

Growing an Online Audience for Rich Media

How the photography departments at the South Florida Sun-Sentinel and The Denver Post cultivated an online audience for multimedia.

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CHAPTER ONE

I began this project in the summer of 2006 with a photo editing project placement at the South Florida Sun Sentinel. It was supposed to have taken me six months to finish. As I sit here, in 2012, drawing conclusions from the questions I posed six years earlier, I am excited to see what has evolved in the world of online newspaper photojournalism. I entered the University of Missouri's Graduate School of Journalism simply because I loved photojournalism. What drew me to the profession of newspaper photo editing has remained the same while the job itself has been reinvented.

I graduated from Providence College in 2000 as a business management major completely unsure of what path to take in beginning a career. I wanted to try something different and travel somewhere new. I decided to become a full-time volunteer in a program called Jesuit Volunteer Corps. After applying and interviewing, I was placed with six roommates in Anchorage, Alaska. My roommates and I would work at social service agencies in the community for the following year. Social justice was the main tenet of the program and its motto was, "Live simply so others may simply live." My placement was at Abused Women's Aid in Crisis, Inc., a 52-bed domestic violence shelter.

It took me a while to become accustomed to the job but in the following year I learned the causes of domestic violence and experienced the challenges of working with victims, including children. The shelter was always busy and the work was always exhausting but I loved the job and I loved Alaska. As full-time volunteers, my roommates

and I were paid \$240 per month to pool together for house bills and \$85 per month in individual spending money. We took public transportation, found every free activity in Anchorage and cooked every meal at home.

Working at the shelter as a victim advocate forever changed the way I saw the world. I came to a deeper understanding of the problem and I felt compelled to communicate what I learned to other people in the community. At the end of my one-year commitment as a volunteer, I was offered a full-time job as a victim advocate. I started an outreach program to share what I had learned with high school students and other adults in the hopes of making people more aware of the problem. But, I always had a nagging feeling I could do more to share the stories of the women I came to know so well. I wanted to share their stories to educate others. This urge to communicate stories eventually led me to journalism.

I was a bit different than most of the other students in the photojournalism program who came to a love of photography early in life. I came to photojournalism after realizing that I loved to tell stories. Photography was my favorite method of telling the stories, but I also loved the spoken word, music, design and video as ways to interact with the narrative. So, multimedia photo editing was a natural fit for me. After realizing that, I just needed to create the job. Lucky for me, journalism at the time was on a crash course with the internet.

In 2006, I wanted to know how to get photographs published on a newspaper's website. Newspaper websites had been in existence for more than five years but the quality and quantity of photographs and multimedia online was minimal. Photography

had no real presence or prominence on newspaper websites and I, as both a photo editor and website viewer, wanted that to change.

The only guideline I set in the beginning was to create multimedia projects and publish them on sun-sentinel.com. I knew the photo department was in the midst of creating an online identity and a place to display photojournalistic storytelling. I also knew Tim Rasmussen, Director of Photography, was excited about the prospects of online storytelling.

First, I had to learn the basics of photo editing and the structure of print production at the paper. The Sun Sentinel had ample space in those days to display national, international, and local photography across multiple sections, including entertainment, sports, food, business, opinion and travel. I moved slowly from shadowing photo editors to eventually being responsible for the photo report in whole sections of the paper.

As the duties of print photo editing became more familiar, I began to pay attention to the structure of the website in relation to the structure of the print product. I discovered the source of control for photos on the website lay outside of the photography department. In fact, the department had nothing to do with photography online. The entire content management system was built with visual content as an afterthought.

The graphics department had already identified this issue and was in the process of building a microsite, The Edge, within sun-sentinel.com but outside of the website CMS, which would allow for interactive graphics, photo slideshows and special projects combining graphics, photo, audio and video. The Edge became fully operational during

the time at my project placement and offered a place, outside the control of the online department and Tribune Co.'s rules about content within their CMS, for me to publish multimedia projects.

As the photographers created or were assigned projects, I developed platforms on which to tell the stories online. These projects were small and complicated. First, I would identify the story and decide how best to tell it employing mixed media. Then, I would teach myself the tools to create a platform to tell the story. Finally, I would set out to tell the story on that specific platform. This was time consuming. There was a disproportional amount of time spent creating the tools needed to publish the story. When the story was made available to the readers, there weren't any reliable methods for receiving feedback on the popularity of the story or measuring the value it provided to the online operations of the newspaper.

I believe I made a difference in bringing awareness to creating multimedia content by the end of my project placement at the South Florida Sun Sentinel. Weekly online photo projects became commonplace and photographers began prioritizing the creation of multimedia content - slideshows, video, and audio - on daily assignments. As a department, we made no progress in enhancing the photo galleries created by the online producers of sun-sentinel.com.

In April 2007, I moved to Denver, Colorado and began freelancing for The Denver Post where my former boss, Tim Rasmussen, had been hired as the Assistant Managing Editor for Photography and Multimedia. I started out producing multimedia projects similar to what I had been producing at the Sun Sentinel but on a more frequent

basis. As a freelancer, I had no print responsibilities and was able to focus solely on web projects. I began a collaboration with Mateo Leyba, the systems editor in the photo department, which became an invaluable relationship. I finally had someone with whom to develop better tools, brainstorm future projects and problem solve technical issues. Together we employed a trial and error approach to multimedia on the web. We tried everything. Some projects failed and others were popular but we always built on what we learned.

I was hired as a multimedia photo editor for The Denver Post in October 2007. In the first year, I continued multimedia development. Unlike at the Sun Sentinel, photo presence and prominence on denverpost.com became the responsibility of the photo department and we never relinquished that control. In the first year, Tim, Mateo and I built a hub for all photo department content. For the first time, there was a central home on the website for multimedia content, special projects, video, photo galleries, audio slideshows, etc. It was clunky and manually coded but it was a start.

In the following years we revised MediaCenter, as we came to call it, multiple times. As we learned more about the web and our viewers, we incorporated tracking, better Flash coding and video players. Through bookmarking, we began to see numbers on how many visitors were returning for content we published. We increased the prominence of MediaCenter on the homepage by adding a rotator to display our projects and saw a huge jump in the size of our audience.

Starting in 2008, Tim revised the job descriptions of the imaging technicians to include photo gallery production and we saw another increase in the online photo

audience as the stream of content on MediaCenter became more regular. We cut back on the amount of audio slideshows and smaller special projects we were producing because the traffic return on them was not worth the time spent creating the tools to display them.

By the end of 2008, we had increased our online audience from 620,000 total views for all rich media on the website to 29 million views. In 2009, we revised MediaCenter again, taking the platform out of Flash and publishing it in a standard Wordpress blog format. This change proved to be the most important revision made. Changing the content management system allowed us to focus on search engine optimization. It also simplified the publishing process. Every member of the photo department, with minimal training or understanding of the complete technical process, could now publish content.

In 2009, we refocused on important, large special projects and prioritized daily photo gallery production. I produced the American Solider multimedia project. Craig F. Walker won the Pulitzer for Feature Photography for the print version of the story. The online story accompanied his entry and included an hour of edited video, interactive maps, and extended photo galleries. I created a photoblog called Captured in 2008 and I concentrated on growing that audience in 2009. By the end of the year, Captured had 6 million visitors and was generating advertising revenue for the website.

In the past two years, we have focused on fine-tuning our approach to photography online. The photography department is solely responsible for MediaCenter and photographs on the website. Online producers place photographs with stories on article pages but photo gallery production and all multimedia projects are rooted in the

photography department. Our audience continues to grow, with more than 100 million page views for MediaCenter in 2011. By making tools available to content producers, increasing the presence and prominence of great photography online, utilizing search engine optimization methods and focusing on social media and online trends, we have grown an enormous photo audience on denverpost.com.

So where does photojournalism go from here? Photography departments need to be valuable to an organization as a whole. Photographers, photo editors, imagers and videographers need to be involved in every aspect of a newspaper's website because that is where newspapers will see growth in the audience. I don't get caught up in the decline of print readers. I never have. Maybe that is because I always preferred getting my news and seeing photography online. At The Denver Post, we publish around fifty photographs in each edition of the print paper, including mugshots and cutouts. Everyday, we publish at least ten times that number on our website. There have never been better opportunities to share photographs and photo stories with our audience. Photography departments need to take advantage of those opportunities.

At the same time, photography departments need to become more knowledgeable about how viewers use the internet, how information is found and how information is shared. Just because one person personally prefers one method of viewing information, doesn't mean website viewers agree. There are still some photography departments starting from scratch establishing an online audience. Departments don't research what is and is not working before jumping into the online world. At The Denver Post, we have

tried and failed at many things but we try not to repeat the past mistakes of others in the industry.

As my career evolved over the past six years, my original research question has remained relevant to the work I do on a daily basis. I am extremely lucky to have found a forward thinking supervisor like Tim Rasmussen, who always treated online photography as a priority, and a newspaper like The Denver Post, where the photography department maintains responsibility for photography on the website. Without those two elements, this project and the conclusions drawn from the work done over the past six years would have been limited.

CHAPTER TWO

FIELD NOTES: THE SOUTH FLORIDA SUN-SENTINEL

Photo Editing Project Placement, June 2006 - September 2006

SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 2006

Well, the first week has ended and I'm soon to begin the second tomorrow night when I edit on the Sports Desk for the fifth game of the NBA finals with the Heat vs. Dallas in Miami. I started on Monday with a day of filling out papers, watching diversity videos and hearing about the Tribune's benefit package as I attended orientation with 13 other new hires. There were three interns – one who will be reporting for the Sun-Sentinel's "Help Team" (a sort-of health and community news reporters who go after stories and inquiries from the public), and another who would be reporting for the South office located just north of Miami in Weston, Florida. This general orientation was headed by the HR Department and held at the Sun-Sentinel's Deerfield, Florida office.

On Tuesday, I attended a newsroom orientation with other hires who will be working in the Editorial Division (producing the content for the paper) – the two other interns and two new full-time reporters. We had a couple hours training on the reporting computer programs, which were good to know as a photo editor, but I'll never use them to the extent that we spent training on them. Then, finally, we had the opportunity to meet our supervisors. I wasn't quite sure if Tim Rasmussen, the Director of Photography who hired me, would be my supervisor or if another photo editor would supervise me. Mary Vignoles, the Deputy Director of Photography, was there and she recognized me from when she judged College Photographer of the Year in 2005. Sharon Rosenhouse, the

Managing Editor, was also at the lunch. We all introduced ourselves and Sharon discussed the newsroom and asked if we had any questions. She seemed to have high regard for the Photo Department. She mentioned their awards and praised Mary and Tim.

The approach of Tropical Storm Alberto (which eventually turned out to be just a lot of rain northwest of Fort Lauderdale) brought up the topic of hurricanes and how the Sun-Sentinel operates during the season. Apparently, Wilma did a number on downtown Fort Lauderdale and the beaches, which is still evident now, and a number of windows were blown out in the Sun-Sentinel building during the storm. During that storm all operations moved to the Deerfield office (where the presses are, further inland) because the generators were housed there. They had gas available to the employees in the parking lot (the only place in Ft Lauderdale, they said), hot meals, showers, cots and electricity – all of which were not available in the downtown office where I'll be working.

After lunch we went to meet Taimy, the assignment photo editor, so she could discuss putting in photo requests for the reporters. I felt like I was listening to Rick the first time I heard him talk to the reporters at the Missouriian when they were learning to submit requests. She cited the same problems with submitting requests as the 306 students have. The reporters have the same tendencies, she said, to give incomplete summary information, wrong directions, and give no contact information. She also emphasized that the reporters not tell the photographers how to shoot the picture. I guess these things aren't really resolved before the reporters leave places like the Missouriian – although I can totally see why they continue to be a problem because editors in places

like the Missouriian seem to not care at all about whether or not the reporters learn to complete a request properly.

We returned to the computer training and then had the opportunity to attend the 4pm budget meeting with all the head editors. In the budget meeting the night photo editor attends and brings the pictures that have been chosen so far that day to run in the next day's paper. They also have a computer attached to a projector so all of the editors can view the pictures on the projection screen. After the meeting, I talked with Mary about my work hours and she decided to have me work the same hours as her for the next couple of weeks until I got into the swing of things.

I came in a little before 11am on Wednesday to go to the budget meeting with Mary and the assignment editor, Taimy Alvarez. I spent the day shadowing Mary, learning the systems the department uses, and meeting the photographers. For the most part, I was pretty surprised at how much I already knew and how similar the processes were to the ones I learned at the Missouriian. Working for Rick will really give me a leg-up, I think, in terms of what was emphasized in his class – communication with the designers and photographers. What I need to learn, though, and what I'm struggling with during this week, is understanding that what is acceptable to run in the Sun-Sentinel is on another level as that of the Missouriian, understandably, and I need discover where that line is drawn.

I spent Thursday working the Sports Desk with Amy Beth Bennett, the sports editor, and a former sports photographer. She works from 4pm to 12:30am, although, with the Heat in the NBA finals, her nights have been ending at 2am. She needed some

help so Mary asked if I would work that shift. Of course I said yes. The game started at 9pm, so the rush to finish the pages before deadline was hectic and although I helped edit everything else (Marlins, World Cup and US Open, from the wire) before the Heat stuff started coming in, I felt a little in the way towards the end of the night. It's hard to ask questions when everyone is running around like crazy so I mostly observed. I will be working the next game as well, on Sunday night, so maybe I'll be of more help now that I've seen it happen once. Since Amy Beth sits on the Sports Desk with all of the designers, she seems to have good communication with them. Although, I did see some frustration with one of the designers who seems to question everything she gives him, requiring her to continually defend her choices. But there was only one designer who acted that way. For the most part, the photo editors sit in the areas with the designers, reporters and other editors for the section they are in charge of editing. They seem to have better relationships with the others this way.

On Friday, I actually did some editing. I helped Mary with a project for the Sunday section called "Outlook". It was a feature on the upcoming Mexican presidential election. I searched the wires for pictures. I narrowed my choices down to about ten and brought Mary over to look. She liked the choices and made me talk about why I liked each of the images. A couple of my top choices were different from hers but we discussed them. I still have no idea what to expect from the editors. I'm not familiar with their tastes yet and I think this will take the longest to learn. Everyone keeps commenting that Mary is tough so I hope I get to work with her a lot. Editing is such a personal taste thing sometimes and I don't feel like I have confidence in mine yet. I have to keep reminding

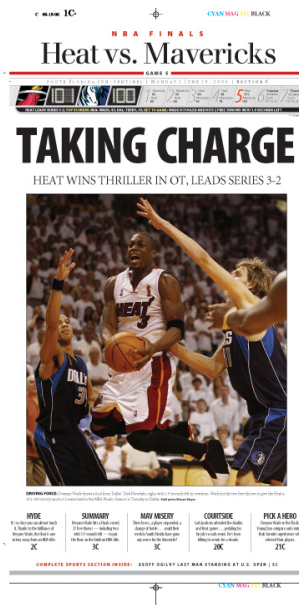
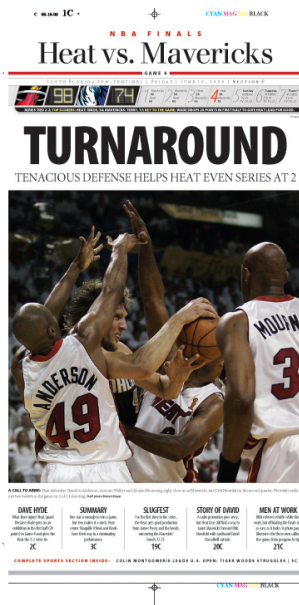
myself that there's no right or wrong and the point is to be able to articulate why the picture works and to develop your standards.

Another thing that will hold me back at first is that I just don't know the workflow yet. I don't know who is responsible for what, which designers to go to with problems or questions or even everything I'll be responsible for yet. Mary suggested I go out to lunch with one of the newest hires, Sarah Orr. She was hired as a photo editor about seven months ago and is young – I'm guessing around 25 or 26. She graduated from San Jose State and worked as a photographer and editor for the Napa Valley Register for two years before coming here. I think the purpose of the lunch was to discuss how to come in and feel comfortable editing the older photographers, including one who has been there for 45 years. Of course I think I can learn from Sarah like I can learn from everyone but I'm not really as concerned about this as I think Mary thinks I am. I absolutely expect there to be a learning curve in discovering how each of the photographers deals with editors but I am more worried about choosing the right pictures and learning what is acceptable for publication. I think I'm pretty good about not taking things personally in that regard. I know I'll be tested as the new one. That's fine with me. I just hope I stand up for the right things.

As for Multimedia, everyone seems to know I will be working on it with Tim directly because he has been doing most of it on his own but since the National Association of Hispanic Journalists Conference was in Fort Lauderdale this past week and everyone was out of the office, I haven't discussed any of it with him yet.

SATURDAY, JULY 1, 2006

The past two weeks have been more about learning the process than producing anything. I finished up my shifts on the Sports Desk when the Heat won the title on Tuesday. It was the first time I saw how difficult it was for the editors and the photographers to communicate when the photographers are on location. All the photographers are equipped with their own laptops and cell phones and they use the phones to hook up to their laptops to transmit photos. So, for example, when the Heat won Game 6 the photographers had about 30 minutes to sit down right where they were and transmit whatever jubilation shots they had just taken so they would make deadline. This adds up to a whole lot of rushing around, which I admit, was pretty exciting.



Speaking less technically, throughout the time I worked on the Sports Desk, I was able to better see how the sports photo editor fit with the sports designers. Coming from the Missouriian, where the sports desk and the photo department have somewhat of a contentious relationship, I paid a little more attention to these relationships at the Sun-

Sentinel. Amy, the sports editor, was hired about two years ago, I think. She is the first photo editor to work specifically with sports. Before she was hired, the designers chose all of the photos in the sports section. This was something Tim Rasmussen (the DOP) changed when he got here. Mary (the Deputy DOP) told me that when they interviewed Amy some of the sports designers were in the meeting and questioned why she was needed. Despite that, I never got the feeling that there was much tension on the sports desk when I was there, and I was there during some pretty stressful days. From what Mary said, though, I think Amy has had a difficult time getting the designers to relinquish some of the influence they think they should have over the photo choices. Not helping the matter is that when Amy has weekends off, the designers once again just pick the photos.

During what remained of the second week, I attended an intern meeting (including the ten or so high school interns working in the newsroom for the summer) and helped the 1A editor with the wire and front-page centerpieces. The photo editors are organized into section heads. There are two Deputy Directors of Photography, Mary and Rolando. Mary is second in charge to Tim and is responsible for all special sections. She organized the special commemorative section after the Heat won the finals and works with the Sunday section called Outlook, featuring multi-picture packages. Rolando is in charge of the Metro Section of the paper. Sarah Orr is the editor for the A Section. Carl Seibert is the Night Editor. He takes over for Sarah when she leaves around 7pm and also deals with any last minute news or photo requests. Taimy Alvarez is the Assignment Editor.

Part of my frustration over the second and third week was feeling as if I don't really have any responsibilities yet. I'm looking forward to starting on Multimedia production when Tim returns from vacation because I want to produce something on my own. When I was working on the Heat and also watching Mary put together the special section, I would offer opinions and suggestions but it was never my final call to have a picture run or not run. Slowly, Mary is letting me edit daily assignments, sometimes on my own, sometimes with her there for me to tell her why I made certain decisions. Those sessions have gone well, I think, and for the most part she has agreed with my choices. But still, I'm kind of floating around, doing some of everything.

The third week (06/26/06 – 06/30/06) I did ride alongs with a couple of the staff photographers and assisted on some studio assignments. I wasn't too excited about the ride alongs. Even though I'm not always doing something in the newsroom, I do listen to all the conversations and problems the photo editors discuss and I didn't want to miss a whole week's worth of planning. I already feel like I'm always trying to become more familiar with the on-going stories and I don't feel like I have a handle on it yet, so being away from the office doesn't help in that regard. On the other hand, I don't know the area at all and I realized that this might help me to better understand the community.

The Sun-Sentinel runs a sizable amount of photo illustrations I've realized. I assisted on two studio shots for a photo illustration about wild salmon and another for a column about teens.



The studio sessions were actually really interesting. The concepts for the illustrations almost always begin with the photo editors and photographers. They sit down and brainstorm and then bring their ideas to the designers. The photographers then shoot whatever can be shot in the studio and bring the photos to the designers who then work on the illustration and bring it back to the editors for discussion. The system seems to work pretty well although there was some tension this week with the salmon illustration. Mary became frustrated when she went to look at the salmon illustration progress and the designer had done something different than what was planned. Mary voiced that she knows the designers are better at Photoshop and illustration and will ultimately make the product more effective, but the illustrations are still the responsibility of the photo department to conceive and execute. When the department has to give up

control of part of the process, there is always the chance that the product will come out differently.

In the upcoming fourth week, I will be shadowing Rolando on the Metro section to prepare for the week when he goes on vacation and they will hand it over to me. The actual editing seems to be the least of the challenges at this point. I'm struggling most with planning the centerpieces and constantly being aware of the assignments and on-going projects.

SATURDAY, JULY 22, 2006

Week 4 began by shadowing Rolando Otero, the Deputy Director of Photography and the editor of the Metro Section. At the Sun-Sentinel, the Metro Editor is responsible for communicating with the Metro reporters and editors, representing the photography department at the 11:00 budget meeting, planning local coverage, editing photographers, and deciding what photos are published in the Local Section. The Local section usually is comprised of a 1B centerpiece, and a 3B daily photo. Sometimes the daily photo on 3B will go with a story but most of the time it is a CLO (cut line only) and stands alone. Lately, it seemed to me that the stories were running a little thin and Rolando confirmed that locally it has been a very slow couple of weeks in terms of news. We've ended up doing a lot of summer camps and community news types of assignments. We've also done quite a few weather pictures since this time of the year in South Florida always has some crazy weather.

A side note: During the week I was shadowing Rolando, there was some discussion about putting me on the Sports Desk when Amy Beth Bennett was not working. She suggested it after we had worked together during the Heat series and it stemmed from a Sports front that ran after the Italians advanced to the finals of the World Cup. The page included almost identical lede and secondary images and did not use any of the great action photos available. There is a marked difference between the days when Amy is editing and when she is off and it seems a shame that the solid packages she puts together are weakened by what follows the next day when she is gone and the designers pick the photos.

The screenshot shows a sports news page with the following content:

- PISTONS REPLACE WALLACE**: Pistons acquire center Wallace from the Heat.
- INDIANS SLAIN YANKEES 19-1**: Indians dominate Yankees in a blowout victory.
- BOONEN ON TOP OF TOUR**: Boonen leads the tour after a successful performance.
- NATIONALS 6, MARLINS 4**: Nationals win against the Marlins.
- WORLD CUP: ITALY 2, GERMANY 0**: Italy wins against Germany in the World Cup.
- Zimmerman's HR caps 9th of dear misses**: A lead article about a home run by Zimmerman.
- Italy fights to the finish**: A lead article about Italy's performance in the World Cup.
- Winning is easy as 1-2-3 (and 4)**: An article about Wimbledon tennis.

The week I spent shadowing Rolando I went to all the meetings with him, made sure we had at least a centerpiece and a daily photo everyday and searched for events in the community that would make good assignments. Not much happened that week as I wasn't really in charge of doing anything. I just listened and tried to keep up with what was going on. The organization is still a challenge but I am getting better with keeping up with things on the desk. On the last day I was shadowing him, Rolando had to leave early and left me to arrange the pictures for the centerpiece the next day. The package was about a junk yard where people can pay a couple dollars and go onto the yard and pull spare parts out of cars. This has turned into somewhat of a community as unemployed and homeless people go in to find parts to sell. Elyse Butler, the photo intern, had done a good job with the package and we had about 10 photos from the assignment. I chose to publish five and then I got the online people to make a gallery and arranged for the designer to include a refer to the online package.



The Sun Sentinel publishes at least three editions every day. There is the Broward County edition (Fort Lauderdale and surrounding cities), the Palm Beach edition (covering news in Palm Beach County), and the South edition (covering Miami-Dade county). Then on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays the Palm Beach edition is zoned into North and South because the county is so large. This took a while for me to understand when each edition ran and what was required for them.

During week 5 (wow, it's already week 5!), I actually ran the section myself. On a typical day as the Metro editor, I would come in at 10am and look over the budget for the local section. I looked at what the centerpiece would be and made sure the photos were good enough to run as a centerpiece. Then I would look over the Metro photo assignments for the day to know what we were shooting if the editors in the Metro section asked. At 10:30, the Metro editors and I had a meeting where we talked about what we had for the section for that day and anything that needed planning for the next couple of days. From that meeting, I headed to the 11am budget meeting where I had to show wire photos from any breaking national or international news, and photos for any stories the editors pitched for the paper that day. Sometimes, photos are already taken and edited and other times, we would be shooting them that day. After the meeting there is a couple hours lull in the day where I got to sit down and think ahead to the week to make sure photo assignments were in or look for some enterprise ideas. At around 3:15, the Metro editors meet again to decide what stories will be pitched for the A section, if any, and what will be planned for the B section (local).

After the meeting, I report to the A section editor (Sarah Orr) what Metro will be pitching at the meeting so she knows what to show at the 4:00 editors meeting. At the 4:00 meeting, the editors vote on what will make the front page. Then I began to print out the photos for the 1B centerpiece and decide what photos from the assignment would make the paper. When the editors edit a take they usually have the photographers caption and move into the system more photos than we will probably need to give the section editors options when they go to put the packages together. At 5:30, I meet with the designers and the Metro editor to go over what photos and stories will be in the section. This is where I tell the designers what will be lede photo, what will be secondary and what will be the jump picture and also, what will be the daily photo on 3B. After this meeting, I go to another one just like it for the Palm edition. Most of the time the South edition will have the same photos for their edition but Palm always has different photos that feature people from Palm County instead of Broward. The editor in the Palm office will be on teleconference telling the designers what will be lede, secondary, etc., but I am responsible for giving these to the designers.

