faculty member.*

*We also talk a lot about digital work options like the community manager for say Pop Tarts Facebook page or Twitter or things like that – administrator/faculty member.*

Participants also noted the importance of content skills including search engine optimization (9%), video and audio production (6%), and writing (6%) followed by coding (3%) and keyword (3%) searches.

*For us from an advertising point of view, the most important skill to know is Search Engine Optimization. We are getting people knocking on our door trying to hire a student who is knowledgeable in that area. – faculty member*

*We launched at the undergraduate level a digital media skills course. It is a little bit visual aesthetics and some audio/video editing software introduction and the visual aesthetics that goes along with it. – administrator*

*To be sure production is a big deal now. Two years ago, we didn't have any of that in our curriculum. Now we have added all these digital classes, like digital storytelling and some html coding, and that is one thing we did. There is a nice graphic [on our website] that has all the classes, but social impact is one area and content communications and digital analytics are another. – administrator*

*For me in my course, [knowing] keywords is big. It is huge. If [students] take nothing else away from this course, a year from now, I want [students] to remember how to build a keyword list to do a [social media] search. – faculty member*

Other platforms named included Instagram (6%) and LinkedIn, Snapchat, Pinterest, YouTube, Vine, Periscope, Swarm, Slack, Google+, and Whatsapp (3% each).

*Some things are added that weren't around a couple of years ago. We talk about Pinterest or Instagram that are really taking over the image area. – faculty member*

*Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Whatsapp, YouTube, Vine, Periscope, Google+, Swarm, Slack. – faculty member*

### **Curriculum should balance instruction in social media concepts and skills**

Participants also discussed the issue of finding the proper balance between instruction in social media concepts or theories and skills or application.

*You can teach the theory of social media all day long, but until [students] really applied what they've learned, it doesn't do them any good. – faculty member*

*The way I have positioned it is really a combination of both theory and practice. The course is broken into three sections. I don't ever change the overall structure that I have of the three sections – one section theory, one section social monitoring and one section campaign strategy. The first section focuses more on the strategies and theories. We talk about the informational strategies for campaigns on social media. I talk about the advantages of social networks, campaigns on social media, personal branding theories, and social mobile design principles. Then I also bring in some of my diffusion of innovation theories and how that applies to social media – for example, how an idea can be spread on*

*social media and the steps. That is one part of how theory is infused into social media marketing practice. – faculty member*

*So basically it is a very practical course. We take a very general approach to the course so it covers generally, why are we doing this, and how do we set up our objectives. I also teach pretty hands-on where they are actually getting in there and using the tools - free tools and professional tools so that they can actually execute a full contact with a real brand and understand what comes with that. – faculty member*

### **Curriculum should include instruction in multiple platforms**

Administrators and faculty member participants stressed the importance of focusing on core skills that were applicable across multiple platforms.

*The way we are thinking about it [new and social media] is that at the heart of all content production is a story of some kind. You are trying to convey information to try to persuade your audience of the validity or reliability or actuality of another story. In the past, you would conceive of the core of that story really for a newspaper article or for a press release, essentially for one vehicle. Today you have to think about the essence of that story because you are going to represent it on a lot of different platforms . . . We have a 10 o'clock strategic communications writing class. It is, of course, writing, but they are writing across platforms. – administrator*

*So everyone is cross-trained. Everyone takes instruction in broadcast journalism and everyone takes instruction in all other mediums. So when they leave here they are cross-trained, and that seems to be working. Papers and news stations are calling us and saying, Hey, do you have anyone for these jobs. – administrator/faculty member*

### **Curriculum should include instruction on industry application**

When discussing specifics for strategic communications curriculum, most participants also noted the importance of instruction in the application of social media for an organization. Participants said students must receive instruction in how to use social media to fulfill the objectives of an organization, fit into industry processes and differentiate organization use of the medium from personal use.

*Really anybody can do anything, but you have to make sure it fulfills the objectives of the organization. – administrator*

*Because of the age of students coming in, they experience or use that [new and social media] technology. They understand it better from a native's point of view probably better than I do, but I'm able to relate it for them and how it fits into the advertising process. – administrator/faculty member*

*I guess the big one is that it's different for an organization than it is for an individual. They [students] all think they are experts in social media, and they are not. They have no clue how an organization should be using it before taking the class. I think the way I incorporate the organization puts more emphasis on it from a PR standpoint and not a personal one. – faculty member*

*They are used to social media from a personal stand point. So they may put their feelings in or something random in for just that day, and they don't realize that when you get into a corporate world you need to think more strategically. You have to think long-term and plan out your post maybe for a whole year and then modify as you go along. – faculty member*

***R<sub>3</sub> What processes of change have been used to integrate social media education into undergraduate strategic communications programs in the United States?***

The content analysis did not provide specific data relevant to R<sub>3</sub>, but was utilized to identify strategic communications programs that have changed and that do teach social media and to identify personnel in those programs to answer R<sub>3</sub>. Lewin's (1947) three-stage model commonly referred to as *Unfreeze, Change, Freeze (or Refreeze)* was used as a basis for development of interview questions for R<sub>3</sub>. Interview participants were asked to discuss the motivations for curriculum change, process of curriculum change and plans for future curriculum change in their programs. Like responses to these questions were grouped into general content areas resulting in five discussion themes related to the process of curriculum change. The interviewees said that change in their programs was motivated by both external and internal forces, but was often hindered by institutional factors and access to resources. The interviewees described a standard higher education path to change and emphasized the importance of making the process continuously ongoing. The following presents the factors and processes discussed by the interviewees and gives an explanation of the concepts in their words.

## **Process of curriculum change is motivated by internal and external forces**

Interview participants identified both internal and external forces as influencing curriculum change. Internal forces that impacted change included demands of current students and alumni and external motivators of change were industry professionals and accrediting associations. The majority of participants identified staying current with the industry as the major reason for making curriculum changes with 10 of the 13 interview participants indicating that information from industry was the key motivator.

*J-schools historically have always been bolted onto the industry we serve. We are professional schools. They were started to respond to newspapers in the first century. So as those industries change we've got to be responsive to that. – administrator*

*The industry is heading that way and we are trying to adapt to industry changes as well. We saw that that was already there in the industry, and it was becoming a bigger component in industry. It was imperative that we start teaching it so we can prepare students for them. – faculty member*

*Our classes have to stay current. Part of it is just continually doing what we are doing so that we are offering the kinds of classes that give people the right background. – administrator*

*We have an advisory board of approximately 20 industry people that we meet with once per semester. They have been really able to keep us tied into the industry and what they are looking for in our graduates. Also because I worked in the industry for 20 years before I got my doctorate I still have all those contacts and I'm constantly talking with them. – administrator/faculty member*

*So we have been going to Chicago and New York for visits since 2014. We have been going to department heads and asking what do we need to be doing, as [my colleague] said, 'To build a better employee for you.' That has been extremely helpful. – administrator/faculty member*

Secondly, participants noted that preparation and participation in a site visit from an accreditation team led to the realization that change was needed.

*We're accredited by ACEJMC (Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications), and we were reaccredited 2 years ago. ACEJMC changed their requirements; they increased the [number of credit hours] to allow more electives outside of liberal arts. We used this opportunity to revise our*



*undergraduate curriculum because we wanted to add more electives. That is why you see so many electives in our undergraduate program because students really wanted to be able to concentrate in areas they were interested in. – administrator*

*We had an accreditation site team visit. We started when I arrived looking at curriculum and really moving some things along. Without that I'm not sure if we would have found ourselves to be in compliance on curriculum. – administrator*

Participants also discussed the importance of internal forces as motivators for curriculum change. Participants identified the demands of students and alumni to provide a high quality, current education as internal motivators of change.

*The Advertising and Social Media class that I am teaching this semester was created about four years ago, and that was more of a response to students having an interest. – member*

*I think student demand [initiated the change]. Students started talking about social media and wanted it. Because of that I have a long waiting list for the class. So that was one of the big motivators. – faculty member*

*We have students that just love digital. It is all they want to do. They just want to be digital and that is what we have to offer. – administrator*

*We have tried to be responsive to the specific industry but also to the market we serve and what our alumni are telling us is needed. – administrator*

*We have had alumni in the field working since 1934, so we have a lot of people at all sorts of levels all over the world. Our alumni are pretty loyal and they like to see us doing well. – administrator/faculty member*

*We have always had a PR person [on our alumni advisory board], but now our students are getting jobs in a wide variety of areas like nonprofits and think tanks and a wide variety of organizations. So we have to make ourselves open to those other areas in the economy, and as we do that information will get back to us about how things are changing. – administrator*

### **Process of curriculum change is hindered by institutional factors**

Interview participants cited a number of institutional factors that hindered curriculum change. Deterrents to the process included institutional management systems, opposition from administrators and faculty members and lack of personnel.

Interviewees bemoaned the pace of change in institutions. Of the 13 interview participants, 12 discussed the difficulties of staying current with a fast-changing industry within the curriculum change processes of higher education that included layers of committees and administrator approvals.

*In terms of curriculum change, where we have to create new courses and we have to integrate those courses into curriculum in terms of credits, it takes time to get through all the processes. A lot of times it takes a good year to do it. From the time we decide to do it, it takes a couple months to design what it is we want to do and then it takes the better part of a year to get it approved. With all the committees and so forth, it is hard for a program like ours to react quickly when we have to because the industry is changing so quickly. It is sometimes hard to get that across to administrators. – administrator*

*But it is hard with curriculum in the university because normally curriculum changes take approximately 2 years. – administrator/faculty member*

*You are touching on something that is of critical importance to our field because as much as universities say we want you to think outside the box, the university structure fights that. Thinking outside the box means introducing variables that they haven't dealt with before. – administrator*

Opposition from other faculty and administrators was also listed by participants as hindering the process of curriculum change.

