Abstract

Journalism Professionals Urge Students to Focus on Specialty Early in Journalism School

This project includes a series of videos produced for the Columbia Missourian, as well as an analysis portion that sought to examine the changing role of journalism schools in the 21st century, paying particular attention to the continuing role of liberal arts education and the shift away from track-based curricula toward a converged curriculum.

The ten videos produced for the Missourian depict the various ways in which citizens of Columbia, Missouri spend their summer, including street festivals, swim lessons, and other events.

In the analysis portion of the project, my methodology involved a combination of in-depth interviews of journalism educators, professionals, and former students, as well as a survey distributed to current students. I was able to conclude that journalism schools are reacting to the pressures of a new media environment by de-emphasizing a liberal arts curriculum in favor of a more technical approach, and that convergence students should be careful not to try to do too many things at once; editors value masters of a single technical skill over jacks-of-all-trades.

These results will be useful not only to journalism students as they plot their course tracks, but also to educators and professionals, as they seek to streamline the curriculum to be more responsive to the changing needs of contemporary newsrooms. The results will also serve to further the discussion concerning the changes in journalism education from a traditional, liberal-arts based curriculum to a more vocationally-focused one.