After the designers for each section have all of the printouts, I then work with them on crops and make sure the photos look good on the page. For the past week I've been leaving the office around 7:30 after meeting with the night editor to make sure they are updating on everything. By Friday, I think I was really getting the hang of it. I was going to all of the meetings on my own and speaking for the photo department at the 11:00 meetings with all of the editors, including the managing editor, which is still a bit

intimidating but I'm working on it. I think I'm picking it up and feeling a little more confident about speaking for the department.

I even got a photo and story onto the front page by pitching it to the editors. It was a slow news day and one of the photographers came back to the office with a great photo of a surfer wipeout in some pretty big waves. In the summer, Florida does not usually get big waves but I had noticed the night before as I drove home from work that they seemed to be bigger than normal and there were a good number of surfers out in the water. Since we had just had a weather CLO a couple of days before I thought there might be some news peg to the photograph that we might be able to add to the caption.

I called the paper's weather reporter and asked if there was a reason for the big waves and found out that there was a storm sitting offshore creating the waves and a danger of strong undertows. I then went to the metro editor to tell them we had a great photo and maybe we could make a story out of the weather as well. In the end the weather article and photo were pitched to go onto the front page of the A section and were run there the next day. I know it's not a big deal but it was good to feel like I actually knew the right people to go to in order to get better play for the picture.



TEEN SPOTS: Cousins of Oak Grove Soccer Club members Elizabeth Anderson (left) and Kaye Farris (right) cheer at the end of a World Cup final that was a light moment in a heavy time for many in South Florida. Other all-movers, from top, clockwise: Steve Brinkman, Benito Agui, Jr., Carlos Pardo, 16; Cynthia Morris, 15, and Dr. Anibalovic, 11. Photo:Steve Brinkman

County boss ready for challenges

Administrator described as no-nonsense manager

AN INDEPENDENT... She was judged at the table to be... with... (text continues)



PAMELA BRINKMAN

Teens have a ball

Coconut Creek club gathers to watch soccer's big finale

BY BILL BRENNEISEN... With every game... (text continues)

COIN COINING

SPONSOR... COINING... (text continues)

Cuban died of head trauma on boat

Coast Guard's shots struck engine, official says

MIAMI (AP) — A Cuban... (text continues)

... (text continues)

THE HELP TEAM SUN-SENTINEL WATCH

New trees, bike trail repair in works at Quiet Waters

THE PROBLEM
The... (text continues)

THE BACK STORY
The... (text continues)

CONTACT US
... (text continues)

ONLINE
... (text continues)

DINING-OUT DEALS
... (text continues)

HELLSOUTH 400M PLANS
... (text continues)

NEW TWEET TO AN OLD PERATE
... (text continues)

Another story I helped get was the local coverage of the World Cup finals on Sunday, July 9th. For all of the other games, assignments kept having the photographers going to bars and I thought we might be missing an opportunity to show how the World Cup was influencing younger fans. I suggested that instead of going to another bar for the finals, we might try calling local soccer clubs to see if they were throwing any watch parties. We have a hard time getting teenagers in

the paper for anything other than delinquency it seems, so I thought that might also be a good pitching point. I called a bunch of clubs and finally found a team that would be having a watch party and got a reporter involved to write a short story about the kids. The picture that ran on Monday wasn't the greatest but it did show a different side of the interest in the Cup and made for a good local story on the effect the Cup has on local soccer players.

Next week, I finally begin working with multimedia. I haven't really written about it so far because I haven't had the chance to discuss it with Tim, the DOP. I think I

have somewhat of an idea about the philosophy behind using the web for photos but I want to sit down and talk with Tim first to make sure I have the correct understanding. Next entry I hope to begin writing some about photos online and multimedia productions. I'm still working on getting the pages I've talked about here. I added some of the heat pages in the last entry. More to come!

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 2006

Week...I've lost count

Since the last post, I've mostly been getting ready to take over editing of the Local Section of the paper. Rolando Otero, my supervisor and the editor in charge of Local, was getting ready to go on a two-week vacation. So for the past week, I've been editing and organizing the section on my own. Well, I definitely get help from the other editors but I am making the decisions on what goes in the section – usually a centerpiece package, some jump page photos and a daily photo for 3B. In between those decisions, I've also been organizing and making decisions on what assignments to shoot and what is good enough to run as a centerpiece.

My day starts a little before 10:00am. I come in and do a quick look through the wire and budgets for the A and B sections so I know what is planned for the paper. I pull aside a handful of images from the wire to show to the editors at the 11am meeting. At 10:30, I meet with the ACEs to hear what they are working on for the day and to give them an update about what we're shooting that day. Then I head to the 11am meeting with all the editors, including Tim Rasmussen, the DOP, and the managing editor, Sharon

Rosenhouse. There, I show the images from the wire that I've pulled and what we have for any centerpieces planned for the next day. I also give an update on what the photographers are shooting that day and what we shoot if there is any breaking news. It's taken me a long time to feel comfortable speaking in front of all those people. It's been quite intimidating really. I think that's the criticism I might get the most – I'm a tad too quiet. In my own defense though, it's taken some time to know the values of the photo department before I felt comfortable speaking on its behalf. After the 11 meeting, I have some time to troubleshoot any assignment issues and take care of misc. things for the upcoming week. I also edit any of the photographers who come in from daily assignments.

At 3:00pm I meet with the ACEs and the Local editor again to go over what they will pitch for 1A and to update what has gone on during the day. I leave that meeting to update the night editor for the 4pm meeting where editors pitch stories for 1A. I begin to organize and move pictures for the next day into the server for the designers. I then meet with the designers and ACEs for each section of the paper – the Local section, the Palm Beach edition's Local section and the various editors if there is any zoning going on that day. For the rest of the day, I work with the designers to make sure all the pictures look good on the page. And hopefully, I leave at around 7:30 or 8pm. Hopefully.

Before Rolando left for vacation, I asked for a couple days to work on Multimedia and to meet with Tim to discuss what his philosophy was. A couple interesting things are going on at the Sun-Sentinel concerning multimedia. Tribune owns the local WB affiliate here in Broward County. Before last week, the only video on the Sun-Sentinel website

were clips from the nightly newscast of the WB or of the local Channel 6 station. Channel 6 and the Sun-Sentinel had a partnership that was dissolved last Friday. I believe the partnership was in effect for quite a while because their clips had been on the website for some time before I got here. From the rumors in the newsroom, the partnership did not end well and did not look like it would be revived. Tim saw the end of this partnership as an opportunity for the photo department to exert more control over the web content. There are still two people in the newsroom who produce video for the web. They have backgrounds in broadcast and produce video clips in the same way that video is used in a nightly newscast.

Tim does not like the idea of not having a say in the direction of video on the website and is very interested in creating multimedia places that combine audio, still photo and video. After the loss of the Channel 6 content, Tim arranged for the web people to create a video player that will stay on the front page of the Sun-Sentinel's webpage: www.sun-sentinel.com. Tim is in the process of supplying every photographer with a small video camera to carry on assignment. They will be asked to concentrate on their still shooting for the majority of the assignment and then to take 15 minutes before leaving to shoot video. This will be used for short, daily reports. For long-term projects, Tim wants to combine the video with the still images.

Tim officially asked me to stay until the end of the year and help with the transition to regular production of both long and short term multimedia projects. None of the photo editors have training in Soundslides, Flash or video editing software. I took two days before Rolando left to train myself in Final Cut Pro and to practice video editing. I

have never done it before but found the transition easier because it is somewhat similar to Flash. Over the course of the next couple of weeks editors are scheduled to begin training with all of this software.

I am actively searching for Multimedia ideas in addition to the still photo assignments I am proposing. I am still in the researching phase for most of the photo projects I want to propose but I think I have a couple of good ideas. I have also been monitoring other sites pretty closely to keep up with multimedia projects. The LA Times just did a fabulous project on the oceans last week:

www.latimes.com/news/local/oceans/la-oceans-series,0,7842752.special

I think this piece is a great example of how to use still images, audio, and video together.

I also like the Washington Post's piece on immigration:

www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/interactives/journeyborder/index.html

I think the most interesting thing I discovered last week though was the piece Julie Winokur and Ed Kashi produced on mediastorm.org:

www.mediastorm.org/0009.htm

The weird thing here was that I saw this piece on MSNBC.com a couple of months ago and couldn't even figure out how to view it. The design was horrendous and confusing and I gave up after a couple minutes.

www.msnbc.com/modules/take3/may

Thank goodness I went to Mediastorm and poked around because they have the original version there and it's great.

Some issues I see with multimedia at the Sun-Sentinel: Online operation falls under the direction of the Marketing department. I envision this to be a major issue if the paper wants to develop a web presence, which I know Tim is pushing for. Also, the design of the website is pretty atrocious. The links are difficult to find even for the most serious searcher and the ads are much too overpowering. The web department equates clicks with what users are most interested in. This does not take into account the fact that users cannot find half the features to even click on so, obviously, those hidden things are considered less important.

In the next couple of weeks, I am going to nail down which papers I plan to interview for my project. I'm still looking for papers in the middle of implementing video and multimedia pieces in different and interesting ways. I think many papers have very different philosophies on what they want to concentrate on and what the future will hold.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2006

Well, it's been longer than I thought since I did my last field notes! I've finally gotten into the swing of producing some multimedia projects. After I filled in for Rolando (the Metro editor) for 3 weeks while he was on vacation, I trained on the night desk for a week. Now, I am working the night desk alone and trying to finish some multimedia projects. I had one put online the other day to go with our coverage of the Katrina anniversary:



http://www.sun-sentinel.com/broadband/theedge/sfl-edge-n-katrinayearafter_0,2696694.flash?coll=sfla-theedge-2promos

It used wire photos that I had been collecting since early August when I started monitoring the wire on a daily basis. I thought they were pretty interesting, so I held on to them and asked Tim about doing a project to go with our Sunday Outlook section – which is a weekly section about an in-depth issue or story. Mary Vignoles edits that section and she ended up using some of the photographs as well. There was no sound to go with the images so we had Doug Phillips, who specializes in radio, narrate the photographs – a bit like audio captions.

When I work the night shift, I start at 2pm and work until 11pm. I'm usually done choosing pictures and looking over the front page by 8:30p unless there is breaking news which usually happens to some degree. That gives me a couple hours to plan or put together some shows. The Sun-Sentinel was struggling with just getting anything online on a somewhat daily basis so I've started with projects. One of the graphics producers wrote a script for Soundslides so that you can either watch the movie like Soundslides exports it or you can click through the pictures one by one. That also gives us the

opportunity to use Soundslides for picture galleries. I couldn't stand looking at the galleries the online division was producing to go with each story so I starting looking for assignments where the photographers had gotten a bunch of good photos that weren't being published because of space and making my own full-size galleries.

I also did one for an underwater assignments that Joe Amon photographed:



<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/broadband/theedge/sfl-edge-n-tires,0,7969275.flash?coll=sfla-theedge-2promos>

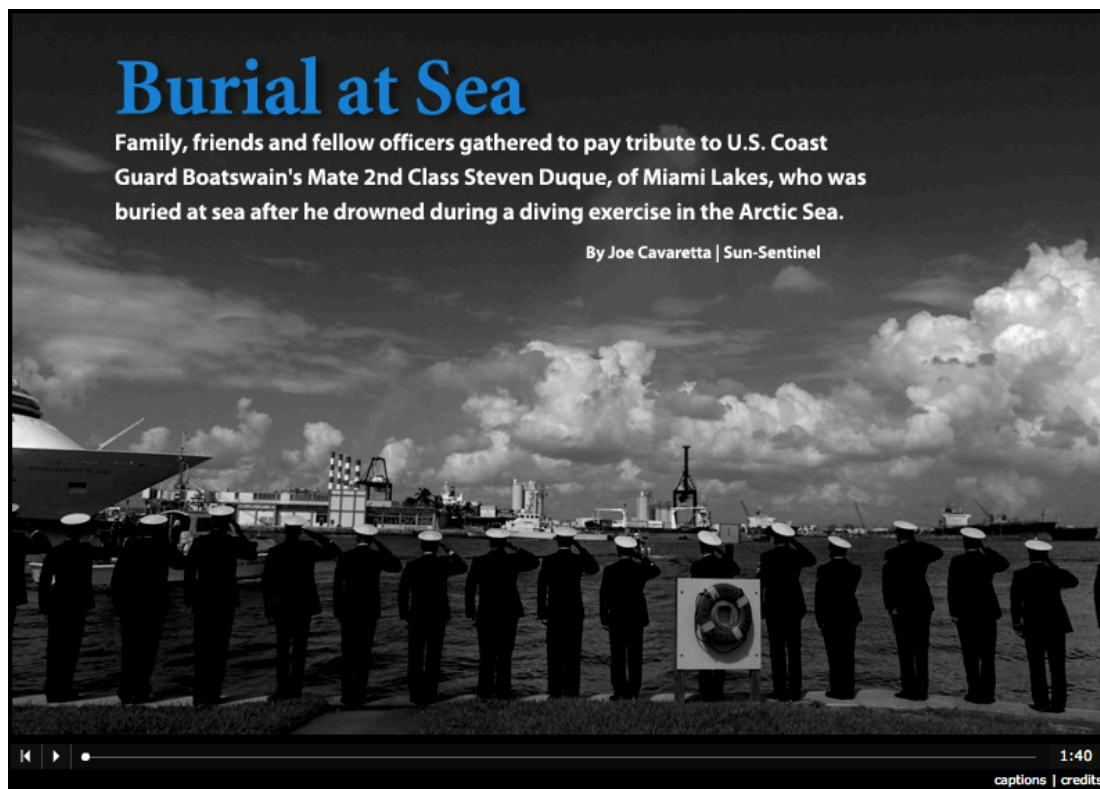
Because the photo department has been somewhat lax in exerting any control over the photos on the website, they are a bit behind. I think the website is controlled by Marketing. No one really seems to know why. There are so many issues with it at this point. First, before I started doing these daily things, the photo department was only

posting multimedia for big projects on their part of the website called “The Edge”. The edge is mostly controlled by the graphics department and lately the photo department is also working with them to get all their stuff posted. Tim has been focusing mostly on video and producing some pieces for the new video player on the front page of the site. Some have been pretty good actually but they are mixed in with video from the WB affiliate owned by Tribune who contributes video to the site. All of the other photographic content – like the photos of the day and the other galleries are put together by the online producers. These are linked from the front page and are pretty horrible in my opinion. Some aren’t too bad but for the most part it looks like amateur hour. There is no picture editing going on – it’s just a big mix of photos from the wire, mostly feature-y stuff – kids and animals, weather pictures, things like that.

So basically the photo department never had any say or contributed anything to the website until recently except big projects every once in a while. Now, they are trying to take back some of that control. So when I create galleries and post them, reefer them from the paper, and link them from the story page, I am basically duplicating what the online people are already doing. The difference is that Tim and I are trying to do it coming from a photo editor’s perspective. For the most part, the online producers welcome the content but I think the higher ups are not too thrilled about giving anyone ownership of anything on the website. I mean, it’s operated based on how many clicks a link receives with no thought as to why things are getting more clicks than others. The website is horribly organized and places like The Edge are barely visible, yet they are measuring the importance of things based on their clicks.

To further the issues, Tribune Co. will not let any of their papers design their own sites. All structural things, like the video player on the front, the organization, even down to the colors, must be designed by Tribune Co. All of their papers online must have the same look. So basically the website is designed for the ads and photo is trying to carve out a little place where the photos have some sort of dignity.

I just completed a short movie about a coast guard member's funeral at sea. The photographer collected the photos and the audio. The sound wasn't the quality I had hoped for and I think it made the package weaker than it could have been.



I asked to help work on a big project that one of the photographers is completing. The story is about a poor neighborhood that many of the city commissioners want to tear down and build into a upscale part of town. Basically, the story's about gentrification and

what the community will do if it happens while showing the culture of the neighborhood. I think it will probably take up the remainder of my time here. The most difficult thing I've discovered in the short time I've been doing some multimedia projects is working with content produced by other people.

The other issue right now at the paper is that there is a distinct tension developing in the last month about the influence of the Marketing department on the content of the paper. The Marketing department did a study using focus groups about what readers want from the paper. Then everyone had to attend these meetings to hear what the readers liked and didn't like. Mostly, the readers said they wanted hard news, not fluffy feature stuff, but it needed to be local but not feature-y. People were a bit confused to say the least. In the midst of this Marketing people have actually sat in on the 4pm budget meetings and some people in the newsroom are completely uncomfortable with the development. There has been a lot of whispering about it.

Mary did a mock-up of a Castro obituary so it would be ready in case he dies soon and when it was completed, it somehow was seen by someone in Marketing who expressed a concern about the fact that there weren't enough local pictures from South Florida and there needed to be because the readers want local news. Mary was beside herself and not too happy about having to alter her edit to include a not-so-great photo only because it was local. I'm sure more of that will come to light in the future.

In other news, the Hurricane Warning for Ernesto required us to evacuate to the inland office. Not a big hurricane in the end but people sure are scarred from last year's Wilma and the preparations were pretty crazy. We put out the paper with a 5pm deadline

and Mary and I edited the entire thing. I did the Sports, Business, and A section on my own and then helped Mary up until the last minute with all the local photos that were pouring in from all the photographers on staff. It was really exciting actually. As I write this, they have just named Tropical Depression #6 so maybe I'll be doing it again in the near future!

UPDATE TO THE FIELD NOTES

I was a temporary photo editor at the South Florida Sun-Sentinel until April 2007. Tim Rasmussen was hired as the Assistant Managing Editor, Photography at The Denver Post in November 2006. He left the Sun-Sentinel in December 2006 and Mary Vignoles became acting Director of Photography at the Sun-Sentinel. At the end of my project placement extension in December 2006, Mary arranged for me to stay on as a temporary photo editor for an indefinite amount of time. Mary was hired by the Los Angeles Times to be the Projects Photo Editor in early 2007. I was not excited to see Tim and Mary leave the paper. It was a privilege to have them as mentors. They were tireless workers, extremely talented photo editors and very patient teachers.

In the end, we had some success in giving control of the local photo galleries on sun-sentinel.com to the photo editors but with Tim and Mary leaving the paper, the photo editing duties were somewhat up in the air, which didn't leave much time for online gallery production. What I did have success with was producing photo projects and publishing them on the website. In the past, the graphics producers really took the lead in conceiving and building special projects on the website. They built their own space

outside the content management system for the website and used it as a hub for online projects - interactive graphics, photo slideshows, audio slideshows and interactive flash features. No one in the photo department had the technical skills to publish content originating in the department.

The graphics producers collaborated with Tim and the photographers after a project was photographed. For example, the biggest project completed while I was at the paper was an online flash feature on AIDS orphans in Haiti. (<http://theedge.sun-sentinel.com/graphics/AIDSOorphans/>) The project was photographed by Mike Stocker and Joe Amon and reported by Tim Collie.



Big special projects features like that project remained the priority. They were very time consuming to produce, required specialized programming skills and only happened once or twice a year. I started off small in my multimedia endeavors. I took small weekly stories and produced online components for them. I began editing video captured by the photographers and published it online. I taught myself Flash, more in-depth HTML, and Final Cut Pro under the guidance of people in the newsroom with some knowledge of programming.

I worked with Staff Photographer John White on a photo story about the culture of hip-hop music in South Florida. We combined audio interviews, photos, video and the artists' original music for an online project.



Producing the hip hop project required a couple weeks away from editing the print paper. My skills in Flash were minimal and I figured out most of the coding as I was building the project.

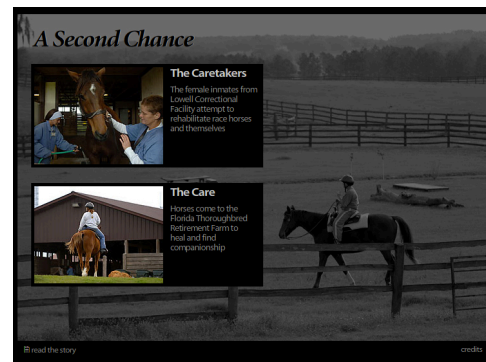
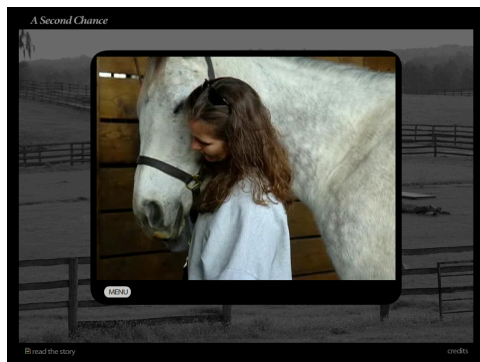
Along with freelance photographer Josh Ritchie, I produced an online Flash feature to highlight an underwater photo essay he completed for a Sunday section in the paper. I combined the underwater photography with audio and presented both in an interactive online gallery.



I continued producing daily audio slideshows with the aid of Soundslides. Most of the staff photographers were anxious to learn sound collecting and interviewing skills. Audio slideshows became a regular part of daily assignments like a feature on the volunteers who patrol South Florida beaches for turtle hatchings.



Tim equipped the photographers with video cameras for breaking news and I was tasked with helping the photographers edit and publish video. Daily breaking news is commonplace in South Florida and the photographers generated a decent amount of video on daily assignments. Some photographers took on the challenge of doing video on longer term stories. I also edited these longer term stories like a feature on female inmates training and rehabilitating horses.



I left the Sun-Sentinel in April 2007 and moved to Denver where Tim Rasmussen was the Assistant Managing Editor, Photography. I began freelancing for The Denver Post producing multimedia projects and was hired as a multimedia photo editor in October 2007.

CHAPTER THREE

Throughout the six interviews I conducted, common reasons for the success of The Denver Post emerged. The single most important step in growing an online audience for rich media is to have the visual thinkers in the newsroom play an active role in the production and editing of rich media content online.

Immediately after arriving at The Denver Post in 2006, Tim Rasmussen assumed responsibility for rich media on denverpost.com. “I believe strongly that, at newspapers, you take as much responsibility as you want. Nobody gives you the responsibility.” Ken Lyons, Senior Photo Editor, commented on the photo department’s involvement in building an online place for photography, “I think that the reason we have been so successful with that is that visual people have created MediaCenter. It’s been created by people with photography backgrounds, photojournalism backgrounds.”

With shrinking newsroom staff, Tim Rasmussen designed the image technician positions at the paper. “We’ve created multimedia photo editing positions. The imaging staff... at the time there was eight when I first got here. Now there are four. Within the first six months, we redefined the job, rewrote the job description to include photo gallery editing and posting,” says Rasmussen. “I think it has definitely helped the photo department’s prominence in the decisions made for budget and personnel. Everyone in the photo department participates in the multimedia effort. One of the key parameters for us is that we are able to refill imaging positions as people leave now because they understand that the online photo gallery effort. The total photo department effort accounts for 13.5% of the overall traffic and that number is amazing when you consider that the

overall traffic for the site has grown in the 40-50% range, year over year, every year since I got here.”

Almost everything we have learned about photography and rich media on the website has come from trial and error. In the beginning, we were able to experiment, grow our skills and problem-solve while coming to a deeper understanding of what the audience thought was important. “We were still trying to do things that we thought people would be as interested in as we were. We were focused on storytelling and making these big multimedia projects. We weren’t focused on the day-to-day and creating simple photo galleries,” says Matt Leyba. “Until the last two years, we didn’t have the focus that anything was fair game in the world.”

Trial and error also helped us decide what kind of content we should be publishing online. “We don’t do things just for traffic. If you dumb down your content... your audience is not dumb. The audience that uses our website is very astute to what it on the web. If they see crap, they aren’t going to come back again. Now if you produce all highfalutin galleries, like newspapers I won’t name, they won’t stay for that either. We have a philosophy that the viewers of our website are as varied as the people in our community,” says Rasmussen.

This additional knowledge also helped us converse and cooperate with the online department, who understood that we were learning. Matt Leyba explains the relationship at the beginning, “We would do something, we’d give it to the web people and they’d put it up and it would never be how we wanted it done.” Together we built a relationship of cooperation early in the process which helped us navigate online publishing. The

publishing tools and systems for denverpost.com were not created to accommodate rich media content. “It is hard now because we are working with a MacGyver, duck tape, bubblegum website version. Our online system was developed by our parent company, MediaNews Group, in 2003. To put some context to that, that is before Facebook debuted and well before Wordpress, now the world’s most popular blogging software came into existence,” says Dan Petty, Social Media Editor. “We had no one giving us tools to publish so we had to build our own tools and that involved learning how and that takes up a lot of time,” Matt Leyba adds.

Another essential component to success is keeping the newsroom informed of what your department is doing. On a regular basis, Tim communicated the photo department’s online efforts and accomplishments to the Editor and Publisher of the newspaper and redefined the positions in the department as multimedia positions. “When I first got here, I wrote a number of memos to the top Editors saying this is what I want to do and I redefined the entire department as a multimedia department including video. I wrote down a list of requirements I would need to make this a full multimedia staff,” Tim said. Adds Senior Photo Editor Ken Lyons, “A lot of papers have done away with their imaging jobs. Tim was great at finding a way to teach those people new skills and in a lot of ways making them a version of a photo editor, building galleries. Those things are generating traffic. You don’t have them just toning pictures for a news hole that is shrinking. You have them building all these galleries.”