*We find someone who is excited about changing the course and fills out the paperwork. It goes forward and a new course is created, but that's if there is no objection. You really have to have support both from the administration and other faculty members. One faculty member can completely derail what you think is a great process and a great program coming forward. You have to massage people and get them on board before you can go forward. So if you have the support things go a heck of a lot easier. – faculty member*

*If there is an objection, things slowdown and go at a bit long and circuitous route. From an overall curriculum stand point, it becomes a little bit difficult if we have someone who is against the change. – faculty member*

*We are kind of unique in that some of our faculty have been resistant to social media so we are slow to get that name change. It has been a bit of a struggle for the more visible way of incorporating social media. – faculty member*

*To be honest with you, we do have some older faculty who are not on social media. They are not on Facebook, not on Twitter. They are not comfortable with*

*social media. They are older tenured faculty, and quite frankly, they can do what they want. I can't really force veterans to do it. – administrator*

Interview participants also noted the lack of teaching expertise or loss of key personnel as deterrents to the process of curriculum change.

*The other part is having the expertise to teach it. Sometimes I'll have that, but other times not. So let's say I needed someone to teach, for example, data visualization. I can use someone I have, bring in a guest lecturer or recruit an adjunct. I might call, and ask a professional, 'Would you like to teach this?' Then I have to decide do I want to have that class? Can I get a good enough teacher? A lot of the time these are first time teachers so you have to be careful. Just because they are professionals does not make them good teachers. –administrator*

*We lost an advertising faculty member who was a bit of a contributor in that area. That is one of the reasons we are doing a search. – administrator*

*Sadly, he [the social media faculty member] passed away back last May and the department has decided that they would not continue with the course, at least for now, because they have to cover other things. – administrator/faculty member*

*We don't do a lot of these [courses] because our faculty is small and we can't offer a whole series of classes. – administrator*

### **Process of curriculum change depends on access to resources**

Participants emphasized the importance of access to resources in the process of curriculum change. Proximity to market resources, connections with consultants, expertise of faculty and investment in professional development were identified by participants as factors in facilitating curriculum change.

Participants said that programs utilized institution market locations and connections to industry organizations to facilitate change.

*And then obviously our adjuncts are from [our city] and they are everywhere. They are in government and PR agencies. – administrator*

*Last year we took 40 or so of our advertising majors to [city] and we spent the day at [a major agency name] and they went through a digital boot camp for the day. [The agency staff] went through so much stuff that everyone was saying: 'Hold on; I can't take much more of this stuff.' It was really great for the students. – administrator/faculty member*

*The last three years we have been able to get a lot of students into the [agency holding group name] system for internships. And that is because one of their executives retired to the family farm [near our school]. He came to us and at first said he wanted to teach and then decided he didn't really want to teach, but what he did want to do was try to get our people in internships because he knew how hard it was when you are in an outpost. – administrator/faculty member*

Other participants used access to experts, consultants and adjunct faculty to facilitate change.

*We bring the experts to us. One thing we are doing is expanding who we have on our professional advisory board. It used to be that we got someone who works at the local newspaper, and we still have that person, but now we need someone who runs a social media marketing firm; we need someone who works for a department in a government agency in communications. – administrator*

*One of our professors is on the board for the [state] press association. He met with the vice president of advertising from a [state newspaper], and he invited us up to take a look at what they are doing with the digital product. Some other professors and I are taking some advertising students from the student paper and some reporters and the [state newspaper], is going to put on some [instruction] for us. The students are going to bring that back to the campus and back to the classroom and back to the newspaper. The students on the trip are expected to share what they learn with their fellow students, and we will be able to incorporate some of this into the classroom – administrator/faculty member*

*We were also able to bring in through associated press media editors a news [instruction] session back in the fall and again that included some social media elements. Of course, it was with a journalism focus, but still it was [instructing] people on social media software/hardware approaches and concepts. It doesn't matter whether it is news or not. –administrator*

*So we have been able to bring experts in to our class or ad club to do a lesson. Whatever it is that I don't have enough of a background in it, then I bring in a speaker to teach the students. – administrator/faculty member*

*All those professionals [adjuncts] in the field that we have tell us that's the direction we need to be headed. – administrator*

*I went out and looked for experts in those areas. There is one more thing I should mention in here. A lot of our faculty are not on the full-time budget. We are able to hire someone on a temporary base from non-reoccurring funds. That helps us. It allows us to quickly do something that we see as a need or opportunity. For example, this spring we are offering a course in Shopper Marketing, which I believe is the first full course on Shopper Marketing anywhere in the nation. We did that by hiring someone who is only teaching that course. In fact, he lives in*

*England so he is teaching it as an online course. His course is what we call a hybrid course. He flies over and meets the students at the beginning of the course and then flies back again at the end. All the classes in-between are taught online. I have another one that lives in North Carolina. I recruit them wherever I can. It depends on what the need is. – administrator*

*I'm an adjunct instructor so I only teach one class which came out of my work experience in social media monitoring and social media research. I started out working for PR agencies in the social media department. I was doing basically social media monitoring in the early days when it was just getting started. Then I started my own company doing the same thing. I work with pretty large global companies doing monitoring and then on the other side analyzing conversations. Having adjuncts is great. People that have knowledge is great for the base knowledge and strategy. When you get into some more specific areas having people who are working in it is a great way to stay up and make it relevant for students. – faculty member*

*We have 22 active faculty members some with PhDs. All have professional experience and many are still actively working in the field. We have executives in residence who are also very active and also teach. – administrator*

Participants identified the hiring of new faculty as another way programs facilitated change.

*We have just hired somebody. We had this line open and I asked that it be someone whose research interest is social media. And just yesterday I asked him to please create a course in analytics. I think he will be good at that because it is his area and he is also very much a quantitative scholar. – faculty member*

*One of the things that has happened in our school is that we had a real change in faculty composition. We lost six senior faculty members in the past six years, and we have hired new faculty. Most recently hired faculty are at the professional level and most are fairly young. We were hiring specifically for digital skills, so they are already pretty savvy about these things and it is not too hard for them to keep up because they are adding to a preexisting knowledge base. – administrator*

*As far as staffing, the more faculty you have the more opportunity you have to hire because faculty do change. You may have one person retiring in one area; you can repurpose their position into an area of need. So that helps. Also, in our case, we have been fortunate or unfortunate depending on how you look at it to be under manned. That has allowed us to make appeals for new positions, and we have been able to get new positions for some of these things. – administrator*

*We've been lucky enough to hire a new professor this year, and he came from industry. That gentleman has some background already because he just retired*

*from industry. He has been out of industry all of six months. – administrator/faculty member*

*We are adding a new faculty. She has a professional background in nonprofit and government public relations. She is going to be offering a new class in content marketing in the digital environment. Then she is going to be a really important member of this group that is going to update the elements that are taught inside classes. – administrator*

Another way participants facilitated curriculum change was investment in faculty development. Programs contracted group instruction and provided funds for faculty to attend workshops and conferences.

*We have a pot of money for professional development in the area of teaching. We bring experts in to teach workshops at least once a semester. – administrator*

*I have been the director of the school for two years and one of the things I have been emphasizing is professional development for faculty in that area [Strategic Communications] of teaching so that they can keep up with the things that are happening in the industry. I just held a workshop for faculty on exactly the question of incorporation of social media in strategic communications classes. I ask faculty to go to conferences where the pedagogy is being discussed. They come back and hold a lunch seminar for other faculty in that area to tell them what they learned. – administrator*

Participants also pointed to faculty taking personal responsibility for identifying opportunities to keep current. Utilizing textbook publisher resources, applying for fellowships, capitalizing on research interests, organizing conference panels, developing industry connections and learning with students were listed by participants as ways to change curriculum.

*In the classroom itself, it is totally easy [to remain current] because it is up to [the professor]. As long as [the professor] keeps up-to-date, [the professor] can keep students up-to-date. That is an asset because the class I am teaching right now, I haven't taught for maybe two years, and I'm feeling like I am behind and need to refresh myself. I'm obviously going to refresh myself so that I'm more up-to-date than what I currently feel like I am. That will be just for my regular rotation courses. – faculty member*

*We haven't done [instruction] for faculty as much, but we have had some of our faculty go through the [textbook company] digital marketing course overview. These are not really classes, but they [the publisher] does go through [the curriculum] with professors and work on digital skills. The digital marketing*

*professor we hired last year had gone through some of [the textbook company] programs in digital marketing and social media as part of his job. – administrator/faculty member*

*You always have to do more. You can't stay in your academic silo. I have a faculty member that is more on the digital journalism side, but it is related to the production of social media. She was able to get a summer fellowship last summer from NATPE (National Association of Television Program Executives). – administrator*

*I'm doing research on this so I have a lot of my background reading to pull from. Then I pull in media and resources as I update my own knowledge. – faculty member*

*I sent out a call to NCA (National Communications Association) on teaching social media to see if we could do a panel and kind of learn from each other. That was very beneficial just hearing from professors across the country who were trying to teach it. We exchanged class activities; we exchanged syllabi; and books we had used and so forth. – faculty member*

*I actually work with a company that has developed a professional listening tool. So I am always talking with them and other companies to make sure that what we are doing fits with the industry standards. – faculty member*

*I learn with the kids to be honest. Quite frankly, interns come back and teach us. There is no money or time for me to go off for special [instruction] even in the summers. So I am working with the students. We had a speaker here several years ago who said if you want to learn the new technology find a 15-year old. When I need help with tech, I find a 15 year-old. – administrator/faculty member*

### **Process of curriculum change follows a standard path**

Interview participants identified a fairly standard process for the incorporation of new curriculum. Most of the participants said that they began presenting new content through offering a trial or special topic course, and then, if the course was well-received, steps were taken to make it permanent either as a continuously offered elective, as a curriculum requirement or by integration throughout the curriculum.