“When I first got here, in the first staff meeting that I had, my stated goal for this department was to save every job that we had,” says Rasmussen. “The way to do that was

to be so valuable to the organization, that when it came time to let people go, when it came time to get smaller, which we will continue to get smaller, the photo department is not seen as a department that is making snaps for these word editors but that the photo department was involved in every aspect of the website, then that photo department would be left alone.

Managing Editor Damon Cain also commented on the new commitment to digital delivery. “It’s become a multimedia department. We do print, we do video, we do galleries, we do blogs. We’ve now gone out and gotten an interactive graphic artist, who is trying to set up frameworks that make it easier for everyone to participate in this grand endeavor. We have become more visually rich and responsive to how readers consume information. We don’t have a preference for print, tab, mobile, online - they are all equal.”

“I keep waiting for the day that they say we are so successful, I can’t be in charge of it anymore,” says Rasmussen. “We are usually a step or two ahead of everybody in the building on what we’re doing. We are always evolving and changing and getting better at what we do. No one is waiting for us to catch up because we don’t rest on our laurels ever. We are always trying to find something that will increase our traffic, increase our audience.”

Lyons echoes Rasmussen’s philosophy, “We haven’t waited for mandates from above about here’s what we have to do. Tim has been proactive in thinking ahead. I think the papers that fail at it are the papers who have no say or they wait too long to be proactive. Tim doesn’t give away responsibility. It’s so important.”

Consistency is a key component to begin growing an audience. Once a news website gets a viewer to visit their site, there needs to be a reason to come back and when that viewer comes back, there needs to be additional content of the same level. Tim says, “We have grown the audience in part by being consistent in what we put out.” At the beginning, we weren’t producing any groundbreaking material or stories but the photo department was committed to building photo galleries with quality, edited content on a consistent basis.

“We have developed a place for stories online and we don’t worry about space. I think we can show that on the biggest traffic days, the biggest draw has been photo projects,” says Lyons. “I think our department has gained a huge amount of credibility and now we’re selling ads on MediaCenter, generating revenue.”

After committing to the digital platform for news delivery, you must then figure out the technology behind the presentation. “We made our content visible to search engines and to the world. This was the biggest thing. We were never worried about that before. We were worried about putting links from denverpost.com to our content. It was also technological. We were doing what we knew how to do because you have to invest time in figuring out how to do it. We had no one giving us tools to publish so we had to build our own tools and that involved learning how and that takes up a lot of time. As our knowledge got better about how the internet worked, our viewers increased because we were more internet-friendly,” said Mateo Leyba.

Building an online audience requires knowledge of how users search, discover and access content. Once the online producers utilized SEO and social media and

increased the prominence of rich media on the homepage, traffic increased by leaps and bounds. As Imaging Technician Don Pavlin explains, “We didn’t really make a big jump until we started using the SEO packs a little more than a year ago. Once we started using the SEO packs, we saw a huge jump where we might see 1 million hits in a day. Our galleries are easier to find. We started following Google trends so we know what people are searching for online and we seek out and create galleries for those topics. There is a huge emphasis now on keywords, headlines and descriptions.” Google trend reports play an enormous role in photo gallery creation. “It’s not only creating things that we think are important. We have to respond to what the audience thinks is important as well. You’re not only focusing on personal projects and things we cover here but you are responding to national and global demand for content on the internet because we have that information now,” Social Media Editor Dan Petty explains.

Ken Lyons believes success still resides in the quality of the content we publish. “Our photo galleries are the best I’ve seen anywhere. I really do think we do them better than anybody. I think we do more of them and they are better quality. They are edited well and have great subject matter. We have a great photo blog. We found a way to create an audience for local photography but we’ve also created an audience for national and international photography which is what is getting cut in the paper.”

FUTURE STUDY

So, once a substantial audience for your content is built, what is the next step? At most newspapers, including The Denver Post, the relationship is still very one-sided. The

news producers push content to the viewers and the transaction usually stops there. In order to take advantage of the audience, the next step is to engage. Newspaper websites, especially the photography portions, can become communities. Photographers and photo editors have specialized knowledge and skills to share with an audience interested in multimedia storytelling.

On the technical side, publishing tools should be more readily available. Having an online publishing tool or content management system that requires basic technical skills is essential to moving newspaper photo departments into the digital world and empowering photo departments to participate in content production.

The presence and prominence of photography on newspaper websites needs to be the main priority. The most significant obstacles to building an online audience for most papers is the absence of rich media on article and home pages and the lack of a centralized location for content.

One area of future study might address the role daily video plays on a newspaper website. At The Denver Post, daily video plays lag far behind still photography despite having two dedicated videographers on the photography staff producing high quality content. Maybe daily video storytelling is not what newspaper website audiences want. Maybe they do want videos but in a different format or on a different platform? Maybe online audiences are only interested in breaking news video? We haven't answered these questions yet and continue to search for ways to grow our daily video audience.

Another area of future study would be to compare the audiences of news websites that have the involvement of photography departments and those where the photography

department plays no role in online content production. At The Denver Post, the priority is placed on the quality and variety of online content. This might be different in a newsroom where online producers control rich media. At the Sun Sentinel, where the website was controlled by Tribune Co. web producers, anything that increased online traffic was published, including photo galleries like “Olympic Babes”. Longer-form storytelling was not encouraged or supported. There was no balance between quality storytelling and low-level photo content.

The Denver Post benefits from having a large photography department staff. This project would have been dramatically different if the newsroom was smaller, which most photography departments are. Studying how a smaller staff could build an audience would be valuable and would offer guidelines to a large number of smaller photo departments.

CHAPTER FOUR

In the summer of 2004, I entered the graduate program at the University of Missouri's School of Journalism with the goal of becoming a newspaper photographer. The extent of my knowledge was the basics of camera operation. I knew nothing of storytelling, internet coding, the daily workings of a newsroom or the history of photojournalism. I wasn't even aware that photo editing was a job.

I quickly became aware that I was much better suited to the job of photo editor than the job of photographer. I was first introduced to electronic journalism in David Farré's class at MU. Throughout the semester, we produced projects using simple HTML, Flash and audio editing. In my third and fourth semester, I worked in the Missouriian newsroom where I learned the basic responsibilities of a photo editor at a daily paper. When I left the University of Missouri for my project placement at the South Florida Sun Sentinel, I was armed with a basic understanding of photo editing, photography, storytelling, HTML, Flash and sound editing.

In 2006, all newspapers had websites but the presence and prominence of photography on most websites was limited to a single photograph accompanying an article. There were some exceptions. Large organizations, like MSNBC.com, latimes.com, washingtonpost.com and mediastorm.org were regularly producing multimedia projects. The Edge was launched on sun-sentinel.com and the graphics department was just beginning to experiment with multimedia projects. Aside from two

or three graphics producers at the Sun Sentinel, I had no one to teach me about creating projects for the website.

In the midst of learning photo editing responsibilities at the paper, I asked my supervisor for three days to sit at a computer in the back of the photo department and teach myself to edit video with Final Cut Pro. It was the first step in furthering my skills. I bought a tutorial book and by the end of the three days, I could edit video and prepare it for online publication.

The biggest challenge in 2006 was that there was only one tool or program that allowed photographers to become online content producers. If you didn't know how to code, you couldn't publish anything on the web. The learning curve was very steep. SoundSlides was the first program to turn photographers with no knowledge of coding into online content producers. The program allowed photographers to upload photographs and audio files, arrange them and publish them without ever coding anything. As a result, audio slideshows could be produced but every other method of displaying online multimedia projects had to first be created before the storytelling part of the project could be tackled.

What follows is a breakdown of select multimedia projects I completed over the past six years at the South Florida Sun Sentinel and The Denver Post.

Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina

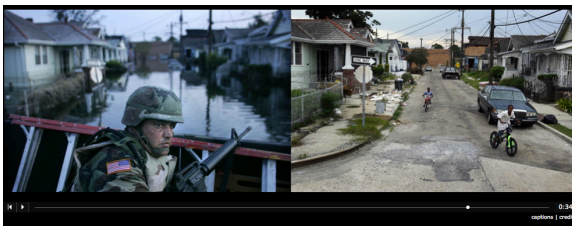
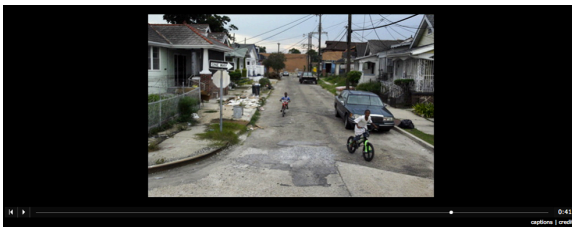
August 2006

August 2006 marked the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. A year earlier, the Sun Sentinel was in the path of Katrina, then a weak hurricane, as the storm made landfall in Florida on August 24. As the storm moved into the Gulf of Mexico, it quickly intensified into a monster Category 5 hurricane and headed straight for Louisiana. In the aftermath, the paper sent staff photographers to document the damage in New Orleans. The Sun Sentinel planned a special section in the paper to commemorate the anniversary. My supervisor, Tim, approached me about putting together a multimedia project with photographs by Mario Tama, a Getty photographer. Tama was in New Orleans when Katrina hit and photographed the city as 80% of it was flooded. A year later, he returned to photograph the same locations. Tim and I decided to place the photographs side by side to contrast how the scenes differed one year apart.



The main page of the project built in SoundSlides.

While we decided on the photographs, we struggled with how to present the project. The print special section was planned far in advance but online components were never considered in special project planning so we only had a couple days to produce the project. With the limited time frame, I did not have an opportunity to build a display tool for the project so we settled on SoundSlides. For the audio, we asked Doug Phillips, a reporter involved with our public radio partnership, to narrate the captions of the photographs. We decided to fade the photos into one another and then place them side-by-side for the viewer to examine. I edited the sound file, created the SoundSlides file and published the project on The Edge. The paper printed a link to the project in the special section.

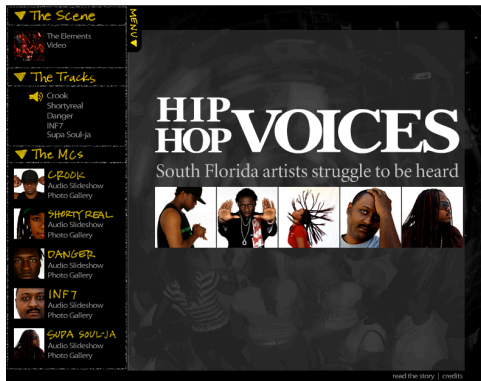


(above left) A 2005 photograph fades into (left) a 2006 photograph of the same street. The photographs side-by-side in the third screen (below left).

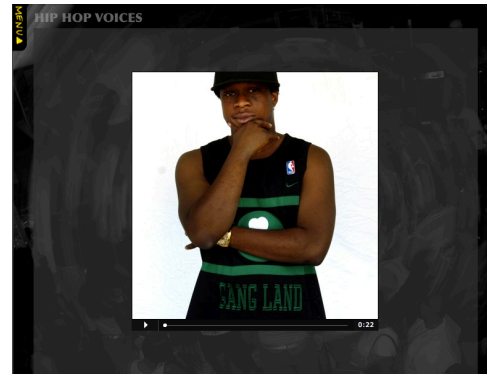
Hip Hop Voices

November 2006

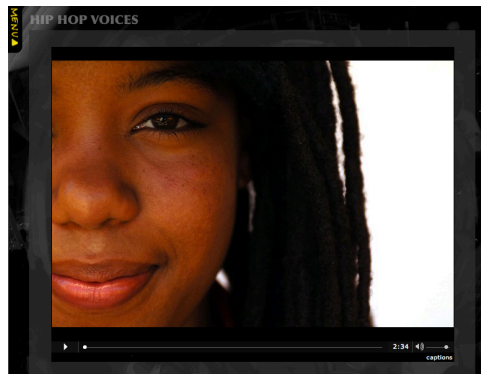
After learning to edit video with Final Cut Pro, I set out to enhance my Flash skills. I read every tutorial book I could find and watched online tutorials. In the midst of this, Staff Photographer John White approached me about a photo story he was working on showing the culture of hip hop in South Florida. He had collected video at a break dancing gathering and interviewed the subjects about their music. We decided to try to build a Flash project that included audio slideshows, video and samples of each artist's music.



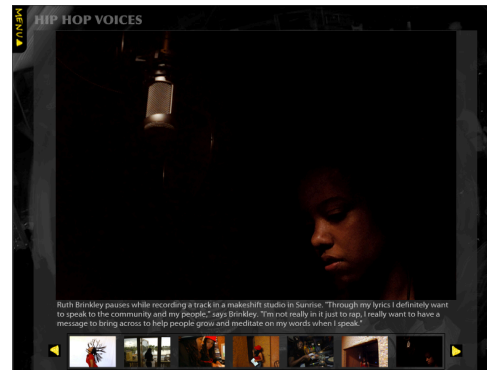
The main page of the project with a sliding menu pane on the left.



The player to feature the artist's sample of music built with SoundSlides.



The audio slideshow player built with SoundSlides.



The photo gallery player built by modifying SoundSlides to advance one photo at a time.

I built the entire project from scratch in Flash. We used a short overview video to open the project highlighting the elements of hip hop - the beat boy (also known as the break dancer), the graffiti artist and the MC or the rapper. The project featured five South Florida hip hop artists. I created audio slideshows for each of the five, combining audio interviews conducted by John and photos taken in the time he spent with each artist. The project was published on The Edge the same day it ran in print, which included a link to the online component.

Beneath the Surface

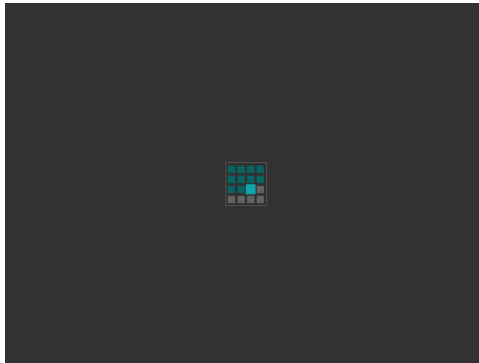
February 9, 2007

The photography department at the Sun Sentinel hired a few freelance photographers on a regular basis. Josh Richie had been freelancing for the paper a couple days a week since before I arrived in South Florida. When Josh moved to Florida, he bought an underwater camera and began a personal project photographing underwater life in South Florida. After about a year working on the project in his free time, he asked Mary Vignoles, Deputy Director of Photography, if we could publish the project in the paper. Mary carved out a photo page for the images and I asked to build a gallery of the images online.

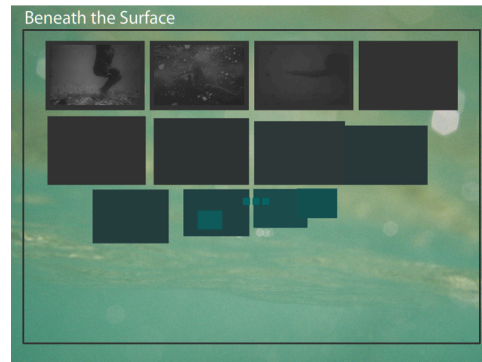
Beneath the Surface included sixteen 800 pixel photographs. I was concerned about the load time so, for the first time on a project, I used a preloader. I taught myself the coding and built one from scratch. The photographs loaded from sixteen small boxes in the preloader. I built an interface for the enhanced photo gallery using black and white versions of the photographs as thumbnails. When the user clicked on any of the images, the image loaded in a larger size and faded to color. Considering sun-sentinel.com galleries displayed small photos, did not use thumbnails and were built by the online producers, we were excited to publish a photo gallery that was displayed well.

The programming for the project was done in Flash using Actionscript 2.0 coding language. I was programming using the timeline in Flash because that was the only way I knew to use the program. I was creating keyframes and using manually added Flash tweens to enable symbols to fade in and out. I was manually placing objects on the

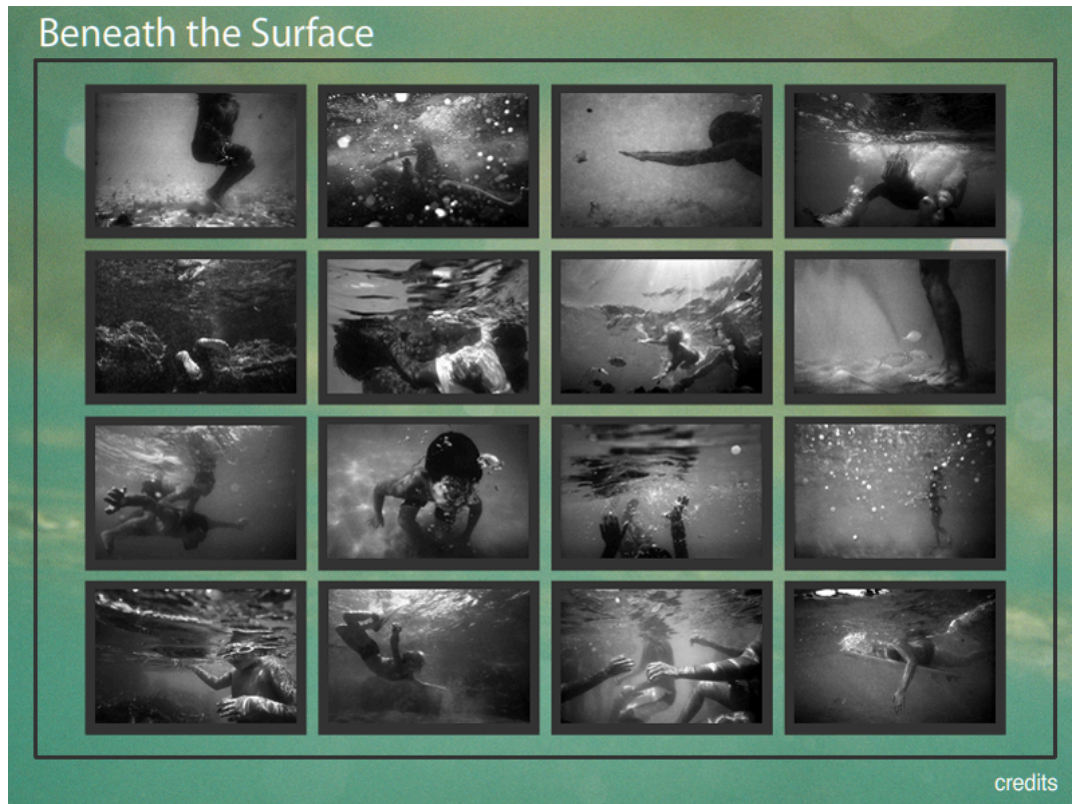
artboard in Flash to create animation. All the photographs were included in the Flash file and were preloaded when the project was opened by the user.



The preloader for the project.



The preloader squares faded into the photographs in the gallery.



The preloader loaded the black and white thumbnails in a gallery.



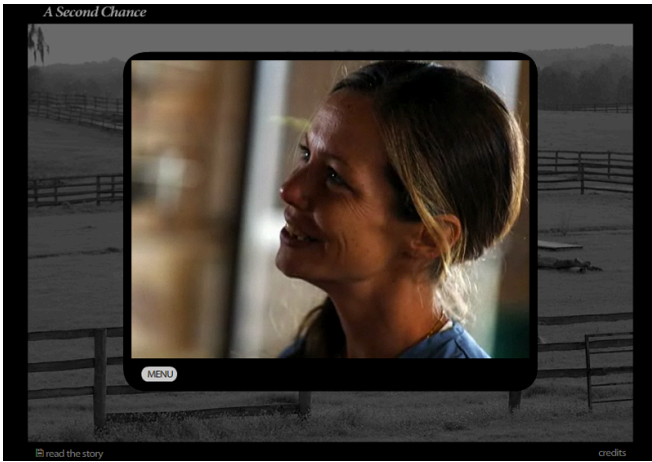
When the user clicked on a thumbnail, the black and white photo faded to color and was enlarged for viewing.

A Second Chance

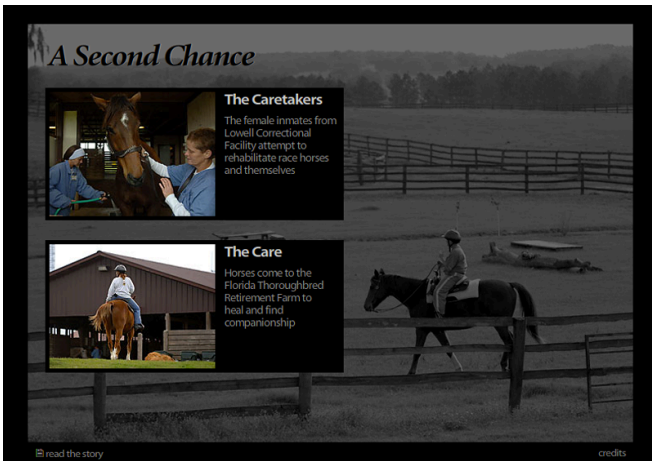
February 2007

In February of 2007, reporter Dave Joseph was writing a short feature story on inmates at the Lowell Correctional Facility in Ocala, Florida. Joseph was documenting the first program of its kind in the United States, allowing female inmates to care for retired thoroughbred horses. At the Sun Sentinel, we had one full-time staff videographer, Judy Rich. Judy expressed interest in following the photo assignment for the story and collecting video from the facility. Judy spent the day with the women at the correctional facility's barn and returned to the office with enough video to feature the women and their stories and to detail the care they administered to the horses.

The hip hop project I completed included some video but this project featured video as the main viewing media. I edited three video pieces combining the video and the stills from the story - an overview, a video featuring the women and a video featuring their responsibilities with the horses. I built the display platform for the project in Flash with Actionscript 2.0 coding language. I researched and built the video player inside Flash. The players were basic and they were missing any mechanism to control the video, like a pause or rewind button, because I didn't know how to program them. For the first time, the project also included a link to the online story because we were beginning to realize the importance of cross-linking different media online.

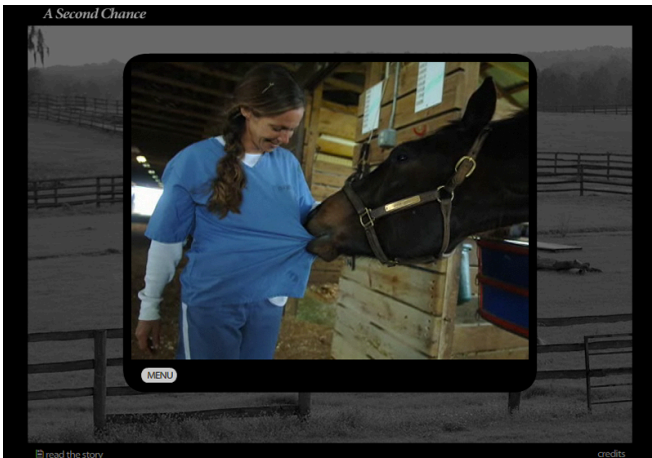


above left: The video overview of the project.



left: The main menu for the project, featuring two videos.

below left: The main video player for the project playing one of the featured videos in the main menu.



Colorado's Fallen

<http://www.denverpost.com/coloradosfallen>

May 2007

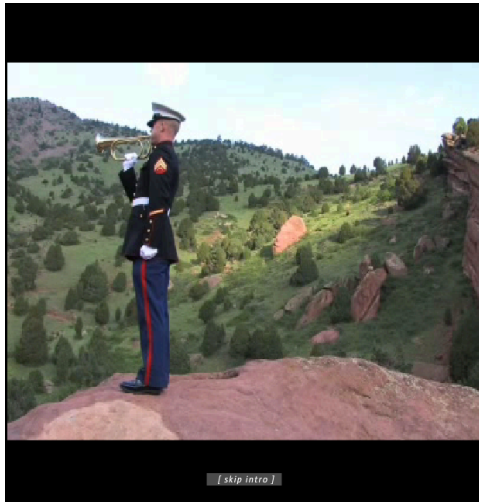
When I got to The Denver Post in April of 2007, I immediately began freelancing for Tim Rasmussen and the photo department. I didn't have any daily print responsibilities. Tim was pushing hard for the photo department to integrate multimedia projects into the website. Multimedia was discussed at the beginning of project planning. This was the first time I experienced this - multimedia was no longer an afterthought. The material I worked with at The Denver Post was collected for the sole purpose of creating an online feature. I was no longer working with material collected with the print product as the priority.

The coding work I was doing online improved by leaps and bounds. I met Mateo Leyba, the systems editor in the photo department who had been experimenting with Flash and video. Matt and I began to build tools and code libraries for online publications. In the past, every time I began a new project, I started from scratch. Matt and I broke down the elements of Flash projects and built them so that they could be used multiple times in future projects with minimal adjustments. For example, we built a video player with control buttons that could easily be added to any future projects. This made project building much easier and more efficient. In terms of functionality, I also began building projects with external .swf files so when a button was clicked, external .swfs loaded on demand, cutting the preload time down significantly. I began moving away from building projects with the timeline function in Flash and began relying more heavily on Actionscript alone.