Participants said that their programs began the process of adding social media instruction through the review and imitation of other programs or identification with industry theoretical

movements including philosophies of converged journalism and integrated marketing communications.

*I asked the faculty to play a game – add a course and take away a course. We had a lot of old courses nobody was teaching. In our division, I can't just add any class I want. If I add a class, I have to take away a class. That is what [the administration] made me do. At the end of the game, I said we aren't going to teach these classes anymore. We are going to add these classes. That was a great opportunity. It involved all the faculty. – administrator*

*[Change happened] mostly because the advertising faculty, one faculty member in particular, has been more aligned with the notion of evolving into the idea of strategic communication or interactive and strategic rather than just traditional advertising and traditional PR. – administrator*

*The head of Journalism has embraced technology and she has been spending summers working at new media that are web or web products. She has done a really nice job of bringing what they call convergence into our program. We recognized that this is something you have to do. Everything is going digital, actually it has gone digital. Companies are really liking the reduced cost for exposure on social media. So that has to be included in it. – administrator/faculty member*

Other participants said that programs changed through a process of trial and error.

*I started talking with this guy in 2009 and I said, 'what do you think about this Twitter stuff.' He said I think it is going to be an important part of communication in the future. Things like that kind of made us jump into the water, so to speak, and try it. – administrator/faculty member*

*When I first came, I added the social media class. At that time, we didn't have much new media, but after I started teaching social media, we added a new digital communications program. – faculty member*

*This past Spring, I made significant changes to the curriculum. The course was created in 2010 and had minor updates over that time period. This past Spring's revamp included taking a more digital ecosystem approach and not solely focused on social media but as a piece of the bigger digital puzzle. – faculty member*

*Not everything you try turns into a mainstream importance for advertising and PR. I can give you one example of things that haven't stayed around. When we started the program about 17 to 18 years ago, we had a branch that was called interactive. That is how we talked about or labeled the technology at the time. In time the term interactive went away and it changed to digital. Of course, at the time we had interactive advertising. Now it is integrated into the curriculum as it becomes more mainstream. – administrator/faculty member*



In most cases, academics used their existing knowledge and connections to craft new specialized courses. Usually, these new courses began as a special topics or seminar course.

*The first step is the experimental course. In this way, we are adapting and shifting the curriculum to fit the industry. When I first taught it, it was a special topics course and it was an elective. It was given a temporary number. Then I taught it for two years, now I have taught it for four. Then we gave it a permanent course number. Now it has been formalized and incorporated into the curriculum, but it is still an elective. – faculty member*

*We added multimedia in 2010. And then we added social media. It was happening haphazardly three years ago, and now more formally for the last two years since I have been here. I want to make our classes as relevant and responsive to the industry as I can. So that is what we have done. – administrator*

*We have a couple of short cuts to get [a new course] approved. We have some variable titled courses, like a special topic course, that we can use to test drive. [That way] we can go ahead and offer a topic. In fact, we are offering one right now. It is called Advertising Analytics. We don't have a course currently for advertising analytics, but it is an important topic. We are offering it temporarily as a special topics course, and we are in the process of getting it approved as a permanent course for next year. – administrator*

*The idea is that when you see a developing technology that you believe might be important to the future of the business, you offer a seminar on it. Then you see if you have support for it, and where it is going. I started the path in 09. I offered, as an elective course for master's students, a seminar exploring social media and its applications to advertising. – administrator/faculty member*

Participants also used inter-disciplinary resources such as existing courses in other programs or available resources from multiple departments to change curriculum.

*A marketing department professor developed one of the first social media marketing classes in the country and it was available to my students. A lot of my students took it – administrator/faculty member*

*We have a separate unit here with a program in interactive media. It is not exactly social media. It is kind of an evolving program. They are trying to figure out what they are doing. The day may come when we have better cross pollination, but unfortunately we are not there yet. – administrator/faculty member*

Other participants believed the best direction for social media instruction was to revive an old course or update an existing course to change curriculum.

*The PR sequence has developed a course called JMC 444 PR Strategies, Tools and Trends. It has evolved into a social media class. – administrator/faculty member*

*If you mean wholesale revisions, I only do that in rare cases if something is methodically going wrong or like we are doing with the online program social media class. And that is a class that needs major development. I'm working with another person who teaches it to do a wholesale redevelopment in the social media class for the online major. We just started working on it. We looked at why is this here and what do we want students to learn from it. Less than 50 percent of the course is going to be what it was before. – faculty member*

Several participants noted that as social media usage becomes more prevalent in the industry, their programs are embracing the idea of integration of social media instruction in all courses.

*Social media is becoming more common these days so it just naturally becomes part of the discussion. We are trying to incorporate more social and digital into our courses. So you will see more courses that have social/digital in it. Each course emphasizes a different aspect of the digital space. – faculty member*

*Yes, we are trying to integrate it across the curriculum. So we have it in some specific courses but we are trying to add it into digital-related courses like media. – Administrator/Faculty member*

*But the basic principles don't change. So the core of classes hasn't changed, but incorporating more of digital thinking into the classes is something I try to stress. So how we frame this is how has writing changed in a digital environment and they [the faculty] have added that to their classes. And earlier they added multimedia to all of their classes. – administrator*

### **Process of curriculum change must be continuously ongoing**

When asked about the future of curriculum, participants identified a number of technologies and interests that they needed or wanted to stay current with the industry and keep the process of change going. Three areas of interest that were mentioned by more than one participant were content creation (3), virtual reality (5) and analytics (6). Other areas of interest for the future included search engine optimization (SEO), brand strategy, digital marketing, personal branding and facial recognition.

*We are also adding content creation. In that way, we are creating the content for social media, like Facebook ads and things like that. – administrator*

*This fall, I'm adding virtual reality into the course as well. Also, we have some new special topics coming up. These are offered one time and then they are not offered again. For example, I'm offering Political Communications in the Computer Age. It focuses on the election through the lens of social media. I'm offering it as a special topic because that is the only way that it can be offered during the election or once every four years. Some of these courses might be offered once and then not offered again for four years. Some of them might be multimedia courses. It varies. – faculty member*

*We are planning to add an analytics course, and maybe add a certification or minor [in social media] – faculty member*

*I'm talking with my colleagues to see if there are any more courses we could develop. That could be a course in Search Engine Optimization, or maybe a full-strategy course on Social Media. That [Search Engine Optimization] is one area that I would love to have for a whole class. We are also looking at a course that has not been taught for a while titled PR and Social Media. I want to look into that and start teaching that course also. That would obviously be taught from a PR perspective, but I might also spinoff from that into a for-profit and a non-profit course. – faculty member*

*The biggest one to add is the account planning or brand strategy course, which we are trying to do. We want to make sure there is another avenue for our students beyond leading to creative or media or account management. Also, within the department, we are trying to have a digital certification. It is more like a digital specialization where they take a set of digital marketing courses. It is not a minor because you can not major and minor in your same department, but it gives them some level of knowledge in that area. – administrator/faculty member.*

*I have proposed another class, basically brand you - how to brand yourself online. Businesses use LinkedIn and Facebook [to recruit] so what does that mean for you and how do you get recruited. – faculty member*

*I did an interview Monday or Tuesday about the new technology of facial recognition and how that is going to impact marketing, advertising and PR. That is a new technology that we are experiencing and it could have a lot of impact as well. We will be able to communicate very quickly by looking at someone's facial expression. It will be able to recognize them when they come into the Target or Walmart and know that stuff on aisle 24 that you have been looking at online is on sale. Then it will ping your cell phone with a message that says, 'Oh, those auto supplies you were interested in are on sale in aisle 24.' We have no idea what can be done, but we are going to be able to connect with the consumer in a new way. – administrator/faculty member*

Participants also noted that their programs needed to keep learning and keep the process of change going.

*On the social media side, we need to do more.* – administrator

*I will always make sure that I'm updating the things that are a little bit more tough like how to use a social listening tool to accomplish it and whatever tool of the day they can use to do it.* – faculty member

*We taught really the very first advertising on the Internet class in the world in the early 1990s. We had a commitment to stay abreast of changes in technology and how they impacted advertising and public relations. We continue inclusion of technology in our undergraduate curriculum.* – administrator/faculty member

*We have got to continue to integrate this new media stuff. Absolutely have to because it's here. It's reality whether we like it or not.* – administrator/faculty member

## **Conclusion**

The goal of this research was to describe the status of social media education for undergraduate strategic communications majors and discuss the phenomenon of change in strategic communications programs due to the shift from traditional to social media in the mass communication industry. This chapter has presented the results from a content analysis of strategic communications curriculum and interviews of strategic communications faculty and administrators. Results have described the status of the current course offerings and course content for new and social media within strategic communications programs and how programs have made changes to accommodate the media shift from *broadcast era* mass communication to *postbroadcast era* social, interactive and personal communication.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Focusing on the process of change, this chapter reviews the purpose of the study, the population and draws conclusions about the results of the content analysis and interview phases of this research. This chapter analyzes the results and considers how the results compare to previous curriculum studies.

#### **Summary of Purpose**

This research has addressed the phenomenon of adaptation by units of journalism and mass communications to the media shift and digital talent gap. While past studies (Grahame, 2009; Kim H. , 2012; Moody & Bates, 2013; Thornton & Keith, 2009) have focused on new media instruction and the digital skill needs of students studying journalism (print, broadcast or online) few studies have focused on social media skill needs and students studying strategic communications (advertising or public relations). This study describes the status of social media education for undergraduate strategic communications majors and discusses the phenomenon of change in strategic communications programs due to the shift from traditional to social media in the mass communication industry. It reviews course offerings and course content. In this study, the researcher explored the curriculum change processes strategic communications programs are using to adapt to the new social media paradigm.