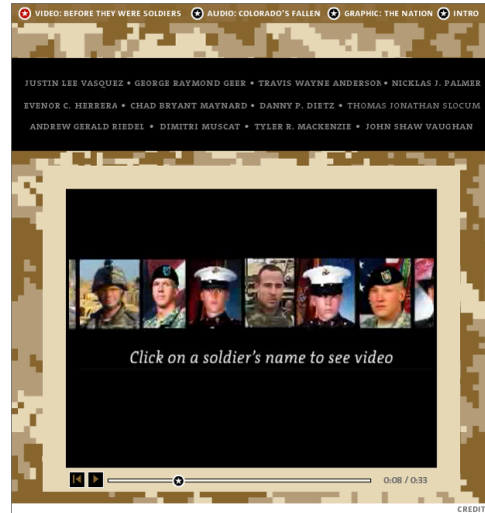
When Tim arrived at The Denver Post, he developed two positions in the photo department for videographers. Lyn Alweis, a staff photographer at the Post for more than 30 years, volunteered to learn video and become the staff's first full-time videographer. At the same time, the newsroom was planning a tribute to Colorado veterans for Memorial Day. With the Iraq War in full swing, Colorado soldiers were among the growing list of casualties. While we deliberated on how to tell the story online, Lyn, Tim and I decided to travel the state and interview relatives of twelve casualties of the war.

As Lyn traveled the state, I began editing the video she collected and building the online display for the project. Tim asked a print designer to create a design for the online project. I worked with the designer to explain what we needed in terms of navigation and web functionality.

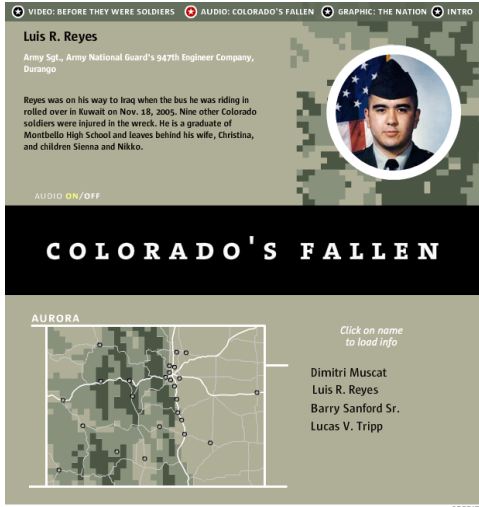
The project was built in Flash with Actionscript 2.0 coding language and included videos, an interactive graphic of all Colorado soldiers killed and an interactive graphic built by a graphics designer of all U.S. casualties. I used Final Cut Pro to edit all twelve soldier videos, incorporating stills with the interviews. We packaged the project with links to the stories and downloadable PDFs of the print pages on an article page with a custom URL.



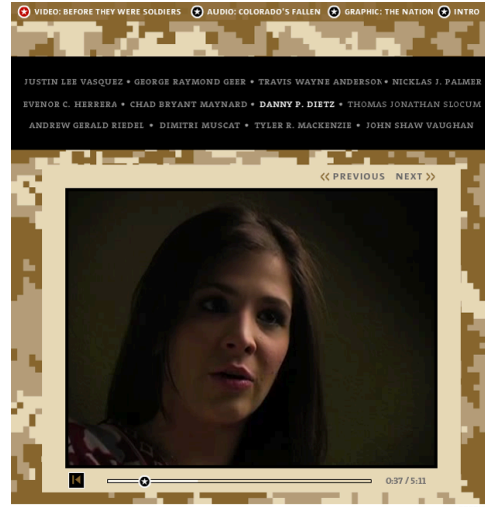
The intro for the project. We brought a Fort Carson soldier up to Red Rocks State Park and videotaped him playing taps to use as an opening for the project.



The project's main feature, a section called, Before They Were Soldiers, which included twelve videos combining interviews with family members and family photos of soldiers from Colorado who were killed in action.



A map of Colorado with fallen soldiers plotted on the map as dots. When you click on a dot, it brings up a menu of names. When you click on a name, it loads the information for that particular fallen soldier.



The main video player for the project featuring a video interview with Tiffany Bitz, sister of Navy Seal Danny Dietz from Littleton, Colorado who was killed in action.

MediaCenter

<http://photos.denverpost.com/mediacenter/>

April 2007 - Present

As we continued to produce more multimedia pieces for denverpost.com, we struggled with how to collect and organize the projects on the website. Previously, the philosophy was to build a project, whether it be a multimedia project, photo gallery or video, and display the project on the article page with a story. There was no central place to collect the projects, galleries and videos produced by the photo department. Tim and I developed the idea for a “Media Center”, a place to display everything we produced for the web independent of the online story.



The original MediaCenter, 2007. Multimedia projects were split into four categories - Photo Essays, Video, Graphics and Special Projects.

Tim created the first design for MediaCenter, as we came to call it, and asked one of the online producers to build it for us. The original MediaCenter was built in HTML on an article page within the main content management system, DASH, used by the online department. DASH was built in-house by MediaNews Group programmers in the early 2000s. It was built with text as the main priority.

Each button in the menu was hand constructed in Photoshop. When I completed a project, gallery or video, I posted the Flash file on an article page, within the DASH system. Then, I would construct a button for MediaCenter, by hand, in Photoshop, log into the DASH system and manually alter the article page HTML code, adding the .jpg and a hyperlink to the project.

Working within the DASH system limited the projects we created to a 600 pixel column because the system was based on prebuilt templates. Pre-sold advertisements were always automatically placed in one of the two or three columns on the templates.

The most important drawback of MediaCenter, which we weren't concerned with at the time because we didn't know any better, was that none of the elements were searchable. None of the text was recognized by search engines because it was housed inside a Flash file or a .jpg file.

Updating MediaCenter was time intensive and inefficient but we finally had a place to collect the projects we were producing in the photo department. It was the first time the photography department had a space of its own to control on the website.

The first version of MediaCenter went through a few minor revisions over the next year. As we continued to improve upon our multimedia skills, we began to outgrow

MediaCenter. The menus needed constant curation and, as we began to produce more breaking news projects and video, the time to publish a project became an issue. We lacked a true content management system to organize what we produced.

Shortly after we launched the first version of MediaCenter, I was hired as a multimedia photo editor. My responsibilities increased to editing for the newspaper on a daily basis, but Tim, Matt and I continued to press ahead in growing an online photo audience. In early 2008, I created a mock-up for a new MediaCenter that would be populated by a new content management system. An online company, SlideShowPro, released a CMS called Director. Director could be downloaded and installed on a server and this made it possible for us to organize our content in a centralized location. Instead of building a tool for displaying every photo gallery, we could upload photographs to Director, organize them into albums and galleries and export code for them without ever having to manually code anything. As soon as the galleries were created in Director, they populated MediaCenter. This meant members of the photo department, like photo imagers without any knowledge of online coding, could participate in online content production.

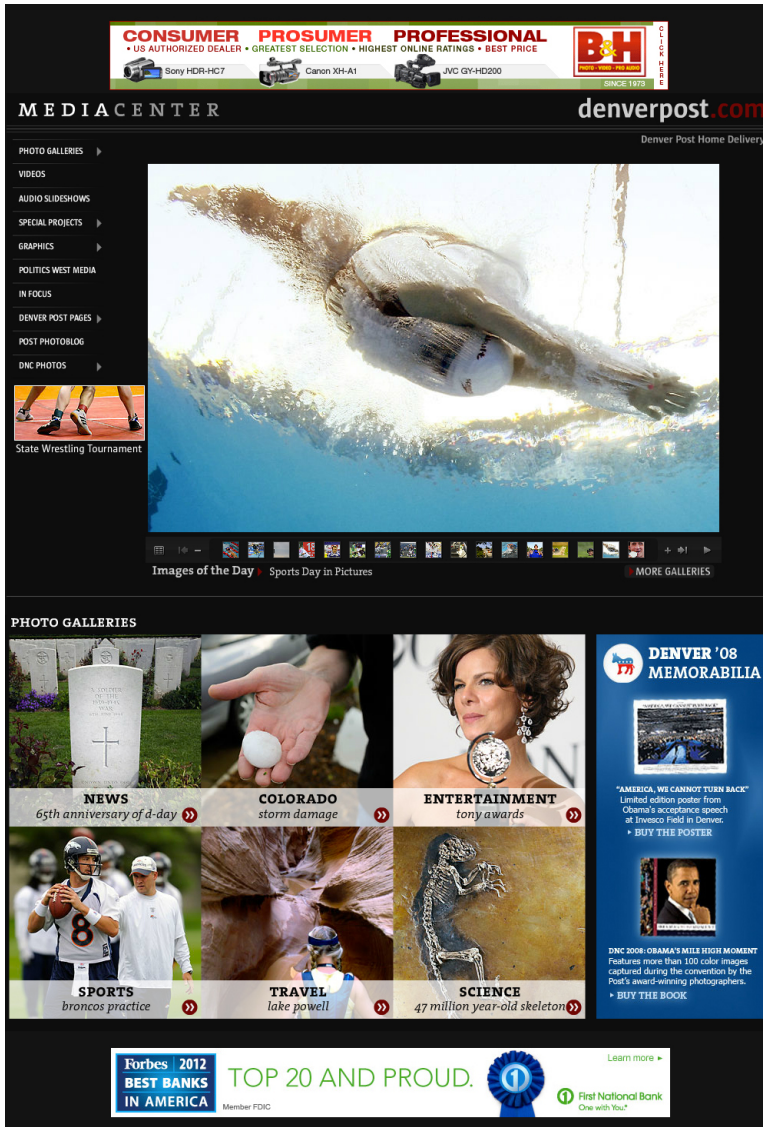
We installed Director on our servers and began testing it out. We discovered we could access the xml data exported from Director and populate MediaCenter automatically. I spent the next month building a new MediaCenter in Flash. I constructed two Flash pieces - one for displaying the galleries, which included a menu linking to all sections of MediaCenter - Photos, Videos, Audio Slideshows, Special Projects and

Graphics, and another piece to feature certain galleries or projects on MediaCenter. Tim and Matt began training the image technicians to create photo galleries in the new CMS.

I built MediaCenter as multiple Flash files and arranged them on a webpage with HTML. We installed the completed MediaCenter on the photo department's servers. This marked the first time that we ran MediaCenter outside of the online department's main system, DASH. It offered amazing freedom for us in creating multimedia projects.

We started small and created four image galleries that would be updated everyday - Colorado Images of the Day, Images of the Day, Entertainment Images of the Day and Sports Images of the Day. The imagers would also create galleries if a photographer came back from an assignment with a good collection of photographs.

At the same time, we began using Brightcove as a content management system for our videos which worked the same way as Director. When a video was uploaded into the system, the video player on MediaCenter was automatically populated with the new content.



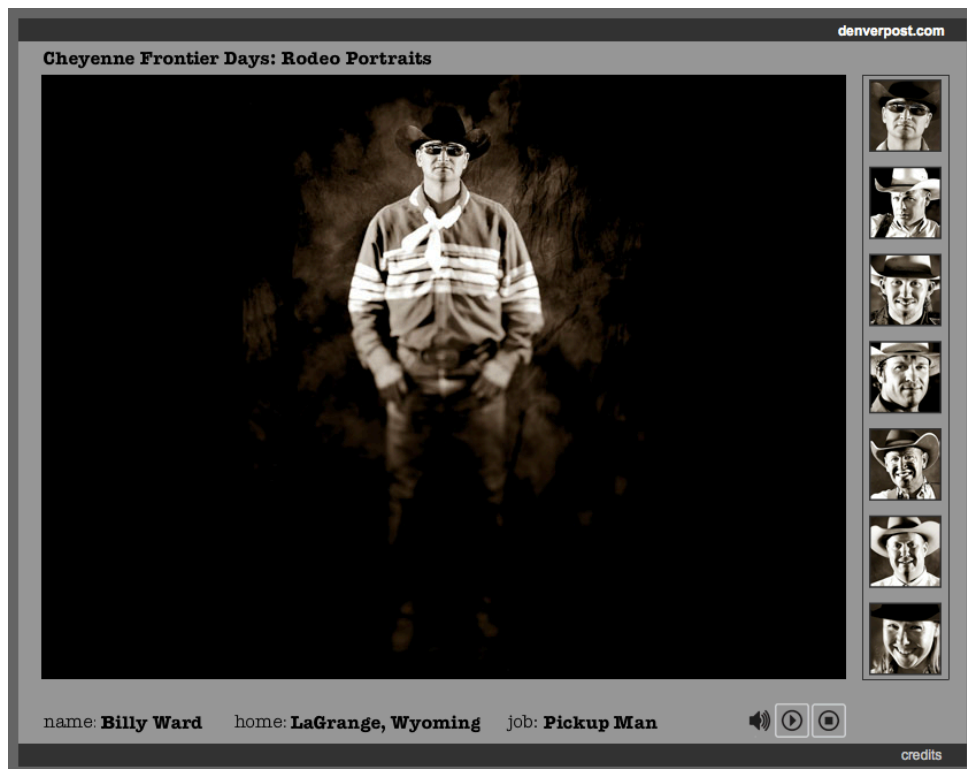
The second version of MediaCenter was built from two separate Flash files. The top section was completely automated. The content was controlled by the SlideShowPro Director content management system and the bottom portion was controlled by the photo editors. Anything could be featured in the bottom six links. A menu was built into the top portion to organize the navigation for all the sections and categories of photo galleries.



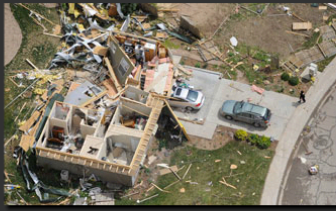
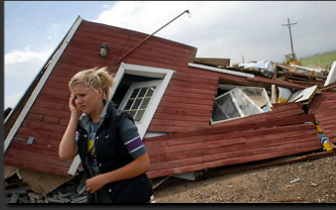
The video section of MediaCenter housed the Brightcove video player which we used to manage all photo department videos. The player had a menu on the top right to separate videos into topics and featured a playlist on the right side to list all recent videos in the particular topic.



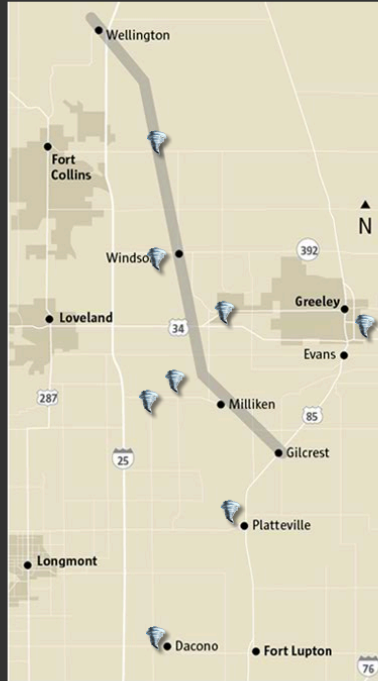
Special Projects could now be displayed outside of the online department's CMS and we were free from the prebuilt templates. (above) A special project for the five year anniversary of the war in Iraq and (below) a feature on rodeo participants.



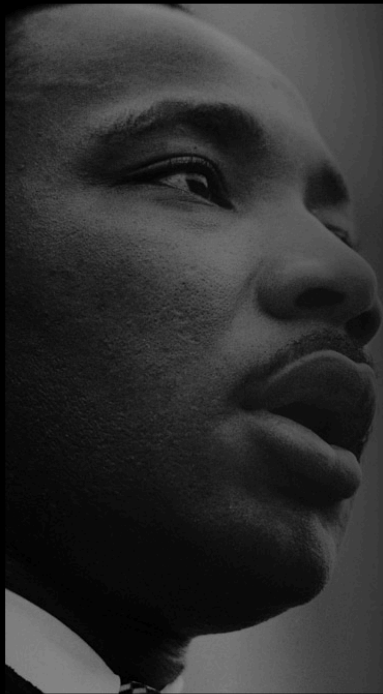
Tornadoes Touch Down in Weld County



denverpost.com



(left) A breaking news project on tornadoes in Colorado and (below) a project on the forty year anniversary of the assassination of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.



40 YEARS LATER

[a conversation about race in denver]

**Grace
Herbison**

**Gordon
Keith**

**Storm
Foster**

**Mike
Olson**

**John
Hatch**

**Michelle
Stewart**

**Diane
King**

**Eleanore
Clark**

**Nancy
Major**

**Casey
Gilson**

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR

INFO | TEXT | EMAIL

With the second revision of MediaCenter, we tried to increase the prominence of photography on the website. In 2006, the year Tim arrived at the Post and the year before I did, all rich media on the website received 620,000 clicks. With the videos, galleries and special projects we produced in 2008, we saw a tremendous increase in traffic to 29 million total clicks for the year. Most people were finding MediaCenter, bookmarking the site and returning for the content we were producing. We placed a rotator on the homepage of denverpost.com to feature and link to content in MediaCenter. With the new MediaCenter and the rotator, we saw another jump in 2009 to 36 million total views for the year.

The screenshot shows the denverpost.com homepage with a navigation bar, a blue promotional banner, and several news stories. The 'MEDIA CENTER' section is highlighted on the left, featuring a photo of a man in a lab coat and the headline 'Highland Neighborhood Changes'. The 'BREAKING NEWS' section features a photo of a man and the headline 'Police arrest father of brutalized baby in Colorado Springs'. Other headlines include 'Colorado medical community tries to slow painkiller misuse' and 'One-third of Colorado cities fail to report arrests flagged for ICE'. The right side of the page has sections for 'Neighborhood news from YourHub', 'Bald eagles nest at Barr Lake State Park in Brighton', and 'FREE ACCESS TO THE DIGITAL REPLICA EDITION'.

Beginning in 2008, the online department placed an online content rotator (left column), featuring galleries and projects, in a prominent position on the homepage helping to drive traffic to MediaCenter.

The latest revision of MediaCenter came in 2010. Continuing to improve on the site required us to scrutinize everything - what was working and what was holding us back from growing our audience. We identified some areas that needed improvement. All content on MediaCenter was still contained inside a Flash file and was not searchable. So, for example, if someone went to google.com or yahoo.com and searched for “New Year’s Eve Photos” the search engine would not return a result pointing to denverpost.com, even though we had a huge gallery of images, because the text on our site was hidden from the search engines.

Mateo Leyba began building the third version of MediaCenter as a Wordpress blog. We built a theme together and Matt programmed a javascript gallery viewer and a SlideShowPro plug-in for Wordpress. Our content management system and the processes to build a gallery remained the same but we added another step to post a gallery. Not only was our text now searchable, Wordpress contained an embedded SEO pack which allowed us to set keywords and description for each post, increasing the chance for a search engine to point to the gallery.

MEDIA CENTER

Home Preps Sports News Entertainment Images Of The Day Special Projects Latest Video Photo Blogs

Denver Daily Deals Click here to see today's deal from www.DenverDailyDeals.com

Photos: Men's NCAA Tournament 2012 - Saturday, March 17, 2012

Posted Mar 17, 2012 | PHOTOS



Photos from around the country from the 2012 NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament on Saturday, March 17, 2012, as March Madness Continues. (more...)

Mar 17, 2012 | Categories: Basketball, College Sports, Sports | Tags: Photos | Add a Comment



Forbes 2012 BEST BANKS IN AMERICA TOP 20 AND PROUD. First National Bank One with You.

Previous Entries



Photos: Avalanche vs. Rangers Mar 17, 2012 | PHOTOS NEW YORK - The Avalanche closed out a three-game Eastern road trip Saturday...



Photos: Nuggets vs. Celtics Mar 17, 2012 | PHOTOS Well, you're not going to believe this. Literally one year ago Saturday, Kenneth Faried played the biggest ga...



Photos: NCAA Basketball Tournament - CU vs. Baylor Mar 17, 2012 | PHOTOS ALBUQUERQUE - Baylor's towering frontcourt got all the advanced billing Saturday...

Grid of related photo galleries: Colorado, Entertainment, Sports, Preps, Images Of The Day. Each includes a thumbnail and a brief description.

Forbes 2012 BEST BANKS IN AMERICA TOP 20 AND PROUD. First National Bank One with You.

Tags: all time Bill Romanowski dirty Ndamukong Suh news nfl Photo Photos prep championships Slideshow special project Video


Facebook social plugin showing 'Find us on Facebook' with a photo of Denver Post Photo and user avatars.

The Denver Post Terms Of Use Subscribe to entries Subscribe to comments All content © 2012 The Denver Post News from The Denver Post: Breaking News | Style | Lifestyles | Food and Dining | Health and Fitness | Fashion | Homes | Entertainment Colorado Snow Report | Vail Snow Report | Breckenridge Snow Report | List of Colorado Ski Resorts

The third and current version of MediaCenter was built in Wordpress, a free online blogging software.

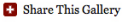



MEDIA CENTER Subscribe via RSS

Home Preps Sports News Entertainment Images Of The Day Special Projects Latest Video Photo Blogs


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Photos: Watoto Choir Performs

Posted Mar 08, 2012

 Share This Gallery
  Tweet 0
  Recommend
  4 people recommend this. Be the first of your friends.

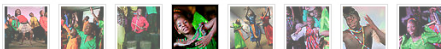
The Watoto choir is a holistic care program that began in response an overwhelming numbers of orphaned and vulnerable children and women in Africa. Its mission, Rescue, Raise & Rebuild, is to rescue an individual, raise each one to be a leader and ultimately rebuild a nation. The group, from Uganda, is finishing a six and a half month tour of the western United States spreading awareness of the conditions and hopes in their country. The choir is made up of children orphaned by war and HIV AIDS.




▶ ◀ ▶


4 of 9

Aisha Nakabuuka performs with the Watoto Children's Choir at the Anastasis Academy in Lone Tree CO, Wednesday, March 08, 2012. The group, from Uganda, is finishing a six and a half month tour of the western United States spreading awareness of the conditions and hopes in their country. The choir is made up of children orphaned by war and HIV AIDS. Watoto is a holistic care program that began in response an overwhelming numbers of orphaned and vulnerable children and women in Africa. Its mission, Rescue, Raise & Rebuild, is to rescue an individual, raise each one



1 2 Next ▶



Forbes 2012 BEST BANKS IN AMERICA **TOP 20 AND PROUD.**
 Member FDIC  **First National Bank** One with You.SM [Learn more ▶](#)

The photo gallery viewer in the current Mediacenter pulls photos from SlideShowPro's Director content management system. The gallery title, description and image caption all contain searchable text.

In the current version of MediaCenter, social media icons were made a priority. Twitter, Facebook and other social media icons were included on all pages to enable quick and easy sharing of Denver Post content. The Denver Post Photography Department also created Twitter and Facebook accounts to alerts fans and subscribers to new or featured content on MediaCenter and the main website.

With the current version of MediaCenter, every person in the photography department became a content producer. Online photo galleries and videos became easy to create, publish and share. Special projects are still created on a case-by-case basis, with whatever technology will best lend itself to telling the story.

MediaCenter traffic in 2011 surpassed 100 million total hits, more than a 100% traffic increase over 2010's total of 49 million. We attribute this audience growth to our increased use of social media, search engine optimization and the renewed focus we placed on daily gallery production. Presently, MediaCenter is undergoing another revision as we hope to engage the tremendous audience we have grown.

Trashing the Truth

<http://www.denverpost.com/evidence>

July 2007

When I came to the Post in April of 2007, investigative reporters Susan Greene and Miles Moffiet and staff photographer RJ Sangosti had been working for a year on a national story about rampant evidence mishandling in police departments across the country. Creating a multimedia presentation to accompany the story was not planned until Tim Rasmussen started at the Post in the fall of 2006. RJ traveled with the reporters to document the story in still photographs and had videotaped interviews with subjects conducted by the reporters.

Tim asked me to develop a project to tell the story online. Trashing the Truth featured an overview of how police departments regularly skirt evidence handling procedures, often destroying a defendant's chance at DNA exoneration, and focused on specific people whose cases were effected by the mishandling of DNA evidence.

In 2007, we were still organizing online projects based on the print product. The story was to run in the paper over five days. I organized the online project according to the topics which would be covered on each of those five days. The first day focused on an overview of the issue and a review of the case against Colorado inmate, Clarence Moses-El, who was convicted of rape in 1988 and sentenced to 48 years in prison. Police had DNA evidence in the case but DNA testing in 1988 was impossible. After 17 years in prison and improvements in DNA testing, Clarence Moses-El raised \$1,000 for a DNA test of the evidence only to discover police had improperly disposed of the evidence in

his case. I built these and all the other videos in the same manner, combining interviews, still photographs, music and a narrative.

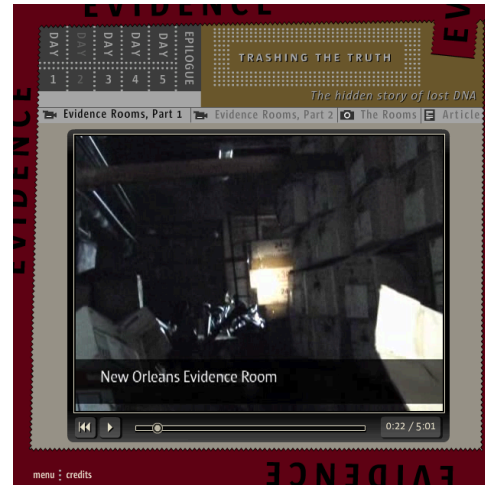
I worked with Susan and Miles to write scripts in order to narrate the videos for each day of the series. Mike McPhee, a reporter, voiced the scripts to help fill holes in the raw video. We did this for each video on each subject - Clarence Moses-El, Evidence Rooms, Rape Kits, Floyd Brown, Johnny Briscoe and Tim Masters. I built the Flash project using Actionscript 2.0 and the project was published on a special article page, which included links to every story in the special five-day run of the series in print.

Trashing the Truth was mostly an exercise in making something out of nothing. We had no opportunity to go back and get what we were missing for the project. The project contained photo galleries and videos that I produced and graphics produced by Tom McKay, a graphic designer.