#### **Summary of Method**

To understand the changes and the process of change in strategic communications curriculum, this study used a mixed methods research design. Using Terrell's (2012) sequential explanatory and Leech and Onwuegbuzie's (2009) fully mixed sequential equal status research designs, the researcher first conducted a content analysis of strategic communications curriculum

webpages and then qualitative phone interviews of strategic communications administrators and faculty members. Both phases of the research were given equal priority and data from the two phases were integrated during interpretation of results.

The content analysis research phase included an evaluation of undergraduate strategic communications curriculum offerings on university and college websites to identify the number of sampled programs with new and social media content. On the website for each academic unit, the researcher reviewed the program home page, curriculum requirement pages and course description pages. The content analysis was evaluated using descriptive statistics and emergent themes.

The results of the content analysis were used to identify programs for inclusion in the interview research phase. The interview phase sequentially followed the content analysis phase and used interviews to gather a more detailed description of the social media content being offered and understand the process of change in the undergraduate strategic communications programs. The researcher endeavored, as much as possible from available information, to select information-rich strategic communications programs for analysis in the interview phase. Following sample selection, the researcher attempted to interview at least one administrator and faculty member in each of the selected programs using a semi-structured interview guide. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, coded and analyzed. The interviews were evaluated and emergent themes and metathemes identified using Bogden and Biklen's (2007) coding categories as a guide.

Following the interview phase, results of both phases were interpreted using descriptive statistics and gestalt analysis to derive a holistic perspective of social media content offerings,

the phenomenon of curriculum change and the influences of the transition from *broadcast era* to *postbroadcast era* media on undergraduate strategic communications programs.

### **Summary of Population and Samples**

The research used proportionate stratified and random sampling techniques to derive an appropriate sample for each phase of the mixed methods research. The sample universe of 160 programs was compiled from the ACEJMC accredited units website (Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, 2015) and the booklet published by the American Academy of Advertising *Where Shall I Go to Study Advertising and Public Relations?* (Ross & Richards, 2014). Units in the lists not offering an undergraduate strategic communications program were eliminated resulting in a population of 154 schools. Programs were analyzed for placement in four curriculum groups and a proportionate stratified sample of 115 programs was randomly drawn from the population for the content analysis research phase. The research examined undergraduate strategic communications program websites published between July 2015 and March 2016.

For the interview research phase, programs in the content analysis were indexed and ranked according to the number of mentions of new or social media concepts in course titles and descriptions, the presence of a social media program and the likelihood of recent curriculum change. The researcher interviewed administrators and faculty members from the top indexing programs in each curriculum category whose primary responsibilities involved oversight or instruction in strategic communications and social or new media. The resulting sample included 13 interviews of administrators and faculty members from nine institutions conducted between April 2016 and April 2017.

## Conclusions and Discussion

This discussion addresses the phenomenon of adaptation by strategic communications programs to the media shift to *postbroadcast era* social media. It evaluates the status of social media education and discusses the process of change in undergraduate strategic communications programs.

***R<sub>1</sub> What is the percentage of undergraduate strategic communications programs in the United States that include new media and/or social media concepts or skills in course titles or descriptions?***

Of the 115 programs reviewed, 81% offered courses in new media, and 43% offered courses in social media. When considering concepts mentioned in course descriptions as well as course titles, the percentages were higher. The majority (90%) of sampled strategic communications programs had some mention of new media concepts or skills, and a little over two-thirds (68%) had some mention of social media concepts or skills. However, less strategic communications programs offered courses with new media or social media concepts specific to strategic communications (26%). While the number of programs that provided instruction in social media was lower than programs that offered instruction in new media, this research showed that programs were trying to change to meet the demands of an evolving media landscape.

It is possible that a number of the programs that offered new media had integrated social media content in new media or other general courses. This was evident in some general course titles. These courses simply added new media concepts like digital, multimedia, Internet or web to an existing course title such as “Reporting and Writing Across Platforms” or “Digital Media Planning.” While the renaming of general courses like these suggested that the content of



traditional courses was changing, changes like this made the identification of instruction in specific social media concepts in the content analysis difficult.

Whether a program offered instruction in new or social media concepts or skills was only evident in the content analysis if the terms were listed in the title or course description. If new or social media instruction was completely integrated into existing courses, the instruction could not be identified in the content analysis. Lin (2012) identified three possible approaches to the integration of new or social media instruction in curriculum:

- *Fully integrated* – Social, digital and/or multimedia instruction is taught within other skills courses such as reporting and production.
- *Partly integrated* – Social, digital and/or multimedia instruction is taught both in other skills courses, but focused or separate courses with specific instruction that are also offered.
- *Siloed* – Social, digital and/or multimedia instruction is taught in a focused or separate course or concentrated track of classes only.

Kim (2012) recommended invisibility in the teaching of new and social media curriculum in journalism and mass communications programs favoring the fully integrated model of instruction that blends skills with critical and theoretical understanding of the discipline. The interview phase of the research attempted to uncover possible invisibility of social media instruction. The nine programs where administrators or faculty were interviewed were evenly distributed across the three integration approaches described by Lin. Three programs favored the silo, or specific course, approach to new or social media instruction. Three programs were partially integrated, including new or social media in general courses as well as offering specific courses in social media and three were fully integrated including the social media instruction

throughout all curriculum courses. Interview participants noted that the invisibility of new and social media instruction in the strategic communications curriculum may be more related to the description and naming of courses rather than the actual content of courses. In describing the contribution of a new hire, one administrator discussed the changes the new hire was making to course content, *“Without the syllabus you can’t see those changes.”* Another administrator said, *“We have a 10 o’clock strategic communications writing class. It is, of course, writing, but they are writing across platforms.”* A faculty member at a school with partially integrated courses noted that:

*Most of my courses incorporate social media, and I don’t think it is in the title. It is more in the content. I’m not even sure if it is reflected in the syllabus to be honest with you. It does come out in class discussions, in class presentations and it is used for examples of good campaigns and bad campaigns.*

Interview participants also noted that placement of new and social media instruction in a program impacts its visibility in the curriculum. In studying curriculum structures, Kim (2012) found two approaches. In one approach, curriculum was divided into four parts: foundation, basic skills, advanced skills and topical cluster courses. In the other approach, curriculum was divided into two parts, required and elective courses. Some interview participants favored the four-part approach to curriculum emphasizing the importance of keeping some specialty or topical new and social media courses to meet the needs of students. As one administrator said, *“So for us it isn’t about only the [integrated] core classes. We have students that just love digital. It is all they want to do. They just want to be digital and that is what we have to offer.”* In these programs, the content analysis found the specialty/topical courses in new and social media, but may have missed the integrated core courses if new or social media was not mentioned in the course description. Other interview participants noted the importance of the two-part approach with some new and social media skills in all courses. In this curriculum structure, new and social

media instruction was integrated across the curriculum. As one faculty member said, *“It should be throughout [the curriculum] and in some courses more than others.”* In integrated programs like these, new and social media terms were not always included in the wording of the title and/or course description, but were included in the course content. Thus, instruction in new and social media may be happening in more strategic communications programs than was found in the content analysis, but it is not visible in a review of course titles and descriptions only.

While the nine interview participant programs were evenly distributed among the three curriculum approaches, fully integrated, partially integrated and siloed, most of those interviewed (9) believed that social media concepts and skills needed to be either partially or fully integrated into courses in the future. Interview participants attributed this to the continually evolving nature of new and social media and suggested that while their curriculum structure at the present may use a siloed or partially integrated format, they expected that in the future this content would become fully integrated into all courses. One administrator/faculty member said about dealing with evolving technology *“When the technology evolves we will stop teaching that class. Now, it is – ‘Oh, my gosh, so hot,’ – but once it becomes a mainstream integrated tool, it [the special course] will go away. That is the normal process in these [types] of classes.”* This research found that strategic communications programs are still experimenting with new and social media instruction and the placement of this evolving technology in curriculum. While at this time, new and social media were often found in a special course, the belief among most interview participants was that it would become fully integrated into all curriculum courses in the future and another new technology would take its place in specialty/topical courses.

***R<sub>2</sub> For those undergraduate strategic communications programs that include social media in the curriculum, what social media concepts and skills are taught?***

In the content analysis, the researcher found 332 mentions of social media concepts or skills in 624 courses. Of the 624 courses identified, 11% had social media titles and 8% had social media titles specific to strategic communications. Of the 332 mentions of social media (see Table 8), the most mentioned concepts were general references to social media and social networking and the most mentioned skills were content, engagement and analytics. This showed that at least a small percentage of strategic communications programs were offering some instruction in social media concepts and skills.

Since the Boyd and Ellison (2007) definition of social media matches one of the two caveats listed in the Socha and Eber-Schmid (2014) definition of new media, it is possible that the 308 new media courses identified in the content analysis also included instruction in social media. Of the 1,092 mentions of new media concepts and skills (see Table 9), the most mentioned concepts were general references to new or emerging media and digital or interactive media. The most mentioned new media skills were Internet website creation and multimedia content. The new media skill most closely related to social media is mobile technology, which is the main platform for accessing social media. Mobile technology garnered only 4% of mentions. This showed that more strategic communications programs were offering instruction in new media concepts and skills than social media, but mentions of new media concepts and skills in course descriptions and titles does not guarantee social media instruction.

Researchers (Auger & Cho, 2016; Beachboard & Weidman, 2013; Capgemini Consulting, 2014; Moses, 2014; Online Marketing Institute, 2013) identified a Digital Talent Gap between the digital needs of organizations and the talent of potential new employees. These

researchers noted key areas of weakness in strategic communications instruction including new media concepts of content marketing, cross-platform storytelling; mobile media, interactive media, search engine optimization (SEO), paid search, digital display advertising, and digital analytics. The researchers also identified social media as a key area of weakness, mentioning specifically the concepts and skills of social networking sites and blogs or microblogs. The content analysis showed that strategic communications programs have made strides in closing the Digital Talent Gap on new media skills. Of the 1,424 mentions of new or social media concepts or skills, new media concepts (1,092/77%) more than tripled the mentions of social media concepts (332/23%).

When drilling down to mentions of specific social media concepts, the content analysis was not always specific. Of the 332 social media mentions, 53% referred to social media in general (177) (see Table 8). Additionally, specific new media concepts noted as needed by researchers such as interactive media (286/20%) and cross-platform or multimedia (164/12%) were mentioned almost as much as mentions of all social media and social media in general. When focusing on specific social media concepts and skills being taught, the concept most noted as lacking by previous researchers, analytics, represented only 2% of mentions on both new media (23) and social media (22) lists. A combining of the mentions of analytics on both lists (45) resulted in only 3% of all new and social media mentions.

However, interviews with administrators and faculty members showed that programs are aware of the need for instruction in specific concepts and skills. The need most noted as lacking by digital talent researchers, analytics, was the most mentioned concept or skill needed by interview participants. Metrics or analytics and monitoring was listed as the top need by both faculty (4) and administrators (6). As one administrator/faculty member said, “*There is a huge*

*emphasis now on analytics; everything you have has got to have analytics.*” Interview participants added more specifics to the instruction concern over analytics including monitoring and auditing social media. One faculty member described monitoring as *“The big data, data driven and data analysis part of social media.”* The need for instruction in the general concept of analytics was mentioned by nearly every interview participant (10 of 13). Other specific concept needs noted by researchers (Auger & Cho, 2016; Beachboard & Weidman, 2013; Bor, 2014) including engagement (25/2%), social network sites (48/3%) and content marketing/blogs (31/2%) received 3% or less of the new and social media mentions in course titles and descriptions but were more prominent on the lists of mentions by interview participants (see Table 10). Content marketing was the second highest mentioned need by administrators and social networking sites or platforms was the second highest mentioned need by faculty. About engagement an administrator/faculty member said *“More and more consumers are not just on those sites to talk at the brands; they want to have that interaction and have that relationship.”* Interview participants, particularly faculty were keenly aware of the need for instruction on social media networking sites or platforms. Unlike the content of course titles and descriptions, interview participants identified a number of social media platforms by brand name including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Pinterest, YouTube, Vine, Periscope, Swarm, Slack, Google+, and Whatsapp (see Table 11). In describing a class one faculty member said,

*This fall, I'm adding virtual reality into the course as well. Some other things I have added that weren't around a couple of years ago are Pinterest and Instagram. They are really taking over the image area.*

The last part of the above quote also points to one area of concern related to social media instruction noted by other researchers and interview participants. The need for instruction in the application of social media skills for something beyond personal usage. Previously, researchers

(Bor, 2014; Beachboard & Weidman, 2013; Kim H. , 2012) have noted three key issues related to teaching social media concepts and skills. These issues included the importance of balancing skills with concept instruction, teaching multiple types of expertise and explaining to students the differences between social media for personal versus professional use. Interview participants confirmed the importance of all three issues. On finding a proper balance between instruction in concepts and skills, interview participants discussed the need for instruction in general strategic communications concepts along with social media skills saying it was at the core of a good social media program. One faculty member said, “*Strategic thinking is never going to change as a basic starting point.*” Administrators and faculty members also stressed the importance of focusing on core skills that were applicable across multiple platforms. One administrator described this concept in relation to the creation of a 21<sup>st</sup> century story or news release.

*The way we are thinking about [new and social media] is that at the heart of all content production is a story of some kind. From the very beginning we are asking our students – So you have a story idea. How would you write that story in a 10-inch newspaper story? How would you convey it in an Instagram photo? How would you convey it in a tweet with 140 characters that represent your story? – On the one hand, you have to have a much clearer idea of what story you are trying to convey, and on the other hand, you have to know basic forms of best practices for each of these platforms.*

Over half of the interview participants (8) also noted the importance of instruction in the application of social media for an organization versus personal use. Administrators and faculty members discussed the problem of students experienced in the use of social media in their personal life, but lacking knowledge of how to use social media in a professional world. One faculty member said,

*Students have a little bit of an Achilles heel when it comes to [social media] sites because they are using them. There is a difference between using them for personal and academic or professional reasons. They don’t know how to make that switch to brand and brand voice. There are goals and objectives that guide what you do and there are analytics and metrics that measure how well you do it.*

On the issue of professional versus personal social media use an administrator said, *Students learn certain things about how to use social media on their own. They blindly stumble into it. It is the same way with Facebook style issues or Twitter or whatever the application might be. They learn to use certain things, but they don't understand the why; they don't understand the how; they don't understand maybe how to be more strategic with some uses. We try to get them to the point where, yes, they can do certain things, but they also understand why you do what you do.*

Thus, it is clear strategic communications programs are aware of the talent gap, but while programs are improving in the instruction for new media concepts and skills, much work is still needed to close the talent gap for social media concepts and skills.

***R<sub>3</sub> What processes of change have been used to integrate social media education into undergraduate strategic communications programs in the United States?***

The researcher observed that of the 115 programs reviewed in the content analysis 20% appeared to have recently changed curriculum as noted by website statements such as “If you entered the program before a specified date, please see an alternate curriculum.” Change theorist Lewin (1947) described the process of change using a three-stage model commonly referred to as *Unfreeze, Change, Freeze (or Refreeze)*. The processes of change used by undergraduate strategic communications programs to integrate social media instruction into the curriculum closely followed Lewin’s model. In interviews, participants discussed internal and external motivators for change and forces that hindered change. They described a fairly standard process of change in higher education, but most were planning to take a more circular approach to the process skipping the freezing or refreezing step and opting for a model of continuous change instead.



## **The process of unfreezing the curriculum**

In the first stage of Lewin's model, unfreezing, an organization must become aware that change is needed. Lewin (1947) saw human behavior as being in a state of equilibrium and that breaking out of this state requires an emotional stir-up or destabilization force. Schein (1995) expanded on Lewin's theory identifying three steps in the process of unfreezing. According to Schein, individuals or organizations first begin to change as a result of an encounter with disconfirming information that leads to dissatisfaction with the current state of being.

Participants encountered disconfirming information about program curriculum from internal and external factors. The external factors of industry change and accrediting association visits presenting disconfirming information to programs resulting in change. Participants noted the importance of maintaining the connection between curriculum and the strategic communications industry.

Pressure to change came mostly from participants own active observation of happenings in the industry including investment and hiring practices. Administrators focused on where industry dollars were being invested with one saying that the industry has *"invested a whole lot more in areas like social media rather than traditional media in recent years."* Faculty members focused on changes that impacted what students needed to be taught to be hired as one faculty member observed, *"We saw that that was already there in the industry, and it was becoming a bigger component in industry. It was imperative that we start teaching it so we can prepare students."* Accrediting agencies also provided disconfirming information. Administrators pointed to the self-examination part of the accreditation or reaccreditation process as making them aware that change was needed. In describing such a case of disconfirming information, one administrator said,

*We are going through reaccreditation this year and we have to track our formal numbers on the graduating class. Where did they end up? And the vast majority of them have ended up in some blurred occupation – a little bit journalism, a little bit [public relations], a little bit social media, a little bit multimedia and some design. So they really need to have at least some minimal set of a broad-range skills.*

In Schein's (1995) second step in the unfreezing process, individuals or organizations accept the disconfirming information leading to survival anxiety or the feeling of a need to change. Internal forces of current students and alumni made programs recognize that they needed to change to survive. While accreditation is a force of change, changes to meet accrediting association standards were not as important to participants as meeting the needs of students. One administrator said, *"I want to make sure I'm delivering the educational knowledge and skills, not just feeding my ACEJMC (Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications) competencies, but really figuring out where we want [students] to go professionally in their career."* Another administrator said, *"I want our students to get jobs. We are a professional program so I can say that. It is really all about employment. Do our students leave with the skills needed?"* Most participants described anxieties not only over meeting the needs of students, but also living up to the expectations of alumni. Talking about the impact of alumni one administrator/faculty member said, *"We have alumni in the field working since 1934, so we have a lot of people at all sorts of levels all over the world. Our alumni are pretty loyal and they like to see us doing well."*

Schein (1995) identified learning anxieties such as defensiveness and resistance to change to be obstacles that must be overcome for the unfreezing process to happen. Participants also talked about resistance to change in their programs. Faculty members spoke of unsupportive colleagues and administrators. One faculty member said, *"When I suggested a social media course, my administrator went to the most senior [public relations] faculty member. He said*

*that he didn't think it was a very good idea. He said he thought this whole social media thing is a flash in the pan, and it is not going to last.' Of course he was wrong."*

The third step in Schein's (1995) unfreezing process involves the creation of psychological safety by overcoming survival and learning anxieties. Wirth (2004) writes that for this to happen either the survival anxiety has to be greater than the learning anxiety or the learning anxiety must be reduced. The best way to unfreeze is for learning anxieties to be reduced. Participants identified a number of ways programs used to overcome learning anxieties. Both administrators and faculty pointed to the importance of money in addressing learning anxieties. One administrator said, *"I have the faculty I have. It is not like I can be changing every year. They are just going to have to keep up in their own fields, and we have to put money to it. It can't just be encouraging it."* Another administrator said, *"We have a pot of money for professional development in the area of teaching. We bring experts in to teach workshops at least once a semester."* Some programs utilized the advantage of being located in an urban area with a strong strategic communications industry to overcome learning anxieties. An administrator said, *"You try to play to the strengths of your city and the marketplace. So this means tapping into all the resources around [our city]."* About money and location, a faculty member said, *"It also depends on how much access to examples, and how much money you have."*