The online project for Trashing the Truth was the first large scale multimedia project that coordinated with a major investigative piece in the paper. Online and in the paper, the series had widespread impact. Floyd Brown was released from a mental institution. He had been held for 14 years without a trial because the evidence in his case went missing. All charges against Tim Masters were vacated by a judge in Fort Collins, Colorado and he was set free in January of 2008 after serving nearly a decade for allegedly murdering Peggy Hettrick.

The online project was included as supporting material when the Post submitted the series for a Pulitzer Prize. The entry was a finalist for the prize in investigative

reporting. The video featuring Tim Masters' case won first place for documentary video in NPPA's Best of Photojournalism contest.



[TIM MASTERS WEB DOCUMENTARY SCRIPT]

As the Fort Collins police tell it, Tim Masters killed Peggy Hettrick in 1987.

((Begin slowly zooming into Tim Masters' jailhouse photo in front of cinderblock wall, moving from left corner to his face))

He was 15 years old.

He lived within 100 yards of where her partially clad body was found with knife wounds.

((Cut to pictures of his house, the field and the street curb.))

On his way to his school-bus stop, he saw the body. *((Move slowly to shot of her left arm with bracelet among brown leaves))*.

He says he didn't know whether it was real. *((Cut back to his jailhouse shot, zooming slowly in again))* He thought it could be a mannequin, possibly a prank being pulled on him by neighborhood kids. There wasn't a trace of blood visible on her corpse.

So he kept walking.

((Move across picture of Landings Drive))

He later admitted that he made a mistake. That he should have reported to police what he saw.

But his mistake hooked police. *((Shot of police standing in field))*

He became their No. 1 suspect. *((Zooming into his eyes))*.

The day after they discovered the body, they pounded him with accusations during seven hours of interrogation while he told them that he had nothing to do with it.

(Show separate clips of three investigators accusing him)

(Detective goes into mild tirade – 48:00, Masters Disc 3)

(Woman detective says, "You did it. I'm not asking you, I'm telling you. 35:33..., Disc 2.)

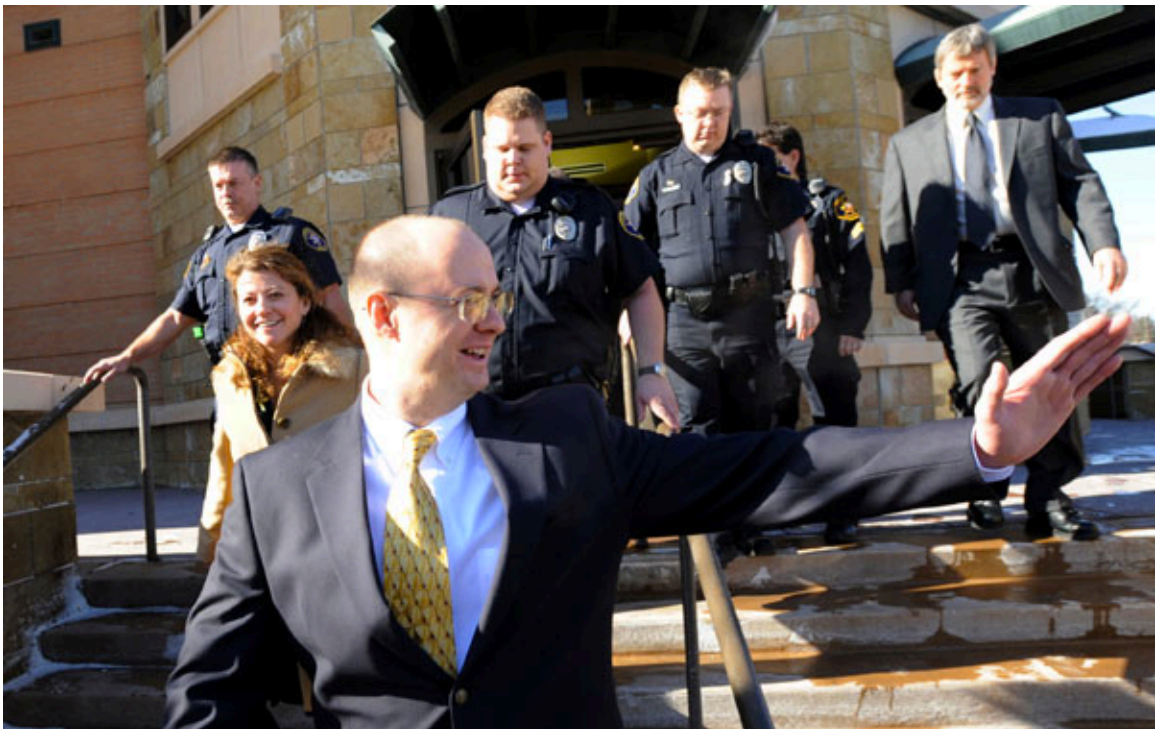
(Detective accuses him – "We know you did it.")

(top left) The video player featuring a Day 2 video on evidence rooms from the series. Elements from each day of the series were grouped together in the online project. (above right) A video from the third day of the project featuring Floyd Brown. (left) A web script used to narrate the Tim Masters video.



(left) A photograph of Tim Masters at age 15 in the video featured on the fifth day of the Trashing the Truth project.

(below) Tim Masters walks out of the Larimer County Courthouse on Jan. 22, 2008, after a judge ordered his release. Masters served nearly a decade in prison. (Helen H. Richardson, The Denver Post)



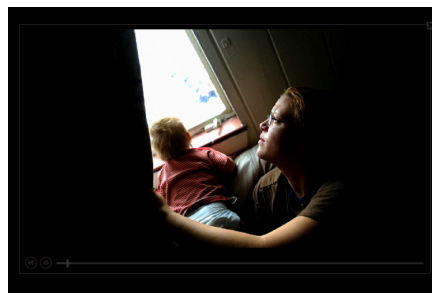
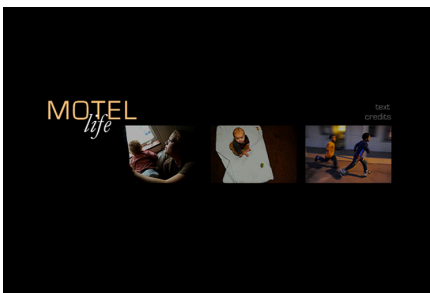
Motel Life

<http://www.denverpost.com/motellife>

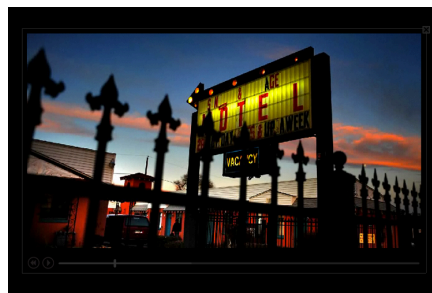
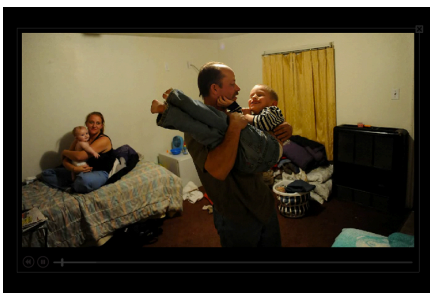
December 2008

In November of 2008, health inspectors from Commerce City, a suburb of Denver, closed down the Clear View Motel for a long list of violations. While Post reporter Jason Blevins was writing the story, he decided to follow the displaced families at the motel to their next locations and write a more in-depth story about motel life for homeless families. Jason discovered that across metro Denver, between 1,000 and 2,000 men, women and children bounce from motel to motel because they can't afford permanent apartments or homes.

Staff Photographer Hyoung Chang was assigned to photograph the families and we worked to produce a multimedia project from the story. Hyoung collected sound and I built an interface. I editing the sound and the photographs and produced three audio slideshows. The project was built with Flash and coded with Actionscript 2.0.



Screenshots from Motel Life produced in 2008. The project included three audio slideshows featuring families living in decrepit motels in downtown Denver.



Ian Fisher: American Soldier

<http://www.denverpost.com/americansoldier>

September 2009

On January 10, 2007, while facing mounting criticism about the war in Iraq, George W. Bush addressed the nation in a primetime speech. He announced new plans for the war, including a troop surge and an increase in money directed towards rebuilding in Iraq. Tim Rasmussen, Damon Cain, Managing Editor of Presentation at The Denver Post, and John Sunderland, Director of Photography, were watching the speech at a restaurant near the newsroom and Damon asked, "Who would join the military now?" John immediately suggested we do a photo project following a local kid graduating from high school and enlisting in the military.

The next day, John found a contact person at Fort Carson Army Base in Colorado Springs and passed the name and number on to Staff Photographer Craig Walker. Tim told Craig about the idea for the project and Craig set out to find a subject. Craig found two seniors at Bear Creek High School. Craig met and began following one of the seniors, named Troy, while he prepared for graduation and Army enlistment. About three weeks into the project, Troy called Craig to tell him he changed his mind. Troy decided not to join the Army. We thought the project was finished because high school graduation was two weeks away. Craig had one contact left at Bear Creek High School and he met him on the day of graduation rehearsal. His name was Ian Fisher.



One of the first images Craig Walker made of Ian Fisher on the day he met him at his high school graduation rehearsal.

Craig took some time to explain the project and the kind of access he would need to Ian. Ian seemed interested and brought Craig home to meet his father, Eric, whom Ian had lived with since he was a child.

Eric and Ian's mother, Teri, understood the project and the commitment required. The two gave Ian their blessing. At the same time, Craig was establishing contact with Major Anne Edgecomb from the Army's public affairs office at the Pentagon. Major Edgecomb would be instrumental in establishing access for Craig as Ian moved through Army training and deployment. Craig began to tag along with Ian - to friends' houses, graduation parties, on dates with girlfriends, at the dinner table with his father - and a trust developed between Craig and Ian.

At the beginning of this project, Craig and I sat down to discuss how the photo essay could be presented online. Craig was the sole photojournalist on this story. Tim wanted Craig to focus on making the best photos of his career. We quickly ruled out action video for the story and we focused on video interviews. Each week or so, Craig would look over his photos from the project, we would discuss interview questions and he would sit down with Ian, his family members, his friends, his girlfriends and his Army colleagues to conduct video interviews.

Craig followed Ian Fisher for a total of 27 months, through boot camp and basic training, to his station in Fort Carson, Colorado, to his year-long deployment in Iraq and his homecoming in the summer of 2009. During the same time period, The Denver Post weathered layoffs, the Rocky Mountain News closed its doors after more than a hundred years, the newspaper industry as a whole continued its decline and support for the project among the word editors disappeared. Three reporters were assigned at different times to the story which got passed around like a bit of an unwanted burden. Craig ignored all those things and held true to telling the story.

As Craig was immersed in Ian's life for more than two years, he gathered approximately 136 hours of video interviews and more than 130,000 photographs. Tim and I worked to organize the project while Craig was out gathering content. First, we sat down to imagine what the online version could be. We divided the project up into four categories - photographs, videos, the written story and "online extras", as we called them, which included interactive maps, a glossary of Army terms and acronyms, video

postcards from soldiers serving with Ian in Iraq, video outtakes of interesting stories that didn't fit the main storyline and videos of what Ian saw as a driver of an Army Humvee.

Tim and I edited eight online galleries from Craig's entire catalog of images and broke them down into chapters - Signing Up, In the Army, Basic Training, First Assignment, Army Blues, In Country, Life in Iraq and Coming Home. Tim was already working with Craig to edit as he photographed so we started with a pared down edit of the entire take. We narrowed down thousands of photos to 211 frames. We attempted to do the same with the video and set out rough guidelines for a ten part documentary video using the video interviews and Craig's still photographs.

As I sat down to begin the overwhelming task of editing 136 hours of video, I was a bit lost. Craig and I created a timeline of events over the past two years. We then merged the timeline with the list of video interviews.

| key | EVENTS - VIDEOS |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| TAPE LIST & TIMELINE | |
| 2007 - Ian at Home | |
| First Meeting with Ian | |
| May 5th | - Ian Fisher |
| May 5th | - Eric Fisher (Dad) |
| May 31st - High School Graduation | |
| Current Girlfriend: Ashley Hibbs | |
| June 11th | - Ashley Hibbs (Girlfriend) |
| June 11th | - Nick "Buddah" Nelson (Best Friend) |
| June 11th | - Ian talking about Buddah |
| June 11th | - Ian talking about Ashley |
| June 13th | - SFC Gavino Barron, Station Commander, Lakewood Recruiters Office |
| June 16th | - Farewell Parties for Ian |
| June 17th | - Ian leaves for Basic Training |
| July 17th | - Rob Compton (Friend) |
| July 17th | - Shane Doyle (Friend) |
| July 17th | - Nick "Buddha" Nelson (Best Friend) |
| June 18th | - Ian bused to MEPS and takes Oath, departs for Basic Training |
| June 19th | - Ian arrives at Basic Training, processing begins |
| June 22nd | - Ian handed over to Drill Sergeants at Basic Training |
| 2007 - Ian at Basic Training | |
| July 18th | - Eric Fisher (Dad) |
| July 18th | - Teri Mercill (Mom) |

Part of the timeline Craig and I developed to help track events in Ian's life with the video interviews Craig conducted.



Tapes from the video interviews Craig conducted with Ian, his friends and family.

To begin editing the videos, I logged the interviews. I used dictation software and sat in a conference room with my laptop, watched each video, repeated each line, corrected the typed dictation and time-stamped each entry for eight hours a day over the course of three months. Although this step was time intensive and tedious, the 500-page log I created proved invaluable in both editing the videos and aiding the reporter while he wrote the print story.

At the same time, Tim created a mock-up sample of the online project display. By 2009, we had begun building special projects outside of the online content management system. This offered us extreme flexibility in building the web presentation for American Solider. We wanted the design to be simple, uncluttered and elegant in order to keep the focus on Craig's photography. The first design we created had a plain gray background

and simple thumbnails. We started with the photo gallery section of the project because we were still deciding on which content to include in the other sections.

| Clip Name / Question | Answer | Time In | Time Out |
|---|---|---------|----------|
| Untitled5-1.mov | Ian's first interview. His house. | | |
| Introduce yourself? | I'm Ian Fisher. I live here in Lakewood Colorado. I just recently graduated Beer Creek High School last Thursday. I plan on joining the Army on June 18th, that's when I leave for boot camp in Atlanta, Georgia. I basically plan on being an Army Ranger. | 15s | 35s |
| Can you tell me a little about your high school life? | Basically in High School I was the kid who tried to be friends with everyone. I really didn't worry about the whole awkwardness of dealing with who you basically, having a certain type of friends, basically not worrying about the social issues, the social factor of high school. I was kind of a lazy high school student, cause I never really wanted to do work, I never really cared as much, I mean, I always knew I'd end up joining the Army. It was three years ago that I really started wanting to be in the Army. I know that as long as I graduate, I'd be able to do what I wanted in life. I was more worried about having fun with my friends, living my life than sitting at a desk doing homework. I was always just a lazy kid, never wanted to do work. Graduation really wasn't a big deal to me. It was basically a culmination of what I didn't work for, in a way. But I made it, I graduated and now I'm able to do what I really want to do in my life. Graduation for some people is a big celebration, a really happy moment but it never really was for me. It was just something I really wanted to get over with, just get my diploma and just live the next chapter of my life. | 50s | 2:22 |
| What about sports? | I played baseball in high school for three years. I did boxing for a while. Baseball was a big part of my life. It kept me out of trouble. I was always on the baseball field in high school. I played baseball year-round. It became a part of my life. I kind of quit baseball this last year, cause it scared me because I wanted to join the army but I was scared at the point of where I was. I didn't know what was going on in my life so I kind of took back, lived my life and kind of found myself in a way. I miss baseball. It literally made my life, made me who I was and I plan on playing it later in my life. It's just an amazing thing. | 2:25 | 3:25 |
| Where were you born? | I was born here in Denver, Colorado at Lutheran Hospital. I was born in 1989 so I just recently turned 18. | 3:27 | 3:37 |
| What do you like to do with your free time? | Be with my friends, hang out. Be with everyone I care for. There's nothing really I can do right now besides basically have fun and be with my friends and family and kind of say my goodbyes, in a way. Baseball was just my past time but when I quit that it just became being able to be with my friends, do what I wanted to do and have fun. | 3:50 | 4:20 |

The first page of my video interview log book which grew to more than 500 pages.

IAN FISHER: SOLDIER



CHAPTER ONE ▶



CHAPTER TWO ▶



CHAPTER THREE ▶



CHAPTER FOUR ▶



CHAPTER FIVE ▶



CHAPTER SIX ▶



CHAPTER SEVEN ▶



CHAPTER EIGHT ▶



CHAPTER NINE ▶



CHAPTER TEN ▶

MENU

The original mockup for the American Soldier project - (top) a simple thumbnail menu and (bottom) a sample of a slideshow page.

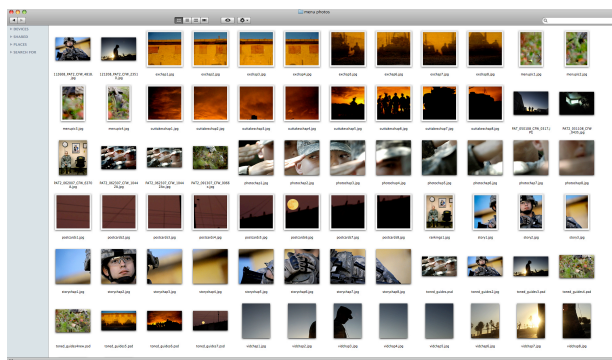
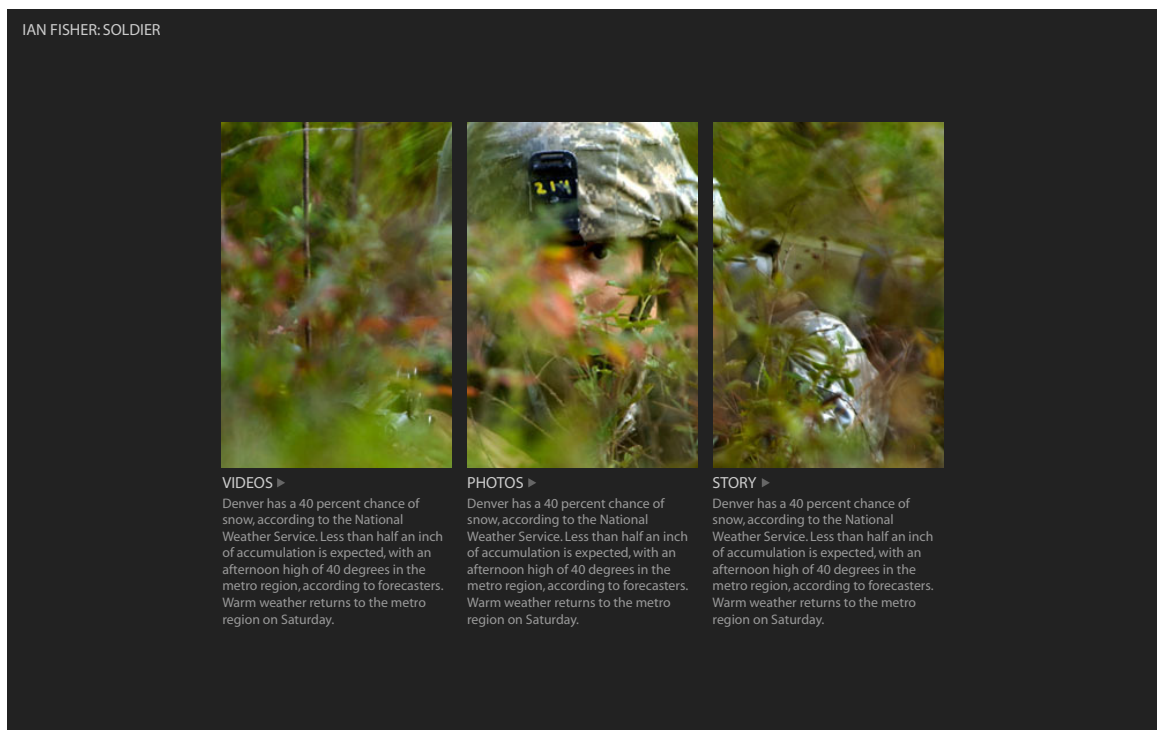
IAN FISHER: SOLDIER

Denver has a 40 percent chance of snow, according to the National Weather Service. Less than half an inch of accumulation is expected, with an afternoon high of 40 degrees in the metro region, according to forecasters. Warm weather returns to the metro region on Saturday when highs are expected to reach 53 degrees under sunny skies. The high in Denver Sunday is expected to reach 65 degrees, with daily highs in the 60s all next week. A Pacific storm is expected to drop heavy snow in the high country today, according to the National Weather Service.

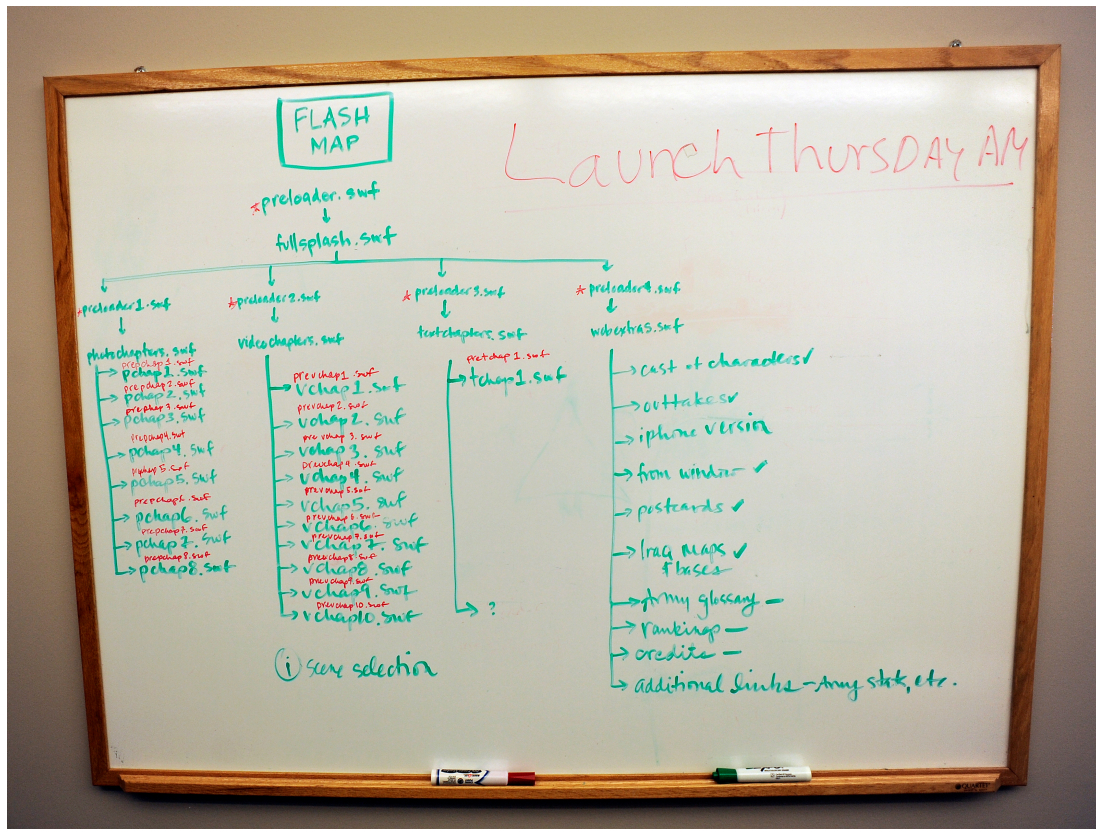


MENU

Even though the mock-ups were extremely simple, I wasn't satisfied with the menus. Craig Walker fills the frame on every image he makes and when you took those photographs down to thumbnail size, they looked cluttered and were difficult to read. I started toying with a new idea of sectioning up some photographs to act as menu thumbnails. I created another mock-up using this idea and brought it to Tim. We agreed on this design and I began the backend organization of the Flash project.



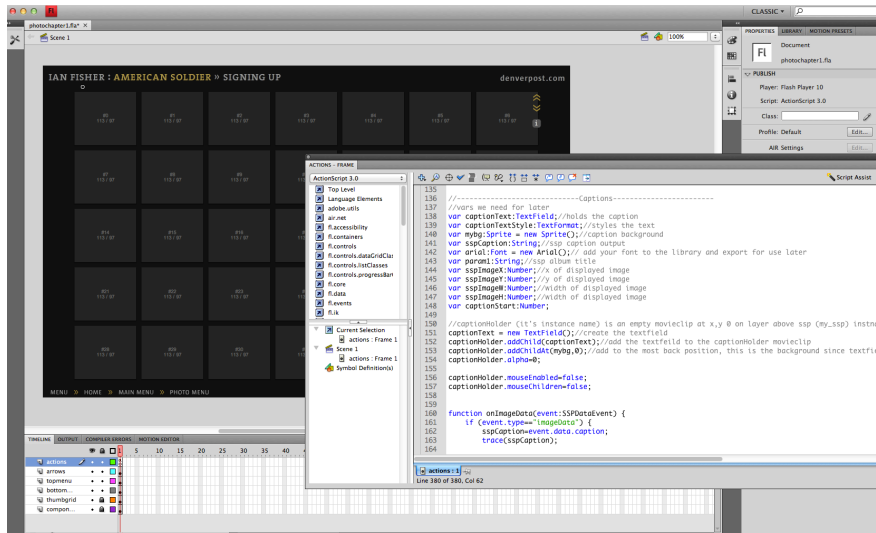
(top) The new American Slider mock-up with simplified menu photos. (left) My project folder with menu thumbnails sectioned up.