### **The process of changing the curriculum**

The second phase of Lewin's (1947) change theory involves moving or changing. After becoming sufficiently dissatisfied with the current conditions, the organization must gain a real desire to change. Schein (1995) describes the moving or changing as a process of "cognitive restructuring" (p. 5). He notes that imitation of role models and looking for personalized

solutions through trial-and-error learning aid change. Consistent with Schein's process of cognitive restructuring, programs used trial-and-error and review and imitation of other programs to initiate the change process. In describing the process of change, one faculty member said, *"It [incorporating social media] is touch-and-go and trial-and-error. Like anything else, every year students are different. So I'm constantly trying to find things that keep their attention and that they can relate to."* Other programs took the review process to change. Describing the program's review process, one administrator said,

*I asked the faculty that teach in the area of Strategic Communications to form a group, and they are going to take a look at all our basic classes in that area. They are going to insure a couple of things. One is that there is a logical flow from one class to another and that [classes] are not duplicating material. Then second that each one of [the classes] is updated and pointing in the direction of using social media.*

Another administrator started the change process by reviewing curriculum in other programs. The administrator said,

*So last semester I went through all classes we have, and looked at all the other programs out there because I want our program to be as up-to-date as possible. Sometimes you just have to clear the decks. You have to look at it holistically and ask what could you take away; what isn't relevant anymore.*

Louvel (2013) found that curriculum development in higher education programs can take three forms, crafting a specialized product, creating an inter-disciplinary program and renewing or reorienting an existing program. Participants described a process of change in their programs consistent with Louvel's forms. In the first form, academics acted pro-actively using existing connections to craft specialized products. Participants in these programs changed by adding new courses. Describing the process of curriculum change in the program, one faculty member said,

*The process is that if we want to add a new class they [the program administration] are open to trying an experimental special topics class. The instructor submits a proposal for a special topics experimental course. If the course receives positive feedback and has been offered twice, then the instructor*

*can propose that the course be given a permanent course number to make it a routine course in the curriculum.*

Another faculty member said, *“I started in 2009. I had heard of social media, [and our program] administrator was looking for online courses for our extended campuses. I said ‘how about social media.’”* Another faculty member, linked the development of a specialized course to personal research interests. The faculty member said, *“I started out with a research interest in social media. Then, as social media became prevalent, I started incorporating it into more of my courses. Then, as the students responded with more interest, we ended up developing specific courses.”* These examples demonstrate two ways that social media is finding its way into strategic communications curriculum. In the first example, the specialized course came first, but in the second example, the faculty member experimented with social media in other courses and the experimentation led to the development of a specialized course.

Not all programs have the resources to develop specialized courses. One participant noted that while the program has access to *“a couple of courses that focus specifically on multimedia or digital media, we don’t do a lot of [specialized courses] because our faculty is small.”* These programs were more likely to use Louvel’s second form of development. Participants discussed the use of inter-disciplinary resources such as existing courses and available resources from multiple departments. One administrator said, *“So one of the things is we have these digital classes that the media department offers. We don’t offer them, but they are important enough. Two years ago we didn’t have any of that in our curriculum. Now we have added all these digital classes like digital storytelling and coding. So that is one thing we did.”* In some cases, academics in these inter-disciplinary programs benefited from the new label without making significant content changes. During the interview phase of the research, it became apparent that some programs showed stronger social media offerings in the content analysis phase than the

reality of the curriculum. As one administrator said, *“We are at the point where we are revising curriculum, and we just got to the place where we have separated a little bit more from the Electronic Media department. It probably doesn’t look like it on paper, but in practice now there is not too much cross-pollination.”*

Academics in the last form renewed or reoriented existing programs. Louvel (2013) noted that these programs added modules that reinforced subjects already taught and utilized repertoires of scarce existing resources. An administrator/faculty member for a small program said, *“Advertising on social media is discussed in all classes as part of course content. In Media Planning class, for example, the students put web and social media in their media plans and in the capstone course, where appropriate, students are expected to have social media in their plans books. We are fully integrating, because we are still not there.”* Several of the participants noted that as social media usage becomes more prevalent in the industry their programs are moving away from specialization and toward integration. One administrator/faculty member described this progression as part of the natural process of curriculum change, *“Now you can tell that social has become a big part of most brands’ spending these days. As it has become more the norm, it integrates into even the core classes as well.”* The administrator/faculty member had the expectation of a similar process of integration for a newly developed virtual reality (VR) course. The administrator/faculty member said, *“As VR integrates into consumer brand experience, it will also follow the same path to integration through our curriculum and all the other core courses as well.”*

Lewin (1947) described change as a slow process. Curriculum researchers (Castaneda, 2011; Crook, 2008; Faison & Montague, 2013; Greenberg, 2009; Hermida, 2010; Louvel, 2013; Merrin, Media studies 2.0: Upgrading and open-sourcing the discipline, 2009) have said this is

especially true in higher education describing change at educational institutions as moving at a “glacial pace” (Castaneda, 2011, p. 370). Interview participants agreed with this assessment of change in higher education institutions. The majority identified this as a major hindrance to curriculum change. One administrator/faculty member said, *“But it is hard with curriculum in the university because normally curriculum changes takes approximately two years. So sometimes by the time you get it done, the industry has moved on to something else.”* Louvel (2013) described a number of pressures placed on programs and academics participating in curriculum change. In addition to institutional pressures, Louvel listed the competitive marketplace, rules and norms of disciplinary organizations, local politics, the lack of clear models, shortages of resources and professional interests as impacting the change process. Participants also noted a number of pressures on the process of curriculum change including industry professionals, accrediting associations, opposition from administrators and faculty members, lack of personnel, and interests of students and alumni. Most of the participants did not reference concern for competition with other universities. Generally, the participants seem to have an open relationship of sharing and encouragement with other programs. However, at least one administrator hinted at rankings of programs saying, *“We are currently one of the programs that is seen as a leader in this area. We have had more extensive offerings in social media and digital media than most of our competitors.”* Participants found the rules and norms of disciplinary organizations, accrediting associations, to encourage change. Participants made reference to the self-evaluation process as making their programs aware of needed change. One administrator said, *“So ACEJMC (Accrediting Council for Education Journalism and Mass Communications) changed their requirements. They increased the requirements to allow more electives. We used this opportunity to revise our undergraduate curriculum.”* While concerns

over expertise of personnel and opposition from administrators and colleagues hindered the process of curriculum change, the greatest influence on the process came from academics' perceptions of industry expectations and students' interests. One administrator/faculty member summarized these influencers on curriculum change best saying, *"Students that graduate and get involved with new technologies become alumni; we bring them back; and they energize our students by letting them know the reality of what's important to know before you leave. That is the process we have taken . . . We are fortunate to be connected in that way. Also, we are pretty fortunate to have a strong connection to agencies."*

### **The process of refreezing into a new curriculum**

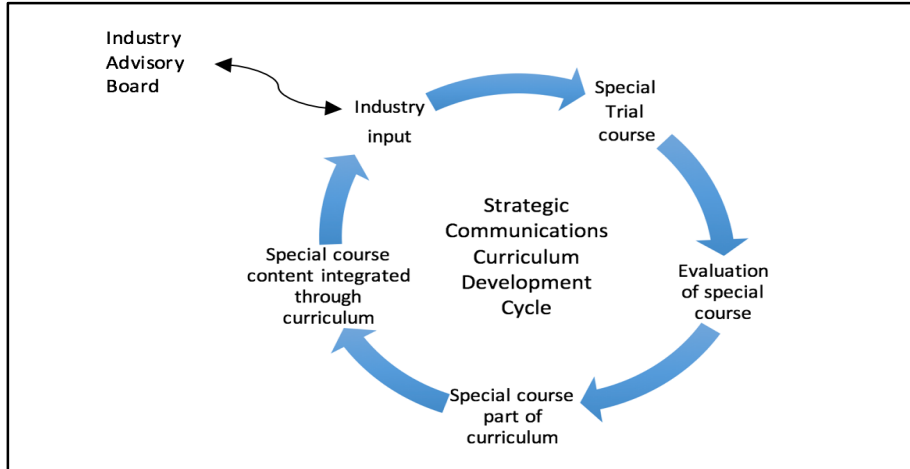
The third step in Lewin's change model calls for individuals to freeze, or refreeze into the new position. Organization change theorists Fullan (1995) and Senge (1990) questioned Lewin's third stage of change and suggested that change is a circular rather than linear process. Most participants seemed to be on a more circular change process. When asked about the future for curriculum, participants agreed that they needed to keep changing to stay current with the industry. One administrator summarized this circular approach to change saying, *"We are always looking at what's out there; what is it that the industry needs for their professionals; and how can we make sure students are getting not only the theory and foundations, but also the latest information."* Fullan (1995) notes that to manage the dynamically complex world of change, an organization must become a constant learner. Participants agreed that their programs need to keep learning and changing. About constant learning, one administrator/faculty member said, *"We have got to continue to integrate this new media stuff. Absolutely have to because it's here. It's reality whether we like it or not. I tell my students the audience has changed the medium; the medium did not change for the audience. It is the audience who has said they want what they*



*want and they want it right now.” Change is difficult. The idea of unfreezing from something that is known is scary. Programs noted that opposition from colleagues and the glacial speed of curriculum approval in higher education are problems, but all participants stressed the importance of keeping pace with industry change. As one administrator said, “With all the changes the industry is making, it is hard to tell what changes we will need to make for the future. There will be changes next semester that we don’t even anticipate this semester because it is moving so fast.”*

### **Implications of Study**

This research shows that the process of curriculum change in strategic communications is consistent with Lewin’s (1947) model as augmented by Schein (1995) for the first two stages of the process, but is more consistent with research by Fullan (1995) and Senge (1990) in the third stage. Participant descriptions of the change process in strategic communications programs suggests that a model for curriculum change should be circular and include input from industry professionals. Thus, a model for strategic communications curriculum change can be represented as follows (see Figure 7).



*Figure 7. Strategic Communications Curriculum Development Cycle*

Figure presents a revised model of the cycle of curriculum change in strategic communications programs. In this model, curriculum change is viewed as an ongoing process fed by knowledge from the industry and constantly reevaluated and changed by educators.