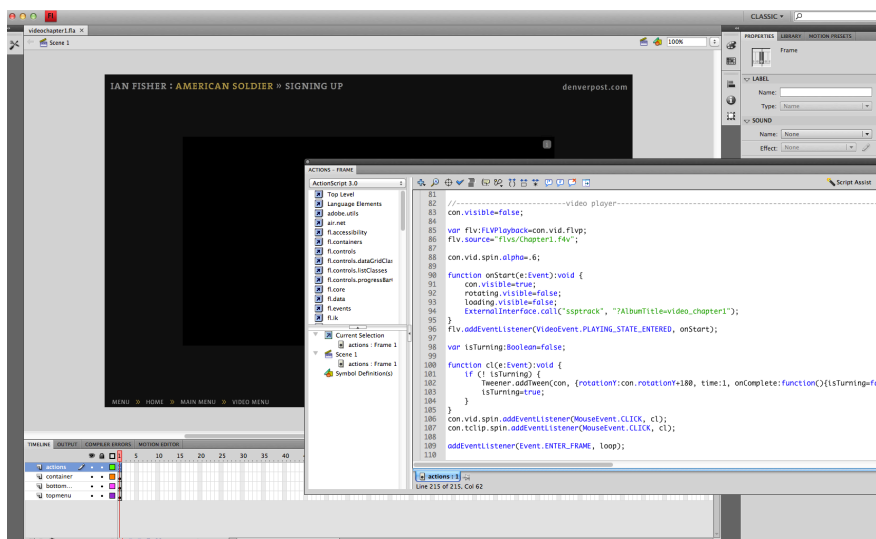
(above) The marker board in my office served as a place to organize and map out the Flash project and all the sections involved. (below) My project folder for the American Solider online presentation.



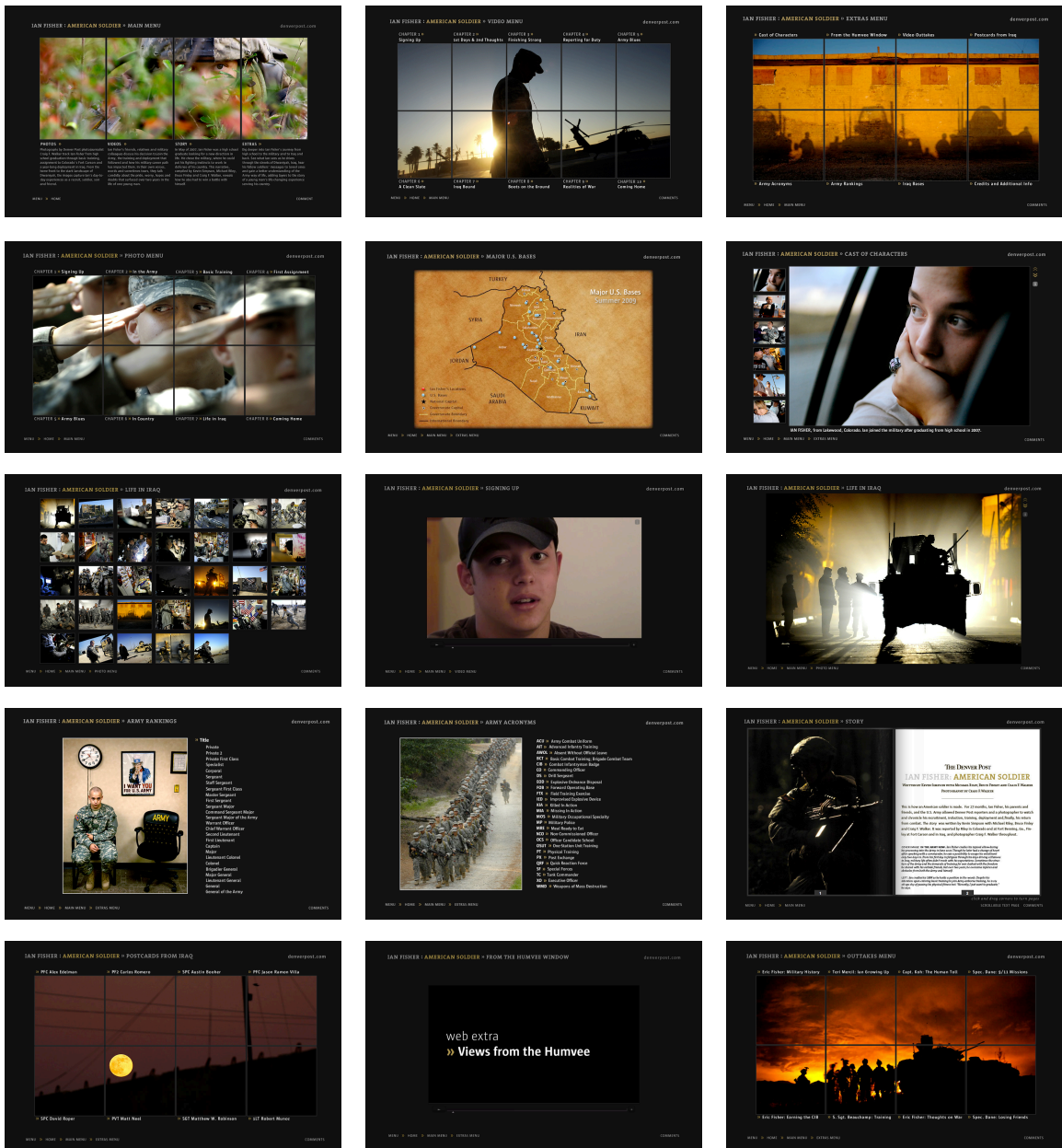
I built the online presentation, Ian Fisher: American Solider, in Flash with Actionscript 3.0 coding language. Each section of the project was its own .swf file. The online slideshows were managed with the SlideShowPro content management system and all information for the photos, including captions, were loaded from SlideShowPro using a Flash component. I built the video player and all the controls from scratch using Actionscript 3.0. I turned the text of the story into an interactive flip book, designing all the pages in Adobe Illustrator.



Screenshots of the Flash dashboard and Actionscript code for the American Soldier project.



The project was launched online in September of 2009. By the end of the year, more than half a million people had visited the website. The project registered more than 1.5 million hits in total traffic. In October 2009, the online project was awarded the Grand Prize in the Editor & Publisher Photos of the Year Contest. It was the first year multimedia entries were judged in the history of the competition.



In April of 2010, Craig Walker's Ian Fisher: American Soldier won the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography. The online presentation was submitted as supporting material in the entry. The print story ran in The Denver Post as a three day special series and was reprinted in seven foreign publications in Europe and Asia.

THE DENVER POST

AMERICAN SOLDIER

ARMY AND IAN FISHER: AN EVOLUTIONARY WAR



Training for Iraq, Ian Fisher faces another war inside himself

Health care, 'head shot' training: Army's focus on soldiers

Adapting to the military pushes young recruit to his limits

Health care, 'head shot' training: Army's focus on soldiers

Adapting to the military pushes young recruit to his limits

THE SATURDAY POST

AMERICAN SOLDIER

ARMY LIFE HITS CLOSE TO HOME



Funds foil Gates plans

Training for Iraq, Ian Fisher faces another war inside himself

Health care, 'head shot' training: Army's focus on soldiers

Adapting to the military pushes young recruit to his limits

Health care, 'head shot' training: Army's focus on soldiers

Adapting to the military pushes young recruit to his limits

THE SUNDAY DENVER POST

AMERICAN SOLDIER

TO WAR AND BACK A NEW OBJECTIVE



Dem rivals round up posses

Health care, 'head shot' training: Army's focus on soldiers

Adapting to the military pushes young recruit to his limits

Health care, 'head shot' training: Army's focus on soldiers

Adapting to the military pushes young recruit to his limits

Ian Fisher: American Soldier remains the biggest online undertaking of my career. If I started building it today, even with all the additional technology lessons I've learned since its publication, I don't think I would have done many things differently. Since the popularity of Flash is fading online, I would have built the project using different software but the content, the editing, the display and the organization would remain mostly the same.

CAPTURED PHOTO BLOG

<http://www.denverpost.com/captured>

July 2008

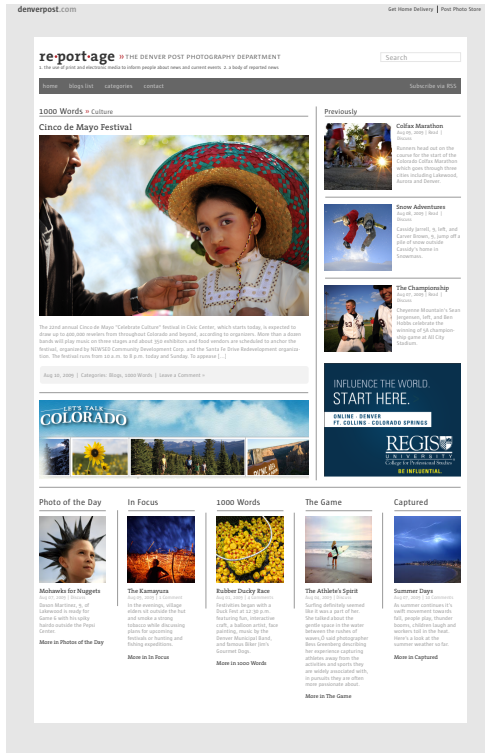
After focusing solely on multimedia projects and special sections of the print newspaper, I began to miss daily photo editing. I asked Online Producer Doug Conarro to create a blog for me to post national and international photo stories. At the time, The Denver Post had a couple of blogs - Reverb, a blog about the local music scene, and a blog by the sports department about the Broncos. Being new to blogging, I asked Doug what a good amount of traffic would be for the blog so I would have a goal. He responded that Reverb did well with about 5,000 hits a month.

Doug created a simple Wordpress blog, which displayed photographs at 900 pixels wide on a black background. Even though the Wordpress system had a built-in SEO package, I had no idea of its importance and I didn't use any of the tools to help increase traffic to the blog. I just started posting, hoping someone would notice, and not sure how to increase the chances that anyone would.

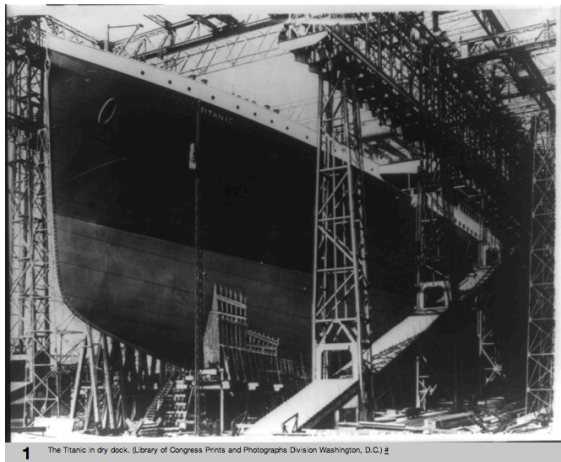
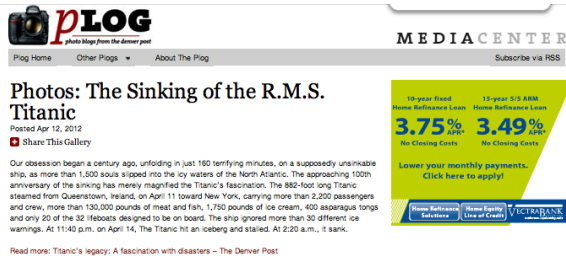
I spent a couple hours a week updating the blog with current world and national events, photo stories and photographer collections. By the end of 2008, after 6 months of posting, the Captured blog had 500,000 total hits, averaging 83,000 a month and becoming the most popular blog on denverpost.com.

I continue to publish the Captured blog a couple times a week. In 2010, I created a new design for the blog, utilizing categories, searching and larger photographs. Mateo Leyba built the theme in Wordpress and that blog display remains the same today.

At the end of 2011, the Captured blog recorded 14 million total hits, 12 million of those unique visitors. It remains the most popular blog on denverpost.com.



(above left) The mock up page for the redesign of the Captured Blog. We toyed with the idea of creating more photography department blogs under a new title but, in the end, we stuck with Captured and created categories within the Captured blog. (below left) A blog post on the Captured Blog as it looks today.



Childhood Poverty in Colorado

<http://www.denverpost.com/childhoodpoverty>

December 2009

In October 2009, census data was released showing that the number of children living in poverty in the state of Colorado had risen by 73 percent from 2000-2006. That jump was the largest percentage increase in the country.

The numbers shocked people in the newsroom. 191,725 kids were growing up with the widespread and long-lasting consequences of poverty - they would be more likely to have poor health, more likely to be involved in crime, and more likely to never earn enough to break the cycle and climb out of poverty.

A reporter was assigned to cover the story, first by reporting the release of the numbers and then by delving a little deeper to put a human face on the statistics. Initially, the reporter found one family, in Denver, to photograph for the story reporting the statistics. The more in-depth story stalled.

Tim was not satisfied with how the newsroom reported the story. He tasked photographer Judy DeHaas with finding eight families living below the poverty line to photograph. We began the project at the beginning of November with a mandate from Tim to publish it online by the end of the year. As the families were picked and six photographers were assigned, we offered the photo stories for print but the word editors were not interested. It was the first major project, originating in the photo department, produced exclusively for the website.

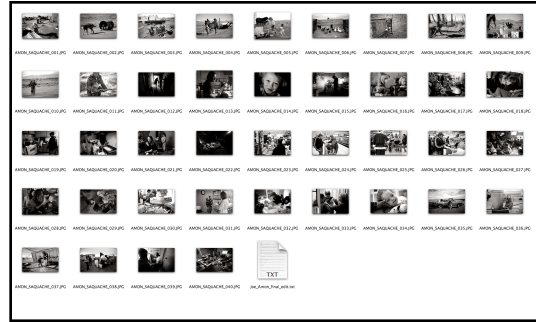
As the photographers fanned out across Colorado to photograph the families, I began building the online piece. Multimedia Photo Editor Eric Lutzens and I created a

plan for including video stories in the project. Because of the time crunch and the distances between the families, we decided that Eric would conduct video interviews with the families and spend a couple days with each family documenting their dailies lives. Eric then dropped the raw video at the newsroom for me to edit.

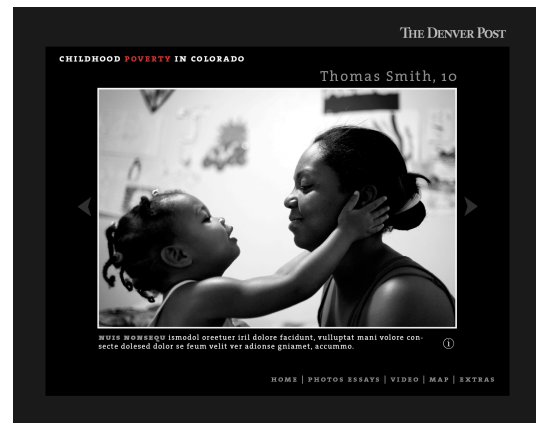
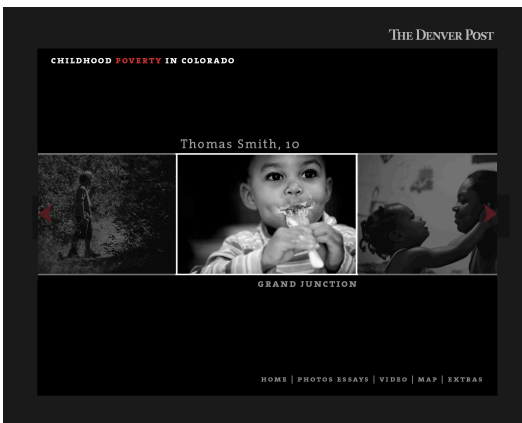
This project also marked the first time we experimented with DSLR video. DSLRs were different from the traditional video cameras we were using because they did not have autofocus capabilities. Eric built a shoulder rig with a waist belt to help steady the cameras, added a focusing ring to keep the lens steady while manually focusing and mounted an oversized video monitor to ensure the sharpness of a subject.



I edited the videos with Final Cut Pro and began building the online Flash presentation with Actionscript 3.0. Included in the project were a photo gallery and video for each family in the story, a list of resources for families and an interactive graphic displaying the newly released poverty numbers for the state of Colorado. The project won the 2009 Sidney Hillman Award and the 2009 Harry Chapin Award. The video stories, shot by Eric Lutzens and edited by me, won The Denver Post its first ever Emmy Award.

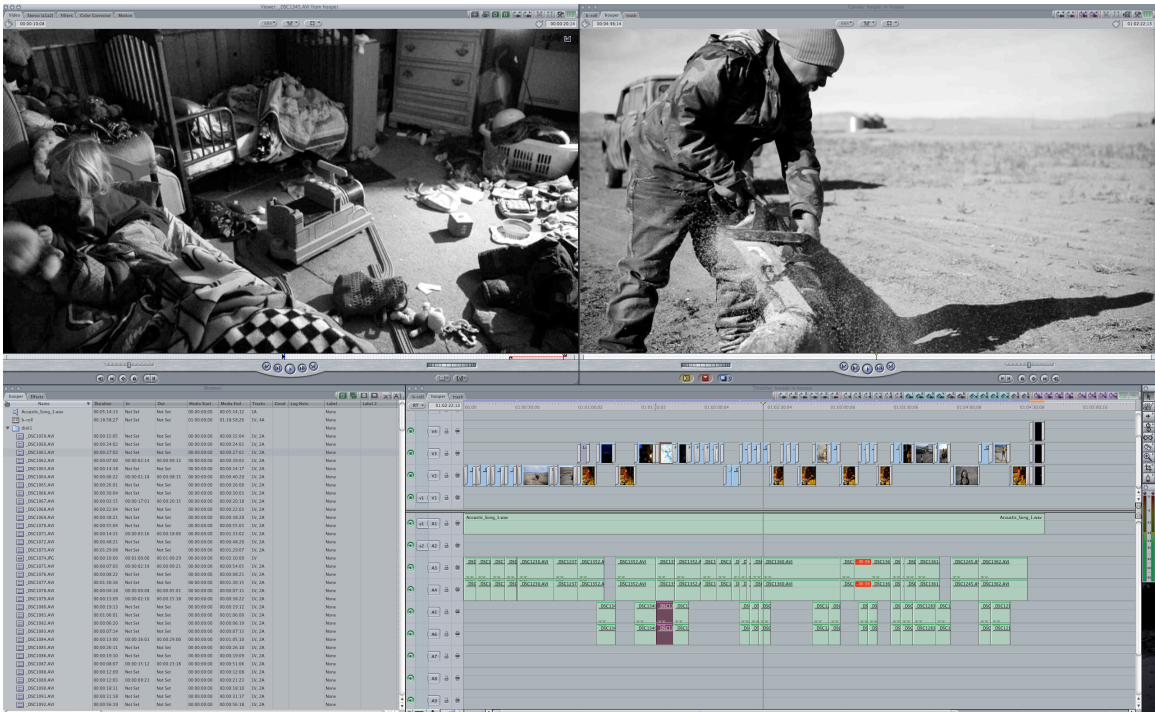
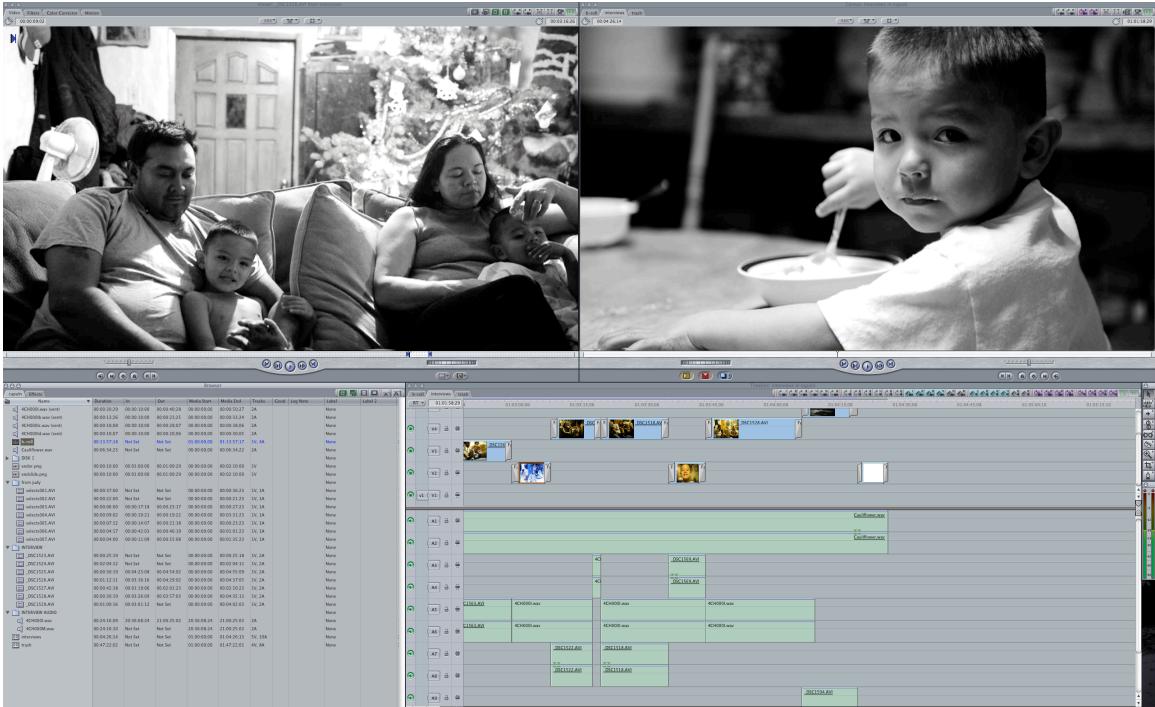


(above left) The initial storyboard for the online project. I used storyboard sheets to help organize the Flash project and name the Flash files. (above right) A folder of photos for one family's slideshow.

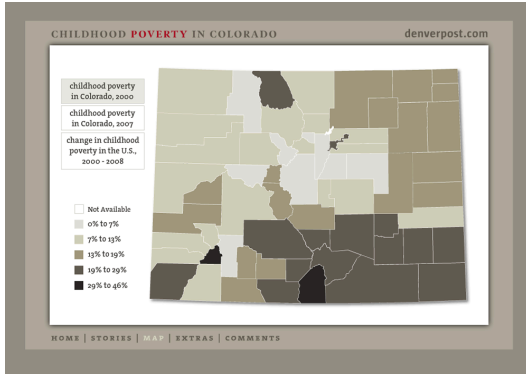


The original design mock-ups for the Childhood Poverty project. Some of the design elements were changed on the final design.





Screen grabs from the video editing process in Final Cut Pro.



The published Childhood Poverty project, including the main menu, the sliding photo gallery menu, the video player, the interactive map and the list of resources.



CHILDHOOD POVERTY IN COLORADO denverpost.com

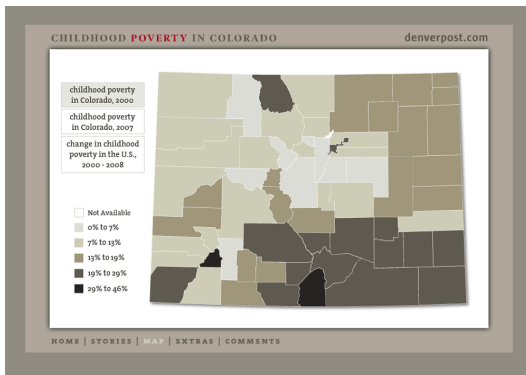
The Atencio Family
An army of poor in Grand Junction

Ron and Vickie Atencio's modest Grand Junction house and an adjacent RV are home to 27 people, including 13 children. The Atencios' three sons - victims of lay-offs in the energy industry - and their families comprise most of the household. The living room transforms into a bedroom at night for many of the children, and fixing meals is an adventure. Alicia Atencio, the wife of one of the sons, said it's like cooking for an army.