Administrators of strategic communications programs need to establish a system for continuous review and revision following a circular process of curriculum change tapping into connections with alumni and industry professionals to provide assistance and directions. Important to the success of the circular curriculum system is providing resources for professional development of existing faculty including funding for instruction, conference attendance and onsite workshops. Additionally, administrators need to strategically plan hiring practices that provide opportunities to expand curriculum through careful selection of adjuncts and new faculty that bring not only instructional skills to fill existing vacancies but also offer experience in new technology and industry skills.

Faculty and administrators should work together to develop curriculum that adds new and social media concepts, but does not stray from the core knowledge of what makes good strategic communications and storytelling. Support and encouragement should be given to faculty development of experimental courses providing instruction for students on industry changes, and space should be provided in curriculum for students to elect to take experimental courses. As new and social media skills and concepts increase in the industry, instruction in these skills

should be integrated throughout the curriculum. Course names and descriptions should contain specific wording that reflects the new curriculum content as this is the only way potential students and other observers can see changes made to programs and curriculum. Finally, administrators and faculty must put pressure on institutional administrations and curriculum governance systems to develop procedures for curriculum change that allow programs to be more responsive to a fast-changing industry.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Since this study used a sample of programs based on lists from an accrediting association and a guidebook for potential students, future researchers should consider expanding this study to include all strategic communications programs in these sources and consider adding other sources to the database to more fully represent programs in the United States. Future research could also expand this analysis to other countries and compare content between domestic and foreign programs.

A database that catalogs curriculum content for other subjects related to strategic communications such as ethics, design or integration would also be beneficial to curriculum developers. This study used content analysis and interview to describe curriculum in strategic communications programs. These methods give only a limited view of content. Research using other methods could give a more comprehensive view of exactly how strategic communications programs are addressing changes in the industry. Finally, more study needs to be done on the process of curriculum change in higher education and how it can be improved to make curriculum more responsive to industry changes.

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## APPENDIX A

### OFFICE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY APPROVAL LETTER



**Office of Research Integrity**  
Institutional Review Board  
One John Marshall Drive  
Huntington, WV 25755

FWA 00002704

IRB1 #00002205  
IRB2 #00003206

February 22, 2016

Lisa Heaton, PhD  
Graduate School of Education and Professional Development

RE: IRBNet ID# 831794-1  
At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Heaton:

**Protocol Title:** [831794-1] Curriculum Change in Undergraduate Strategic Communications Programs

**Expiration Date:** February 22, 2017

**Site Location:** MUGC

**Submission Type:** New Project APPROVED

**Review Type:** Exempt Review

In accordance with 45CFR46.101(b)(2), the above study and informed consent were granted Exempted approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Designee for the period of 12 months. The approval will expire February 22, 2017. A continuing review request for this study must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date.

This study is for student Allyson Goodman.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Coordinator Bruce Day, ThD, CIP at 304-696-4303 or day50@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

## APPENDIX B

### CONTENT ANALYSIS CODING BOOK

**General Information:** *The coding directions below apply to all categories in the coding sheet*

**Dimension:** Program – *Code any list of courses leading to a higher education degree in a field of specialized interest as a program whether the program is titled a major, specialization, emphasis, concentration, track, area or other term denoting a list of required courses.*

**Dimension:** Undergraduate – *Code a program that lists courses leading to a Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts degree as undergraduate.*

**Dimension:** Course – *Code any unit that provides instruction in content related to a specialized interest area as a course. To be considered a course, the unit of instruction should be numbered, titled and have a description of the instruction offered.*

**Category:** Descriptors – Demographic characteristics of programs

**Dimension:** Accreditation – *Code based the list of accredited schools on the ACEJMC website. Code a school as ACEJMC for full accreditation or provisional ACEJMC for accreditation pending review.*

**Dimension:** Strategic Communications Faculty – *Code a faculty member as a strategic communications faculty member if that person has a biography or other descriptor on the website listing advertising, public relations, strategic communications, integrated marketing communications, healthcare communications, public communications or a term that indicates strategy-based persuasive communications on behalf of a client as their primary teaching or research responsibility. Record the total number counted.*

**Category:** *Strategic Communications program* – Code any program of curriculum that may be identified as advertising, public relations, strategic communications, integrated marketing communications or uses both advertising and public relations names in the title as a specialized or combined program of study.

**Dimension:** *Advertising specialized program* – Code with a 1 a program advertising specialized if the program title contains the word advertising or the majority of the courses in the program relate to instruction in only advertising such as copywriting, advertising research, media planning, advertising strategy, advertising campaign, advertising design or similar titles.

**Dimension:** *Public Relations specialized program* – Code with a 1 a program public relations specialized if the program title contains the words public relations or the majority of the courses relate to instruction in only public relations, such as public relations writing, media relations, corporate publications, corporate video, healthcare communications, nonprofit communications, public affairs, public relations research, public relations case studies, public relations campaigns or similar titles.

**Dimension:** *Strategic Communications combined program* – Code with a 1 a program strategic communications combined if the program title contains both the words advertising and public relations or if it is titled with a blended curriculum name such as strategic communications or integrated marketing communications. Possible courses in a combined program might be titled public relations, advertising, strategic communications, marketing communications, copywriting, layout and design, corporate publications, corporate video, media planning, channel planning, campaigns, case studies,

research, media relations, healthcare communications, public affairs, nonprofit communications or similar titles.

**Category:** *Social and related programs* – Code any program of curriculum that may be identified as social media, new media, digital, online, Internet, new technology, interactive media or a similar name in the title as a social media or new media program of study.

**Dimension:** *New media program* – Code with a 1 a program as new media if the title includes the words “new media” or indicates instruction in a related area such as Internet, web, digital, interactive or networked media or technology. Courses in the program might be titled new media, social media, web design, interactive design, digital technologies, analytics, Internet strategies, online media or similar titles.

**Dimension:** *Social media program* – Code with a 1 a program as social media if the title includes the words “social media” or indicates instruction in a social media area such as networking, blogs, photo sharing, vodcasting, podcasting, document sharing or viral marketing technology. Courses in the program might be titled social media, brand journalism, content marketing, analytics, blogging, podcasting, vodcasting, viral marketing, social networking or similar titles.

**Category:** *Social media and related courses* – Code any course that may offer instruction or technology instruction in social or related media as a social media or new media course or as a strategic communications course with social or related media emphasis. These courses will list social or related media concepts in the title or course description such as social media, new media, digital, online, Internet, new technology, interactive media or a similar concept.

**Dimension:** *New media courses* – Code a course as new media if the title or course description contains the words new media or a related term such as new media, digital,



online, Internet, new technology, interactive, web, website, social media, blogging, podcasting, vodcasting or other related term. The course should offer instruction exclusively in the management, writing, design or production of content for Internet delivery. Code with the total number of courses for each school whether the wording is in the title, the course description or both.

**Dimension: Social Media course** – Code a course as social media if the title or course description contains the words social media, social networking, viral, social listening, brand journalism, content marketing, blogging, podcasting, vodcasting, photo sharing, wiki, document sharing, or other related term. The course should offer instruction exclusively in the management, writing, design or production of content for social networking properties. Code with the total number of courses for each school whether the wording is in the title, the course description or both.

**Dimension: Strategic Communications course social/related media emphasis** – Code a course as a strategic communications course social/related media emphasis if the title or course description contains words for a social/related media course and a strategic communications course. Words for a social/related media course might be social networking, viral, brand journalism, content marketing, blogging, podcasting, vodcasting, photo sharing, wiki, document sharing, new media, digital, online, Internet, new technology, interactive, web, website or other related term. Words for a strategic communications course might be advertising, public relations, media planning, media relations, strategic communications, marketing communications, healthcare communications, nonprofit communications or other related term. The course should offer instruction in both social/related media and strategic communications. For

dimensions in this category, code with the total number of courses for each school whether the wording is in the title, the course description or both.

**Category: Keywords** – Code a course keyword if the title or course description contains words related to new or social media. Write all keywords found in the appropriate new or social media space.

**Dimension: Social media keywords** – For this dimension, code with a 1 all social media related words such as social media, social networking, blogs, photo sharing, vodcasting, podcasting, document sharing, viral marketing, brand journalism, content marketing, analytics or similar words that appear in any course title or description. Record each word only once.

**Dimension: New media keywords** – For this dimension, code with a 1 all social media related words such as Internet, new media, web, website, interactive, digital, analytics, online media or similar words that appear in any course title or description. Record each word only once.

**Category: Social media concepts** – Using the keyword information from the previous category, code the words according to the following dimensions by marking a 1 in the space. If a word could fit into more than one category, count it in as many spaces as appropriate.

**Dimension: General instruction in Social Media** – If a word refers to social media in general with no specific information or uses a term like shared media, etc., record it here.

**Dimension: Social networking sites** – If a word refers to managing, writing designing or producing social media pages like those found on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc., record it here.

**Dimension: Podcasting/Vodcasting** – If a word refers to managing, writing or producing online video, audio, graphics, photos, animation, slideshows for sharing websites like YouTube, Vine, Pinterest, etc., record it here.

**Dimension: Viral marketing/Opinion monitoring** – If a word refers to managing, producing or promoting audience produced social content such as opinions, reviews, ratings, etc. or encouraging others to share online memes, photos, links, etc., record it here.

**Dimension: Blogs, content marketing, brand journalism** – If a word refers to managing, writing or producing blogs for sharing like Wordpress, Wix, Google pages, etc., record it here.

**Dimension: Social media analytics** – If a word refers to collecting, reading or assessing social media analytics or metrics such as likes, tweets, retweets, shares, etc., record it here.

**Dimension: Social media advertising** – If a word refers to selling, writing or designing social media advertising, record it here.

**Category: New media concepts** – Using the keyword information from the previous category, code the words according to the following dimensions by marking a 1 in the space. If a word could fit into more than one category, count it in as many spaces as appropriate.

**Dimension: General instruction New Media** – If a word refers to new media in general with no specific information like new media, digital media, web, Internet, interactive, etc., record it here.

**Dimension: Internet websites** – If a word refers to managing, writing or designing Internet websites, record it here.

***Dimension: Digital technology*** – If a word refers to managing, writing or producing graphics, photos, animation, video and/or audio streaming for the Internet, record it here.

***Dimension: Converged media*** – If a word refers to managing, writing or producing content for multiple platforms, record it here.

***Dimension: Mobile technology*** – If a word refers to managing, writing or designing for mobile technology like cell phones, tablets, etc., record it here. Includes creating applications known as apps.

***Dimension: New media analytics*** – If a word refers to collecting, reading or assessing media analytics or metrics such as visits, page views, clicks, etc., record it here.

***Dimension: Search engine optimization*** – If a word refers to knowledge and use of search engine optimization (SEO) or search engine marketing (SEM), record it here.

***Dimension: Internet advertising*** – If a word refers to selling, writing or designing Internet advertising, record it here.

## APPENDIX C

### CONTENT ANALYSIS CODING FORM

Categories	Dimensions	STATE	School
Descriptors (D)	Accreditation		
	Number of Strat Comm faculty		
Strat Comm programs (D)	Ad Specialization		
	PR Specialization		
	Combined Strat Comm		
Social media and related programs (R3)	Undergrad Social media program		
	Undergrad New media program		
Social media and related courses (R1; R3)	New media courses		
	Social media courses		
	Strat Comm courses social/related media emphasis		
Social media and Related Keywords (R2; R3)	New Media Keywords		
	Social Media Keywords		
Related media concepts (R2; R3)	General instruction in New Media		
	Internet websites		
	Digital technology		
	Converged media		
	Mobile technology		
	New media analytics or metrics		
	Search engine optimization (SEO or SEM)		
	Internet advertising		
Social media concepts (R2; R3)	General instruction in Social Media		
	Social Networking Sites		
	Podcasting/Vodcasting		
	Viral Marketing/Social listening		
	Blogs, Content Marketing, Brand Journalism		
	Social media analytics or metrics		
	Social media advertising		

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

*I'm conducting research on Advertising and Public Relations programs and how they are changing. Would you have 15 minutes to answer some questions?*

*To make sure I record your answers correctly, would it be okay if I record this conversation?*

Just so you know, there are no foreseeable risks or benefits to your participation in this study. There is no cost or payment to you. You will remain anonymous. Your participation is voluntary, and you will not be penalized or lose benefits if you refuse to participate or decide to stop. If you have questions while taking part, please stop me and ask. May I continue?

1. What are your job responsibilities at (University)?
2. For this study, I'm looking at undergraduate programs. As you know, Ad/PR industries are experiencing evolutionary changes. I have reviewed your website and noted that you have a number of undergraduate courses that include new and social media concepts in their titles or course descriptions. There are many programs in the country that don't have this. Can you describe how your program has made these changes and why?

*(Taken from content analysis: This school has ?? courses that mention new media in the title, ?? course that mentions social media in the title and ?? general courses with social media listed in the course description in your undergraduate program ?? mentions of new media and ?? mentions of social media in course descriptions)*

3. In my research, I have found that programs vary according to the degree to which new content is integrated into the program. For some it is fully integrated into courses and others have it partially integrated or completely siloed. How would you describe new and social media instruction in your program and why do you do it that way?

*(Fully integrated – Social media is taught in courses throughout the curriculum  
Partly integrated – Social media is taught in a specialized course or courses that program students take. Siloed – Social media is taught separately in a specialized program that students can elect to take.)*

4. My research, showed that curriculum change in higher education is a slow process and that it varies according to a program's access to experts and degree of existing courses and resources. Can you describe the process you have used to incorporate social media instruction into your program and how you train faculty to teach it?

*(The program planners tap into an existing knowledge network of experts. The program planners amalgamate content from existing courses and available resources such as related programs. The program planners renew or reorient existing courses by adding modules or utilizing other existing resources.)*

5. On your website I was particularly interested in what social media concepts your program taught. I found mentions of *social media generally, as well as concepts like (from content analysis)*. What social media concepts do you believe are important for your program students to learn and why?

6. What changes, if any, do you have planned for your programs in the future?

*Now I have just a couple of demographic questions to ask if you don't mind.*

7. Approximately how many students are enrolled in your programs now?

8. For how long has your program been a part of the unit at (University)?

9. How many faculty members have advertising or public relations as their primary teaching responsibility?

10. How long have you been head of the program at (University)?

11. In addition to your administrative duties, do you also teach courses? (If yes, what do you teach?)

12. I would like to talk with a faculty member at your school that is teaching social media. Is there someone you would recommend that I contact?

13. Is there anything else you would like to add about your social media curriculum?

*If you have questions about this research study or would like a copy of the results, you may call me at (304) 539-3795 or (304) 696-6025 and I will answer your questions. If you feel as if you were not treated well during this study, or have questions concerning your rights as a research participant call the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity (ORI) at (304) 696-4303.*

## APPENDIX E

### NEW MEDIA COURSE TITLES

Title Categories	f	% of titles	Example Titles
Digital Media titles	71	23	
Digital Content Production	17		Digital Media Design; Digital Tools Creating Digital Media Platforms;
Digital Media Literacy	11		Introduction to Digital Media Digital media Digital journalism;
Digital Media Writing	9		Digital storytelling for 21 <sup>st</sup> Century; Writing in the digital age
Digital Media and Culture	9		Grassroots digital advocacy Digital Theories
Digital Advertising	8		Digital media planning Digital Advertising and marketing
Other	17		Digital Metrics Digital photography Digital Media Entrepreneurship Digital Tactics in Public Relations Digital promotional management
Multimedia Titles	58	19	
Multimedia Storytelling	15		Writing for multimedia; Reporting and Writing Across Platforms Transmedia Writing
Multimedia Journalism	10		Introduction to Multimedia Journalism Advanced Multimedia Journalism
Multimedia Communication	6		Introduction to Multimedia Multimedia Environment
Other	27		Multimedia Newsgathering Multimedia Publication design Multimedia Production Art Direction II: Narrative and Multimedia; Advanced Public Relations Writing for Multimedia Platforms
Internet/Web Titles	46	15	
Internet and Web Page Design	26		Internet Production Web Design Web Design Publishing
Internet Marketing	8		Internet Marketing Communications Internet Video Promotion Strategy
Other	12		Internet communications; Web Journalism Advertising on the Internet
New Media Titles	25	8	
New Media Literacy	10		New and Emerging Media; Communication and New Media; New Media Criticism;
Entrepreneurial Media	6		Developing New Media



Emerging Media in Advertising and Public Relations	5	New Media Driver's License New Media Technologies: Their Impact on the Future of Advertising, Marketing and Public Relations
Other	4	Audience Analysis, Public Opinion and New Media
<b>Online Titles</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>8</b>
Online Journalism	11	Editing for Print and Online Online Writing and Journalism Video for Online Journalism
Online Writing and Design	5	Writing for online environments Design of Online Content Online Publishing
Other	9	Introduction to Online Media Online Consumer Research Online Advertising
<b>Interactive Titles</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>
Interactive Advertising	9	Interactive Advertising Campaign Development Interactive Advertising Design Direct and Interactive Response
Interactive Media Design	7	Programming for Interactive Media; Advanced interactive media design
Other	7	Interactive News Applied Interactive Magazine Interactive Digital Communications
<b>Technology Titles</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>
New Communication Technologies	7	Information technology and politics Media Technology in the Global Environment
Other	9	Mass Communication Technology Technology and Culture Technology Marketing and Advertising;
<b>Other Titles</b>		
Web Design and Interactive Digital Media;	10	Interactive Web Design Digital Multimedia Production Multimedia Convergence and Web Design
Media Convergence;	7	Convergence and Hypermedia Convergence Journalism Digital media convergence
Applications of Mobile Technology	7	Mobile Media and Development Mobile Platforms Mobile Communication and Advertising
Interactive Digital Communications	7	Interactive Multimedia Interactive Digital Advertising;
Miscellaneous	11	Media Boot Camp eMarketing Data Visualization Coding E-Commerce/Database Marketing Media Metrics User Experience Design

Note. n=306 Titles

## APPENDIX F

### SOCIAL MEDIA COURSE TITLES

Title Categories	<i>f</i>	% of titles	Example Titles
Social Media	8	12	Sociable Media Social Media Communication Advanced Social Media
Social Media Marketing	8	12	Social Media and Integrated Marketing Social Media and Electronic Marketing Executing Social Media Marketing
Social and Emerging Media	8	12	Digital and Social Media Web and Social Media Production
Social Media and Society	8	12	Social Media and Globalization Social Media Cultures Social Media Blogging, Smart Mobs and We the Media Social Media Theory and Practice
Social Media Strategies	5	7	Social Media Strategies and Tactics Interactive Techniques: Social Media Strategy
Social Media and Public Relations	5	7	Social Media and PR Strategies Electronic & Social media for PR Social Media in Organization Contexts
Social Media Management	4	5	Social Media Consulting
Advertising Strategy and Social Media;	4	5	Interactive, Digital, and Social Media in Advertising One-to-One Advertising on the Internet
Advanced Social Media and Analytics	3	4	Fundamentals of Social Media Monitoring and Measuring Social Media Analytics, Listening, and Engagement
Strategic Branding and Social Media	3	4	Social Media of Brands Personal Branding
Social and Mobile Media	3	4	Mobile and Social Media Journalism Digital, Social and Mobile Marketing
Other Titles	8		Writing for Social Media Interactive Techniques: Social Media Content Blogging: Beyond the Basics Social Media in Strategic Communications Sports and Social Media Experiential Campaigns Online games, Virtual Worlds and Social Networks

Note. n=68 Titles