Photographs by Reza Marvashti

» PHOTO ESSAY » VIDEO DOCUMENTARY

HOME | STORIES | MAP | EXTRAS | COMMENTS



- CHILDHOOD POVERTY IN COLORADO denverpost.com
- HOW YOU CAN HELP**
- The Colorado agencies listed below are always in need of donations, clothing, household items, food and volunteer time.
- La Gente** Alamosa, contact: 719.587.5604 Website
 - Blue Horizon Thrift Store** Saguache, contact: 719.754.0556
 - Have a heart** Westminster, contact: 303.427.5700 Website
 - Growing Home, Inc.** Westminster, contact: 303.426.0430 Website
 - El Centro de Los Pobres** Avondale, contact: 719.822.0690 or 719.564.9296
 - Metro Organization for People** Denver, contact: 303.909.2453 Website
 - Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition** Denver, contact: 303.993.8500
 - Grand Valley Catholic Outreach** Grand Junction, contact: 970.241.3568
 - Project Common Ground** Grand Junction, contact: 970.254.4090 or 970.254.6086
 - Mary and Martha Ministries Food Pantry** Lamar, contact: 719.336.8958
 - Office Action Center** Lakewood, contact: 303.227.7744
 - Colorado Rural Healthcare Center** Aurora, contact: 303.852.7493 or 800.851.6782 Website
 - Family Tree, House of Hope** Wheat Ridge, contact: 303.422.2153 Website
 - The Kinship Program, Pueblo DSS** Pueblo, contact: 719.253.7905
 - The Salvation Army** Multiple Locations, contact: 303.865.4833 Website
 - Cofesa Community Network** Aurora, contact: 303.660.8775 Website
 - Care and Share Mobile Food Bank** Colorado Springs, contact: 719.528.1247 Website
 - The Crossroads Program, Powers DSS** Lamar, contact: 719.336.7486
 - Sun Valley Youth Center** Denver, contact: 303.727.7180 Website
- HOME | STORIES | MAP | EXTRAS | COMMENTS

SUN VALLEY and DIEGO LEMOS

<http://www.denverpost.com/comebackkid>

<http://www.denverpost.com/sunvalley>

2010

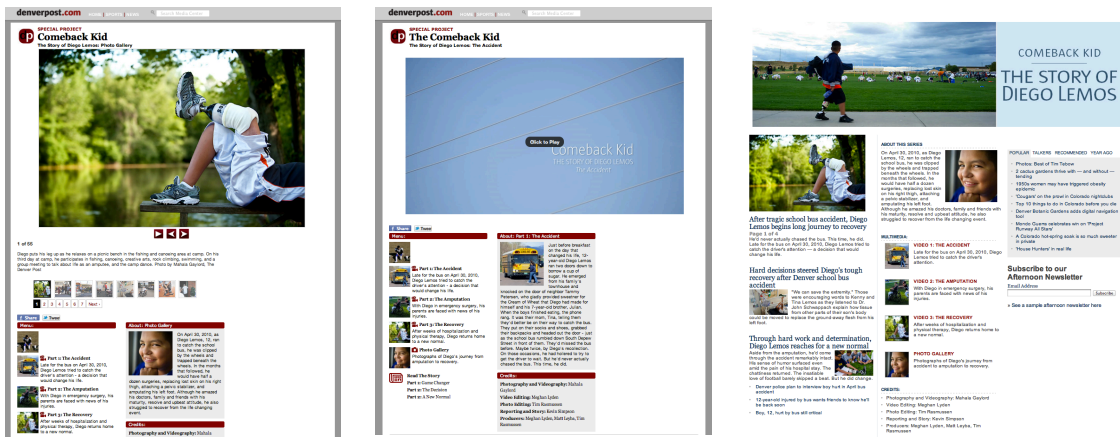
During 2010, I produced two very similar projects for the website, Sun Valley and Comeback Kid: The Story of Diego Lemos. By 2010, we were moving away from building projects with Flash and moving towards housing the projects within the current Wordpress MediaCenter content management system. Projects produced within Wordpress can be viewed on tablets and smartphones with minimal programming adjustments.

On April 30, 2010, as Diego Lemos, 12, ran to catch the school bus, he was clipped by the wheels and trapped beneath the bus. In the months that followed, he would have half a dozen surgeries, replacing lost skin on his right thigh, attaching a pelvic stabilizer, and amputating his left foot. Although he amazed his doctors, family and friends with his maturity, resolve and upbeat attitude, he also struggled to recover from the life changing event.

We did not follow Diego's story as it was happening. About two months after Diego's foot was amputated, reporter Kevin Simpson began talking with the family about the difficult decision to amputate and the resulting recovery process. Newly hired Staff Videographer, Mahala Gaylord, was assigned to collect video and conduct interviews for the online project.

As Mahala interviewed Diego, his family, friends and doctors, I logged the video and began editing together a three part series - the accident, the amputation and the recovery. The photo galleries and videos posted online were housed in MediaCenter. On

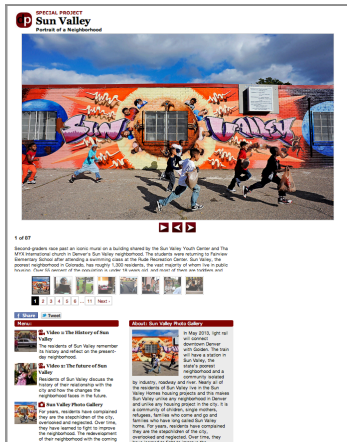
one hand, the programming for the project was minimal - all traffic counters, advertisements, navigation and media players were already built in, but these conveniences came at the expense of the project presentation. This online display method is still currently the way we publish special projects in MediaCenter. Today, we continue to struggle with keeping the convenience but also offering customizable options within MediaCenter.



Sun Valley was published a couple months after Diego’s story in the same manner. In May 2013, light rail will connect downtown Denver with Golden, Colorado, a western suburb. Sun Valley, the state’s poorest neighborhood, is currently isolated by industrial real estate, highways and a river. Nearly all of the residents of Sun Valley live in the Sun Valley Homes housing project. It is a community of children, single mothers, refugees, families who come and go and families who have long called Sun Valley home. The neighborhood has a history of fighting for everything, from a park to increased police patrols in the neighborhood. With a planned light rail station in the neighborhood, the residents are unsure how it will effect the community.

Columnist Tina Griego was writing a three part series on the current state of the community and the challenges facing the neighborhood concerning the light rail

developments and construction. Mahala Gaylord and Tina conducted interviews and collected video from the neighborhood. I edited the video into two parts to tell the story of Sun Valley and its people, while Craig Walker photographed the community. We published the Sun Valley story in the same manner as Diego's story, within MediaCenter's content management system.



In 2011, The Denver Post won Emmy Awards for the video portion of both Comeback Kid and Sun Valley.

WELCOME HOME

<http://www.denverpost.com/welcomehome>

December 2011

In 2011, the photo department set out to photograph a story about the high incidence of PTSD among returning troops from Afghanistan and Iraq. Colorado, and especially the areas surrounding Denver, have a large number of active and retired military service men and women.


Craig Walker found Iraq War veteran Scot Ostrom through a recreational outdoor veterans group. After serving four years as a reconnaissance marine and deploying twice to Iraq, Scott, 27, returned home to the U.S. with a severe case of PTSD. He attributes his PTSD to his second deployment to Iraq, where he served seven months in Fallujah. Since his discharge, Scott struggled with daily life, from finding and keeping employment to maintaining healthy relationships and coming to peace with his actions while deployed in Iraq.

While Craig photographed Scott, Mahala collected video interviews and b-roll for the online video story. Scott's story was difficult to tell because much of it happened in the past. In the video Mahala and I edited, we relied on Scott's own photographs from Iraq and creative b-roll which gave a sense of place to the story.

Welcome Home: The Story of Scott Ostrom received more than two million hits on the photo gallery and the video combined. The photo story I edited won first place Issue Reporting Picture Story in the 69th Pictures of the Year International Competition and was part of Craig Walker's winning Newspaper Photographer of the Year entry. In

April 2012, Craig won the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography for Welcome Home:
The Story of Scott Ostrom.

SPECIAL PROJECT
Welcome Home
Video: The Story of Scott Ostrom



Warning: This video contains strong language and graphic images.

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Menu:

- The Story of Scott Ostrom**
Photo Essay: Nearly five years after being honorably discharged, Scott Ostrom tries to make peace with his military service.
- The Story of Scott Ostrom**
Video: Scott Ostrom discusses his experiences in Iraq and his struggle to deal with PTSD.
- Read The Story**

About: The Story of Scott Ostrom

Brian Scott Ostrom says it's been hard to find meaning in his life since 2007, when he was honorably discharged from the United States Marine Corps. After serving four years as a reconnaissance man and doing his job to the best of his ability, Scott returned home to the U.S. with a severe case of post-traumatic stress disorder. Since his discharge, Scott has struggled with sleep, from finding and keeping a job to maintaining healthy relationships. But most of all, he's struggled to overcome his bad and haunting memories of Iraq. Nearly five years later, Scott remains conflicted by the war. Though he is proud of his service and cares greatly for his fellow Marines, he still cannot quit for things he did - and didn't do - fighting a war he no longer believes in.

Credits:
Photography: Craig F. Walker
Video: Mahala Gayford and Craig F. Walker
Photo Editing: Tim Baerstrom
Video Editing: Kighan Lyden and Mahala

CHAPTER FIVE

The Story of MediaCenter: Using Rich Media to Grow an Online Audience

MediaCenter on denverpost.com was born in 2007 out of a simple desire to organize web content created by the photography department. Today, the website showcases photo galleries, videos, graphics, multimedia special projects, audio and a number of photography blogs. The site has become a valuable piece of denverpost.com, driving web growth for The Denver Post since 2006. Rich media (photography, videography, photo galleries, audio, etc.) on denverpost.com garnered 620,000 hits in 2006. At the end of 2011, MediaCenter's fifth complete year in operation, rich media on the site accounted for more than 100 million page views.

I began working on MediaCenter in 2007 when I was hired by The Denver Post as a Multimedia Photo Editor. I had been studying online multimedia audiences and producing rich media projects for a year prior to joining The Post.

I was hired by Assistant Managing Editor of Photography and Multimedia, Tim Rasmussen. Tim had a vision to increase the online presence and prominence of content produced by the photography department. He had one guiding philosophy about working at a newspaper. "I believe strongly that, at newspapers, you take as much responsibility as you want. Nobody gives you the responsibility," says Rasmussen. Sticking with that theory, we set out to make the photography department an invaluable contributor to denverpost.com.

Photographers and Photo Editors at the newspaper were spending more time developing and producing online content with limited results in growing an audience. “We were still trying to do things that we thought people would be as interested in as we were,” says Mateo Leyba, Rich Media Manager for The Denver Post’s parent company Digital First Media and one of the creators of MediaCenter. “We were only focused on storytelling and making these big multimedia projects. We weren’t focused on the day-to-day and creating simple photo galleries.”

Prior to 2007, special projects or series were designed and organized for the print product. Time, money and newsroom resources were poured into important stories that took months, and sometimes years, to report. Online, the stories were copies of the print product and made little to no use of the storytelling tools unique to the web. In addition, multimedia was an afterthought without adequate planning or involvement in the initial project meetings. As MediaCenter continued to grow, special projects published through the site reached a new audience looking for high-end photojournalism and web storytelling. Online projects, like Ian Fisher: American Soldier, were conceived specifically for the website. Instead of reporting the story for print and adapting it for the web, we conceived and developed the project thinking of the web first. This changed the way we told the story, from how we organized the series to how the viewer interacted with the project.

Before the creation of MediaCenter in 2007, photography, videography and rich, interactive media did not have a home on the website, instead, it floated from article page

to article page, acting as secondary content to the written word. Visual storytelling was not a priority which was evident on the website.

The immediate challenge the photography department faced was how to make the existing technology in the newsroom work for us. As the department began to create and publish rich media on a regular basis, links to the projects were collected on an article page built and housed within the content management system (CMS) used by the online department to populate denverpost.com. DASH, as the CMS is called, was developed in 2003, before Facebook, Twitter and the world of social media existed and well before the launch of Wordpress, the most popular blogging software in the world. It was quickly apparent that the in-house technology available in the newsroom was incapable of properly showcasing rich media.

“It is hard now because we are working with a MacGyver, duck tape, bubblegum website version. Our online system was developed by our parent company, MediaNews Group, in 2003. To put some context to that, that is before Facebook debuted and well before Wordpress,” says Daniel Petty, Social Media Editor for The Post.

At first, we tried to build our own rich media publishing tools, like slideshow and audio players, video players, and interactive Flash projects. We had some success, growing our views from 620,000 hits in 2006 to 2.9 million in 2007, but building these tools and manually coding each project was time intensive and inefficient. For each video, slideshow or project, about a quarter of the time it took to create the project was spent publishing to the website. Traffic counters and searchable data was manually coded

into the players and pages. “We had no one giving us tools to publish so we had to build our own tools and that involved learning how and that takes up a lot of time,” says Leyba.

The key to MediaCenter’s success was moving the content outside of the outdated newsroom content management system and into free or very inexpensive systems available online. We employed SlideShowPro to organize and manage all our photos for slideshows and multimedia projects. We abandoned Flash in favor of a Wordpress blog with a custom theme and search engine optimization. With these changes, everyone in the photography department became an online content producer. No longer were specialized coding skills a requirement to publish content on the website. As Leyba explains it, “We made our content visible to search engines and to the world. That is the biggest thing. We were never worried about that before. We were worried about putting links from denverpost.com to our content.”

The quantity and quality of content can become the highest priority once a photography department embraces user friendly, search engine optimized and easily updatable publishing tools. Viewers respond to quality content that is consistently updated. MediaCenter features local, national and international photography. We publish approximately twenty photo galleries a day, showcasing both staff and wire photographs. Every gallery is curated by photo editors in the photography department.

“I think that the reason we have been so successful with that is that visual people have created MediaCenter. It’s been created by people with photography backgrounds, photojournalism backgrounds,” says Senior Photo Editor Ken Lyons. “Our photo galleries are the best I’ve seen anywhere. I really do think we do them better than

anybody. I think we do more of them and they are better quality. They are edited well and have great subject matter. We have a great photo blog. We found a way to create an audience for local photography but we've also created an audience for national and international photography which is what is getting cut in the paper.”

Once an audience is established, content producers must give viewers a reason to keep coming back to the site. At The Denver Post, we did this by focusing on the speed with which photo galleries are posted, paying close attention to what the audience is searching for, emphasizing the correct search terms and keywords for each MediaCenter post and by prioritizing and planning multimedia content collection from the onset of long-term projects and special reports.

When he arrived at The Post, Rasmussen set out to redefine photography department positions, especially the imaging tech positions, so that everyone participated in the online mission. “When I first got here, in the first staff meeting that I had, my stated goal for this department was to save every job that we had. The way to do that was to be so valuable to the organization, that when it came time to let people go, when it came time to get smaller, which we will continue to get smaller, the photo department is not seen as a department that is making snaps for these word editors but that the photo department was involved in every aspect of the website, then that photo department would be left alone,” says Rasmussen.”

Rasmussen focused the department on quality content. “We don't do things just for traffic. If you dumb down your content... your audience is not dumb. The audience that uses our website is very astute to what is on the web. If they see crap, they aren't

going to come back again. Now, if you produce all highfalutin galleries, they won't stay for that either. There is a balance. We have a philosophy that the viewers of our website are as varied as the people in our community," says Rasmussen.

"A lot of papers have done away with their imaging jobs," adds Lyons. "Tim was great at finding a way to teach those people new skills and, in a lot of ways, making them a version of a photo editor, building galleries. Those things are generating traffic. You don't have them just toning pictures for a news hole that is shrinking. You have them building all these galleries."

Newspaper websites place a huge emphasis on speed in posting written breaking news. This should be true for the visual storytelling as well. When local, national or international news breaks, a photo gallery should be posted as quickly as the story. In the minutes after a story breaks, our online audience comes to MediaCenter for the visual report. The speed with which photos and videos are published is the difference between a few thousands clicks and a hundred thousand clicks. Videographers are dispatched to breaking news events to produce quick, short videos to be posted immediately online and then, if needed, to produce a more in-depth video for publication later in the day.

In May of 2006, Google released its trend reports as a way to visualize and project the popularity of Google searches over time. The department began relying on the trend reports in 2009 as a way to better understand what the online audience was searching for. Photo gallery producers check the trend report multiple times a day for ideas on new galleries and the producers use SEO to make sure the audience finds our posts based on the search terms used.

Early on in the life of MediaCenter, we realized the power of social media and the opportunities to grow our audience with content sharing. Every photo gallery, video and special project is accompanied by social media buttons in prominent positions on the page. People trust recommendations from their online network of friends because their friends have similar interests and backgrounds. Those recommendations bring new viewers to MediaCenter and continue to increase the audience of the website.

Perhaps the most important outcome in the creation of the MediaCenter is the value it has added to The Denver Post's online news report. "It has definitely helped the photo department's prominence in the decisions made for budget and personnel," says Rasmussen. "Everyone in the photo department participates in the multimedia effort. One of the key parameters for us is that we are able to replace imaging positions as people leave now because they understand the online photo gallery effort. The total photo department effort accounts for 13.5% of the overall traffic and that number is amazing when you consider that the overall traffic for the site has grown in the 40-50% range, year over year, every year since I got here."

Building an online audience for rich media on a newspaper website increases the value of the photography department in the newsroom. Everyone in The Denver Post's photography department is a content producer, including the photo editors and the imaging technicians, and is an essential contributor to the digital operation of the newsroom. Lyons echoes the philosophy held when we began, "We haven't waited for mandates from above about here's what we have to do. We have been proactive about

thinking ahead. I think the papers that fail at it are the papers who have no say or they wait too long to be proactive. Tim doesn't give away responsibility. It's so important."

In an age where display space for photographs in the print paper is decreasing, the possibilities for online storytelling are endless. Places like MediaCenter offer photography departments a way to connect with audiences who are hungry for rich media content.

APPENDIX

I. INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Interviewees

Damon Cain, Managing Editor for Presentation and Design, The Denver Post
Damon has worked at the Post since 2002 and supervises presentation and design of the print edition.

Tim Rasmussen, Asst. Managing Editor for Photography and Multimedia, The Denver Post
Tim has managed the photography department since 2005. He is responsible for photography in print and on denverpost.com and manages a staff including photo editors, photographers, videographers and digital photo editors.

Mateo Leyba, Rich Media Technology Manager, Digital First Media
Matt was a Senior Photo Editor in the photography department before being promoted to Rich Media Technology Manager for Digital First Media which manages a group of over 100 newspapers. Matt helped develop Mediacenter for denverpost.com and was later responsible for Mediacenter's deployment across all Digital First Media properties.

Ken Lyons, Senior Photo Editor, The Denver Post
Ken came to The Denver Post from The Orlando Sentinel in 2005. He is responsible for photography in the print edition of the newspaper.

Dan Petty, Social Media Editor, The Denver Post
Dan was hired by The Denver Post after establishing the Post's Facebook and Twitter presence as an intern. He is responsible for all Social Media and was promoted to Digital First Media's Engagement Team to help train and foster social media involvement across all DFM properties.

Don Pavlin, Digital Photo Editor, The Denver Post
Don began working at The Denver Post as an Imaging Technician for the print edition. His job description was changed in 2006 to include responsibilities for photo gallery creation on denverpost.com.

J. DAMON CAIN

Managing Editor for Presentation and Design, The Denver Post

CAIN My job title is Managing Editor for Presentation and Design. Try to fit that on a door.

LYDEN How long have you been here?

CAIN September 2002. So I have been here for 9 years.

LYDEN What are your job responsibilities?

CAIN I manage the visual report through department heads in photo, graphics, design and news copy desk.

LYDEN Since 2002, in terms of the photography department, can you talk a little bit about how your job has changed? What was the photography department like in 2002?

CAIN What it was like was print. We had a lot of space in the paper back in the day. We had a lot of advertisers. Our circulation was bigger. We had more elbow room. But at the same time, we were misusing the room that we did have. We were playing pedestrian photos six columns because, oh, well, we had the space, instead of judging the photo report for that particular page or that particular sections in and of itself. It wasn't a very sophisticated approach to photos. When I came to interview for the job, a photo editor handed over five photos to a designer and I happened to standing there and getting a sense of the operation. The photo editor walked away and I asked a designer, 'What is that all about? What's the process? Explain that to me.' The designer said, 'Well, the photo editor did a photo edit on this particular story. It was a wire story. This is an inside page but I have some room. I wanted to see all the photos and she gave me all the photos so I could see which photos fit the design.' And I said, 'Oh.' So that clearly indicated to me that there was a problem here on at least that level. At the same time, we didn't have any photo galleries. We didn't have any online presence other than, here's the top story of the day and we would have a photo. That was it. That was the extent of our photo report online. So, after making a couple of attempts to get that moving, knowing, really, everyone could see the landscape of the industry. Even back in 2002, we were talking about cutbacks. We were talking about reduced space. So we knew that the space was going to be retracted. There was going to be less space in the paper for great photojournalism even after doing the work we needed to do in training photo editors to photo edit tightly and get the photos played appropriately. Even then, we knew we were going to be losing space, losing part of the visual report. We knew that we needed to make inroads to online. I wasn't happy with where we were going and the progress or lack there of and, yet, there were people on staff who were very anxious and eager to do

more online and not just photo galleries but with video. I had one guy who just went out and started shooting video and started editing it and figuring it out. He went over and talked to 9News to understand better how to tell a story with video. But that was a lot of self-initiated kind of stuff. But we knew we wanted to do that. We weren't getting anywhere and that's when I brought Tim in. Tim is a hard charger but he told me, he said, 'I don't know if I can fix both print and online.' I suspected that he could just looking at his work and talking with people and figuring out how he delegates. I figured he could get this done and he, of course, brought in a lot of really great people as well, which increased our visual IQ, increased our knowledge on how to get things done. That first winter that Tim was here, we essentially launched our photo galleries. We had a big winter storm that rolled through in late December and we thought this a good time to test how many people are paying attention to us online so let's get some photo galleries up of weather. Everybody loves weather photos. And we were high-fiving and thinking we found the cure for cancer. I think over the period of three days we got 12,000 page views which was infinitely better than what we had done previously which was zero. So, we were very happy and we knew that people wanted this and 12,000 today is like a drop in the bucket, it's a pedestrian photo gallery for us now. So that was the landscape that we saw when we got here.

LYDEN Can you talk about where we are now? What have we concentrated on going from that point?

CAIN It's become a multimedia department. We do print, we do video, we do galleries, we do blogs. We've now gone out and gotten an interactive graphic artist, who is trying to set up frameworks that make it easier for everyone to participate in this grand endeavor. We have become more visually rich and responsive to how readers consume information. We don't have a preference for print, tab, mobile, online - they are all equal, I think. We just want to focus on getting good storytelling up and taking chances. And we do that. Some of our stuff is very sophisticated. The work that we did on American Soldier, which in print, won a Pulitzer but the online presentation was just as fabulous. It was very interactive and there were story you could follow as well as the stories you could see in print. It also allowed us to do more than what print was ever going to be able to do. Not just the volume but the video, hearing the voice, seeing Ian talk to us, added two or three more layers to the storytelling and that's what online, electronic disbursement of our information can do. But it still comes back to good storytelling. Your blog is wonderful. It takes me into archives or into stories more deeply than what I can get with the typical photo gallery or the typical two, if you're lucky, photos we can get in the paper now. That's just not enough for me. I tend to be more of a visual consumer of information. So, that is kind of where we are. We still have lots of challenges ahead. How do we do more storytelling? I've long wondered, is it a good enough photo gallery if we just throw up photos and let the readers find what they like or should we be more thoughtful with the photo galleries where we have a chance to order the photos so that I

get a sense of story and plot by following the photo edit in the gallery? It seems like there is an opportunity there to do more cogent photo editing.

LYDEN I think in the past couple years, there is a difference between a regular gallery, where it's show me every picture you have of something and then there's the photo narrative where you use the captions and the editing to tell the story.

CAIN I agree, wholeheartedly.

LYDEN Sometimes, I just want to see all the photos and other times, I want to understand better. I understand Occupy Denver but there are other times when you are introduced to someone new or a new story and you want to understand better.

CAIN The protest gets dry after one day. I want to be taken further. Like, here are two or three people and I'm going to tell you their story. This had been laid off from a really good tech job and now he's down here on his own... You know? Tell me his story. I want to see how he lives out there day-to-day. That takes us more visually into his story. Whether or not that is something that will generate interest online? I don't know. But you find out in a hurry online.

LYDEN Since I've been here, the relationship between the photos in the paper and the photos online is different. When I first started, we tended to think of the print audience and the online audience as the exact same thing. People were going to read the paper and you put a link that says, go here for more pictures, and then people put down their paper and go online for more pictures. Do you feel like we view it the same anymore.

CAIN I don't have any evidence, any marketing information that indicates that there is a great carryover between one of the other. Back in 2007, when we did a modest update to the design of the paper, we built in a lot of pointers to what we are doing online. I don't have any sense that those are doing us any good whatsoever. I think they are pretty distinct audiences. I think there are people who consume it all - who read the paper, who get their iPad on the train in the morning and read headlines or read a story or read something a little deeper on the way home, who use their iPhones for quick kind of stuff - breaking news, calling a buddy, tweeting - and I think we don't really have... We haven't really embraced the concept that each of these devices, each of these channels, is a different experience for our users. We have to, in my humble estimation, understand that and structure our newsroom and our reports to feed that. I don't want us to regurgitate everything in the paper for each of the platforms. We don't know that people aren't consuming differently. Breaking news on your cell phone - absolutely - alerts, tweets - absolutely. But the longer story? I just don't think people are reading long stories on their iPhones. It's too difficult to begin with. It's hard on the eyes. But the tablet gives us more of, quite frankly, a magazine linear approach to storytelling. It gives us a little bit richer environment for photo storytelling. But we're not there yet. We don't clearly understand

that as a newsroom and right now, we're just throwing up everything on all of the devices. Likewise, I think the print product has to be something different. We do not break news in the paper anymore, folks. Let's stop pretending we do. We might have an exclusive that nobody else has, we may have a special report that nobody else has and print is very good for those things. But breaking news? Throw it online. For your work station, for your cell phone - absolutely. But not so much for print anymore. Let's open up print for something different - something more thoughtful, something more impactful where we can drill down on a topic rather than having another school board meeting or arraignment or shooting or your typical breaking news fare.

LYDEN So what do you think holds us back from doing that? Why don't we do that?

CAIN Culture. Culture of a newsroom. Defining what we're going to get done on each platform and your role in that - I think everyone has to understand what we have to get done and then understand what your role is. If we explain that and they embrace that... and a lot of that bubbles up. We want folks to tell us what we should be doing as well. Once we figure that out, we have to pursue that religiously and dare to be great.

LYDEN Do you think the role of the photo department has changed more than the other departments in the newsroom?

CAIN I think the photo department is leading the way. Here's the dirty little secret on why photo has been so successful online. We went from 12,000 over three days to owning, on average, about 20-25% of all traffic to the website. That is stunning. The dirty little secret behind that is that no one was looking over our shoulder - unlike the paper, unlike the front page where you have five editors weighing in, not only on which photo you are going to run but how big the photo is going to go and where it's going to go on the page. Online - you don't have that. We can do photo galleries that editors here wouldn't see forever and I think that was part of our success. We didn't have any inhibitions. We tried everything. We didn't have anyone telling us how to do our work. Let's experiment. Let's try.

LYDEN I think, too, that we did it at the right time. Say we hadn't done anything and we tried to start today if we would be able to do what we did starting 4 or five years ago.

CAIN I don't know if I agree with that because, to this day, the culture of newsrooms, every newsroom, not just this newsroom, is nowhere near where it needs to be to make the kind of progress that needs to be made. To this day we still have editors gathered around the 1A Mac looking at what we are doing tomorrow. Not one of them is asking about what we are doing online. Conversations are all about what are the stories? What are the photos within the frameworks of how we are playing them on the front page. We can't even talk about how we play things in DTW or sports but thankfully, you look at the sports design and the photo play in sports is much better in sports because we have an

editor who likes photos to be played well so we have more room to do our business. We don't have a whole lot of editors looking over shoulders in sports, consequently, in my humble estimation, that's why it's better. We have fewer filters to go through. We have fewer compromises to make. The fewer compromises the better.

LYDEN What do you take the next step is now that we have built an online audience for photos?

CAIN I think we still need to connect with communities. People who are born and raised in Colorado or move here, largely because of lifestyle - you have these gorgeous mountains, the outdoor opportunities here are endless. When Joe Amon caught a wonderful photo out on assignment - the photo was of a fellow fly fishing and here comes a bull elk behind him and Joe caught it - that photo gallery got a lot of play online. There is a community out there that loves that stuff. We already know there is a community for the Broncos. I think we need to be better editors to identify those .

LYDEN So, by community, you mean interest group?

CAIN Yes. A community of interest. What resonates with our audience. And I think we need to stop doing some of the smaller stuff. We do a gallery or a project and it gets 10,000 hits. That's not good enough anymore. What the market is telling us is that we might be able to give that up, put more of that effort into the outdoors, put more of the effort into the Broncos and maybe our numbers go up exponentially. I don't know but that's my gut instinct.

LYDEN But at the same time, do you still want to balance that kind of stuff with the stories that need to be told. We didn't know what was going to happen with Ian. We didn't have numbers on how many people were interested in the military lifestyle but we still committed time to Ian.

CAIN I think we had a hunch it would resonate. That touched a lot of people's lives, the soldier, the high school classmates, the family, the veterans, people for and against the war. There was a broad audience for that story. Thank God we had an editor who said, 'Keep shooting.' We stuck with that dang thing for 27 months. That resonated. At a time of war when you are undecided as a country as to whether or not you should be involved in foreign wars - and the war at that time was not going well at all - that's why we asked the question, 'Who the hell would want to go to war.' I think we were smart and let's give ourselves some credit. I think we were smart about that story. You have to do stories that are important but be careful of the arrogance of sitting in an office in downtown Denver and thinking you know what is important for readers. That's the great thing about online. You get immediate feedback and they are going to tell you what is important to them. And then how do we tell the a story that is interesting to them? We can sit here all day and believe in our hearts that coverage of the Denver City Council is important and you

know what? I think that what is important is how we teach our kids or educational reform or whether or not we have enough money, but that meeting is not important. But we cover the meeting rather than the bigger issues.

LYDEN When you talk about it only in terms of numbers, I think you risk falling into the trap of having a websites filled solely with content that will get tons of traffic but not necessarily the well-rounded content that your readers need.

CAIN I struggle with that, quite frankly. I don't look at cheerleader galleries but a lot of people do. We know that. It is a part of people's lives that I don't understand.

LYDEN I don't necessarily have a problem with the cheerleader gallery but I think there should be a balance.

CAIN Right. My point is let's be thoughtful about the menu items. We can't be a paper of record anymore with our resources here. Just because we have electronic channels now, that doesn't turn us into a paper of record overnight. We don't have the resources to do everything. We need to talk about what resonates.

LYDEN I think newsroom still have a problem thinking about the website as a different platform. Instead of thinking of content produced for the website, some of the culture in newsrooms is to just think of the website as another platform to distribute the print information. How do you think we move away from that? In terms of photo, how do you move towards creating content with online as a priority and not as the platform that gets the leftovers from the paper?

CAIN I think we struggle with that primarily because up until a couple years ago we were hiring people from traditional newspaper print backgrounds. So they went about their jobs as if we were only concerned with print. Now, they have not learn, not only new skills but a different way of going about doing their job. We shouldn't regurgitate a tory across different platforms. We aren't all thinking like that yet. Some people are still thinking, newspaper first, website second. We're not turning a second day story around for the paper. We're not protecting the value of our paper with exclusive material. It is the simplest question that has been asked time and time again - if you continue to give away all your content for free, why would anyone want to buy the paper. You are taking the value away. It has no value. We have to make it special. The reading experience with print is still a wonderful experience but what are we giving folks to read that they haven't found anyplace else? Where photo goes next, I am not clear. I wish videos did better and they're not doing so well. The galleries should tell us something. People still like seeing their news. We are a very visual society and people like to linger over still photographs. Go out and take a coffee break and watch someone read the paper and they are not reading deep because they're on a break and they are looking at headlines and looking at pictures. Reading a photo is a wonderful experience. I still think we have work to do

getting the right photos in the paper and telling the photo story online. I think we should be more thoughtful putting galleries together. I think the galleries can be better presented. I'm not crazy about our type. Even Steve Jobs knew typography was important. I think you make the reading experience more luscious when you treat our typography with respect. That's the exciting thing about online is that there's still that ability to experience and create without a bevy of editors over your shoulder. There's still a wonderful freedom in that. But do we have enough people with the mindset, the training and skill set to do that in abundance? And right now, we don't.

TIM RASMUSSEN

Assistant Managing Editor, Photography, The Denver Post

RASMUSSEN I am the Assistant Managing Editor for Photography and Multimedia at the The Denver Post. I manage and direct the coverage for photos in print and online as well as video and multimedia projects online.

LYDEN How long have you been here?

RASMUSSEN Four and a half years. Before this I was at the South Florida Sun-Sentinel.

LYDEN Can you talk about multimedia at the Sun-Sentinel.

RASMUSSEN When I first got there in 2002, I was the Director of Photography and there was absolutely no engagement in the internet whatsoever. In early 2003, the head of the graphics department and my boss, Jeff Glick, built a microsite called the Edge to house multimedia content including Flash driven interactive graphics, slideshows and multimedia pieces which would include videos, graphics and photos.

LYDEN So, when he first built that, did he plan for photos to be included from the beginning?

RASMUSSEN Absolutely. Right after I got there, they came to me with the idea to have photo essays posted right there with the content they had been doing there for a few years but Tribune, as a company, and the Sun-Sentinel, as an interactive department, refused to post any of that content on their servers. So, Don Wittiken, who was the graphics director at the time, built the Edge, posted it on his home server and then linked to it from sun-sentinel.com. So, it was branded sun-sentinel.com, it looked like sun-sentinel.com but it was posted outside the building. We got traffic for it. It was counted but advertising on it came much, much later. In the beginning, there as no interest at all from Tribune to do that. As a matter of fact, to this day, there is no interest in Tribune to do that. They killed it completely in 2007 before I left but they brought it back in a small effort. They refused to put anything in Flash on any of their websites. A number of people in their other companies did the same thing and the Los Angeles Times convinced them to allow it but most tribune papers, Flash was nonexistent after 2007.

LYDEN So viewers went to The Edge for projects, but for slideshows, in general, where did they go?

RASMUSSEN Slideshows were produced using the Tribune CMS called Oxygen and we did make some inroads into them while I was there. During major news events, the head of the editorial side of the internet... there were two sides. There was the business side,

Tribune Interactive, and then there was the editorial side and a guy named Dave Blackwell and Blackwell gave me his password. So, I was able to go in and to create galleries and update galleries with staff photos for the first time. I did that during the hurricane seasons of 2004 and 2005 but on a daily basis we had absolutely no involvement in it. Once we got an Oxygen password, we were able to hack into it and put some Soundslides up. During the Haiti crisis, I put up Soundslides of photos and audio they would send me over the satellite phone. We were able to put up some daily stuff but not very easily. In 2006, the photo editors got some access to the galleries and I don't know what they are doing now. I know that they didn't want the photo department to create photojournalist style galleries to take away from their T&A galleries that were driving their traffic. At the Sun-sentinel a high percentage of their traffic was coming from their galleries. They would have galleries that got in the millions of page views and they were things like Olympic Goddess which was nothing but a bunch of photographs of Volleyball players' butts. Their concern was... and I wasn't allowed to use the term journalism with Tribune Interactive management. they were concerned that we would hurt their traffic by putting up photojournalistic style galleries.

LYDEN What about video?

RASMUSSEN Daily video we started the year before I left. They actually put me in charge of video with a couple caveats - that I could speak about journalism and that there would be a balance between myself and Tribune Interactive videographers. We were able to do a lot more daily video. We did really well. I was credited, and I'm not sure why, with getting the plays up to 750,000 a month a few months before I left. A lot of that came from the fact that the videos we were producing were very much breaking news and we were integrating two different television studios videos onto our homepage player and because the South Florida market was built around breaking news and breaking news was a lot of what we produced. But some of them weren't. I remember one video got 1.2 million play sin a day and it was a security camera that showed two youths beating a homeless man with a bat and the man died. So, that kind of video that you capture with surveillance cameras or something you capture with a little handheld video camera - that kind of stuff was really driving their traffic.

LYDEN When you came here, what were the expectations for photography online?

RASMUSSEN The reason I came here was that the job title had multimedia in the title. The job posting was all about a photo department and a multimedia department and when I interviewed, I met with the then-Managing Editor for Online, Mark Cardwell, who had enough going on in his life that he didn't have any people or effort left for multimedia so he told me that I could have it all and that it would become ours. So I wanted to build a department that was both a great photojournalism department but also produced great daily multimedia at a level that this paper had never done. The gate was wide open for me to walk in a take multimedia completely as a photo department effort.

LYDEN What were they doing when you got here?

RASMUSSEN Nothing really. the photo department had produced a couple things. They had completed a project eh year earlier but they had paid an outside groups to produce the Flash part. It was pretty weak but the stuff inside was good. It was just that hey had paid an outside group to create this goofy Flash part. Matt [Leyba] and Eric [Lutzens] had done a couple video projects, one of the closing of a bar, but there wasn't daily stuff. They were all independent and they were never placed well. There were no galleries that were staff produced. We would pick up galleries from other papers. When I got here in 2006, the total page views was in the neighborhood of 600,000 for photo galleries for the entire year. The galleries were created by other MediaNews Group companies. There were very few galleries from the Denver Post staff.

LYDEN So there was nothing local?

RASMUSSEN On occasion, they would do a local one. There was this one event that would get a few thousand views a year and there was a guy that built a tank out of a tractor and ran over city hall and that got some page views but for the most part there wasn't a process, there wasn't a player. when they did do it, it was more for an extraordinary events and it didn't garner any real traffic or presence on the site.

LYDEN So what did you do when you got here?

RASMUSSEN When I interviewed, I realized that Matt Leyba had huge potential and huge talent. So, I got here in December and by January, Matt had built a photo gallery player. We built a process that, at the time, involved the seven image techs producing daily photo galleries and posting them into daily players. We had a News Pictures of the Day, an Entertainment Pictures of the Day and a Day in Pictures that was Colorado. Matt also built independent Flash players for video. for the most part, our videos were going up one at a time, manually coded in Flash players. Our first video was from the 420 smoke-out over in the park when I looked out the window and saw a thousand people smoking dope, grabbed two video cameras and gave them to two staff photographers, showed them how to turn them on and sent them over there. Oh god, for us, it was a huge amount. I think it got 150,000 plays right away and it was like, 'Wow. That was interesting.' But it was really a pain to build a process because each video that was posted had to be manually coded into a Flash player and manually placed on a page. It was within the first year that we got the Maven video player and that was great because Maven allowed us to post a video without going into Flash code.

LYDEN Who was doing the video?

RASMUSSEN When we first started, we sent four people to the Norman, Oklahoma video workshop. We sent photographers who wanted to do video. We sent an imager who wanted to edit video. Within eighteen months of me getting here we had reconfigured a couple people's job positions to shoot video but when I first got here we didn't buy equipment until the second year. Then we bought a lot of equipment that allowed us to do it. We had four people cross-trained and outfitted so that they could do video. Daily video, we didn't do until the second year.

LYDEN How long was Mark [Cardwell, Online Editor] here?

RASMUSSEN Two years.

LYDEN So there was an understanding that you could do what you wanted and he would help if he could?

RASMUSSEN I believe strongly that, at newspapers, you take as much responsibility as you want. Nobody gives you the responsibility. When I first got here, I wrote a number of memos to the top Editors saying this is what I want to do and I redefined the entire department as a multimedia department including video. I wrote down a list of requirements I would need to make this a full multimedia staff. We didn't get any of those positions. We got the equipment but not the positions and we've had to make what positions we have work in both arenas. We actually sat down with all the players and Cardwell completely supported our desire to be responsible for all rich media on the site.

LYDEN How did people's jobs change?

RASMUSSEN Well, we've created multimedia photo editing positions. The imaging staff... at the time there was eight when I first got here. Now there are four. Within the first six months, we redefined the job, rewrote the job description to include photo gallery editing and posting and they got a salary increase so we could ask them to do that job without any union questions. So, that position no longer is just straight imaging which was a production job. Now it's photo gallery editing. They do the production of the gallery as well as the print imaging everyday. We have converted two of the photo editing positions to multimedia photo editing positions and Matt Leyba was promoted to Senior Photo Editor for Multimedia from Photo Systems Editor. We also tried to integrate multimedia in to all positions from the assignment desk to Ken's [Lyons] projects. The older dogs are harder to teach new tricks. The younger folks get it immediately but the older guys get it but it's harder for them to make the translation from a print story idea and what it could mean online and then to raise the awareness to that in a timely enough manner to where we can affect it. That's a process we're still working on and actually it's getting better. In the last month or so, Ken has been noticing potential stories and then alerting the right people a lot faster than he ever did before.

LYDEN How do you think we've built an audience.

RASMUSSEN Initially we didn't have an audience. At all. We have grown the audience in part by being consistent in what we put out. On a daily basis we have the four best of picture galleries that are updated throughout the day, starting in the morning and going all the way to the night. That is a huge difference. In 2006, the year that I arrived, we had 620,008 total page views for everything rich media on the site. Last year, we had 49 million. So, in a very short period of time, we have grown an audience and that audience comes back repeatedly as we've seen in the galleries but also in the photo blog and now even in video. The second year we went from 628,000 to 29 million. A lot of that had to do with prominence and presence on the site. Instead of galleries being the occasional article page thing that went with an Academy Awards story or some other story, we were producing a stream of content everyday across the board. In 2007, we took a space on the homepage where we could have photo galleries prominently displayed right below the top story on the page. We did it first with an animated gif and then as a Flash rotator and we saw a huge increase in traffic immediately. That's how we went from 628,000 to 29 million based on that rotator because that rotator offered up a serendipitous mix of content on a page with a lot of other things. It was pretty much the only thing that moved on the page and we saw a large percentage early on, maybe 80% of people that got to our photo galleries got there because of that rotator because there was no SEO, there was no searching because it was all in Flash. What we noticed in 2008 and 2009 and to today is that people have bookmarked us. And so, for the four generations of MediaCenter design that we've gone through since 2007, people have started to bookmark us. They started to come to us for that content. Now it's about 50/50 between the bookmarks and the rotator and now in 2011, we're fast becoming the number one Google search of all Denver Post content.

LYDEN When you say multimedia, what content are you referring to?

RASMUSSEN It includes any type of rich media. So, for us it includes photo galleries, number one, blogs, multimedia projects of an entire story which could include interactive graphics, photo, video, maps, whatever we pull together to tell a story, anything that is rich media. I don't think we limit the types of stuff we can use to tell that. Certainly we have expanded into mobile apps as well.

LYDEN How do you think having an audience has effected the photo department's place in the newsroom?

RASMUSSEN I think it has definitely helped the photo department's prominence in the decisions made for budget and personnel. Everyone in the photo department participates in the multimedia effort. Every photographer is asked to produce enough images from an assignment, news or sports events that we can put a gallery up of their work and so the effort touches everyone in the photo department. There is no one that is left out of our

online effort. So, when it comes around to it, we have been able to replace every position that we have lost except for the four imaging positions over that time. But most newspapers do not have imaging departments at all. One of the key parameters for us is that we are able to replace imaging positions as people leave now because they understand that the online photo gallery effort, which the total photo department effort accounts for 13.5% of the overall traffic and that number is amazing when you consider that the overall traffic for the site has grown in the 40-50% range, year over year, every year since I got here. So, not only have we increased traffic but we've kept up with their traffic growth as well. When I got here we were the fifth most popular website in Denver and now we're number one and have been number one for three years. The number one site was 9News which is now half our size. So, I think our effort coupled with their effort has really grown the website into a much stronger position in the market. I think we're delivering a stream of content that people want to see.

LYDEN How do you think the photographers' jobs have changed while we've been trying to build an audience?

RASMUSSEN I think we ask more of the photographers but I don't think we were asking enough of the photographers when I got here. I think the photographers and the photo editors had fallen into a lull. If they got an assignment they would make one frame good enough for 1B. It was rare that they made one good enough for 1A. They would move a couple images from an assignment and that was it. Now we require them to raise the standard of the photography and at the same time that raises the standard of the web. We've also trained the entire staff in the production of video. We still have the standing policy that a photographer cannot, in 90% of the cases, shoot video and stills from the same assignment but they can do things like take their iPhone, get to a news event, shoot a breaking news photo, send the iPhone picture to denverpost.com and the photo editors and then return to their professional cameras to make the photo for print and online. So we found way to expedite their work to facilitate an online effort without getting in the way of the main goal which was to produce great photography. in the last year we bought them all Nikon D3s DSLR still cameras that could shoot video and we've seen a number of times where they've started on their own to produce it. The goal would be to see them recognize opportunities to create video large and small from assignments that they are at without having to be asked and being able to bring back video and saying they have enough video to produce a video. Knowing their first responsibility is to create great photography always, it has a lot to do with the equipment that you give them and the ease with which they can do it. They have to recognize opportunities and then take them.

LYDEN Most photographers do video, edit it themselves and then put it on the web. Why haven't we done it that way? Why have we used the photo editors to edit the photographers' video?

RASMUSSEN Well, most of the web is littered with crap. And I have no desire to be part of that. The increases in our audience show me that they come for the quality we deliver. We don't put up T&A galleries just because. When we do, it has a news hook with it and they have to be good pictures. So we don't do things just for traffic. If you dumb down your content... your audience is not dumb. The audience that uses our website is very astute to what it on the web. I may not be one of those people. I don't spend all my time on youtube.com or Facebook but a lot of the people who come to our website do and so I think we try to give them the quality photography they come to expect from us. If they see crap, they aren't going to come back again. Now if you produce all highfalutin galleries, like newspapers I won't name, they won't stay for that either. We have a philosophy that the viewers of our website are as varied as the people in our community. So, that means some people will come for the swimsuit galleries, some people will come for the Academy Awards and some people will come for the American Soldier project. They are not all the same people and they may cross over and they may not but if you have a great selection of content, that fits different people's likes and dislikes, than you have a better chance to have them come for something. By putting out a very broad, topical based gallery stream, it gives them opportunities to find something you like. You can always find something you want to see in our galleries from the very high level, intellectual photojournalism in the photo blogs to the red carpet from the Academy Awards. It's all in the same place. That has proven to be really successful for us.

LYDEN How difficult has it been to keep control of what we do?

RASMUSSEN It hasn't and I keep waiting for that day. The audience is what we are after. We have always said that. We want to build an audience for MediaCenter. Traffic really isn't the most important. If you really want to change a photo department in the new environment, you first have to start with the expectations. What are the expectations of your photo department. A lot of newspaper editors start with the expectations that photo departments aren't valuable because photographers are pains in the ass and they are and I was and I haven't met a photographer yet that wasn't a pain in the ass but if you can figure out how to harness that, and you can drive them to the new world with a goal... When I first got here, in the first staff meeting that I had, my stated goal for this department was to save every job that we had. The way to do that was to be so valuable to the organization, that when it came time to let people go, when it came time to get smaller, which we will continue to get smaller, the photo department is not seen as a department that is making snaps for these word editors but that the photo department was involved in every aspect of the website, then that photo department would be left alone. So, where do we go from here? Because where we go from here is the most important thing. Now that we are getting new content management system, now that we are getting processes... The photo editor and even the photographer and the imagers for certain, will be involved in every process of our website. So, right now, to go in and change the homepage photo on the website isn't a matter of having permission to do it, it's a matter of it being a huge pain in the ass. In the new system, if a photo editor sees a photo on the

homepage that isn't the best image, the photo editor will have the authority to go in and change it out in collaboration with the online producers. So we will be more ingrained in the process. That is the difference between here and Tribune where they didn't want any involvement in any other departments. I'm not saying that every photo editor should become an online producer but I am saying that every photo editor should care about the photo on the homepage as much as they care about the photo in the paper. That is a little bit more effort but in the new CMS, it won't be that much more. I think that the full integration of the photo department into that world is coming and right now, we are still on the fringes of full integration. I think every photo editor in this department will be seen as an important contributor to the website not just because they edit video or galleries but because they go through and make sure the website has the best photo on each page to sell that story. We are going to put slideshows on every article page so that the presence and prominence is throughout the site and not just on MediaCenter. I think the prominence of photos and video will be much more across the board and in every section and I think that's where photo departments need to go. You have two choices - you can either allow your web producers, as the Tribune model, to cut you out of that process and eventually cut you out of your job or you can take that responsibility, not ask for it, take that responsibility and interject yourself into the new world in a way that very few departments are doing and that's what I want our department to do.

KEN LYONS

Senior Photo Editor, The Denver Post

LYONS I am Ken Lyons. I'm a Senior Photo Editor at The Denver Post. I edit page one, the Sunday paper and projects. I've been here about three and a half years.

LYDEN Where did you work before The Denver Post?

LYONS I was in Orlando. I went to Orlando as a photo editor doing basically the same thing I do here but then eventually became the DOP. Then my boss left. So I was probably the DOP for about a year before coming here.

LYDEN Did you still edit the paper when you were DOP?

LYONS I did do quite a bit because we didn't have the luxury of having quite as big of a photo editing staff so I was pretty hands-on and still had to do the meetings.

LYDEN What the photo editors role in Orlando concerning the website?

LYONS Well, it's funny because the first paper I was at before I went to Orlando, it's really funny because I was a photographer there most of the time and eventually became a photo editor, at the Daily Press in Virginia, and it was kind of a situation where the photo editor position didn't even exist there. So I sort of created it. There was no online initiative. It was in the early days when we were really starting to get bigger on the web. So I took it upon myself at my first paper to learn Flash. I taught myself Flash and HTML. I was the first one at that paper to start doing a website, doing Flash projects. Then when I went to Orlando, my role totally changed because the paper needed to get so much better. It was in such bad shape visually that I totally moved away from that and got really hands-on with the newspaper, trying to get that back up to speed. Now, the role of photo in online in Orlando was kind of interesting because we didn't really have... we had no one like you who could put together great project from start to finish. There was somebody in online that could sort of do that but not with the finesse and polish. A lot of online initiatives in Orlando... at the time Tribune was going through the breaking news focus to the point where every photographer had a video camera. We got to a point where we were actually posting breaking news videos from our photographers before the TV stations were. That was our goal, get breaking news on the web before the TV stations because we were so competitive with their websites. I had actually gotten it to a point where, I wanted it to be quick and easy for the photographers, so we actually had a system nailed down where I taught them how to shoot video, get it into iMovie on their laptops, make a quick small file and get it to the newspaper quickly. That's what we were doing as far as video for the web. Now, photo galleries, we weren't really doing those. Video was the driving force.

LYDEN Orlando was the same as the Sun-Sentinel in terms of the website design and content management system.

LYONS Yeah, we did. But as far as, you know how you built MediaCenter? We didn't have anything like that. I wasn't organized.

LYDEN Who was in charge of putting photos on the website.

LYONS Online producers. We weren't involved in daily photo gallery production. I could go and say, 'Let's lose this gallery. It's awful.' But we weren't generating them in photo.

LYDEN Do you remember what it was like when you first got here in terms of our presence on the website?

LYONS When I see what we've done here, wow. Tim was heavy in trying to get all that going. My role here was much like my role in Orlando. I had to focus on the paper. Tim put me here to get the paper out everyday. But the one thing I miss and regret is when I was at my first paper, I totally saw myself as going in the direction of online, being very involved in that. My job just took me in a different direction.

LYDEN When you first started here, you didn't have really any involvement in online. We weren't editing with a focus on online.

LYONS It was just the opposite. We were editing to be tight. We would choose two or three at the most so that has totally changed. I sort of do it the same. I tell the photographer, 'These are the three I'm looking at. Put in these others for the slideshows but these are the three I'm looking at for the paper.'

LYDEN Can you talk about how the push for online photo galleries has changed what you do as an editor?

LYONS It has gotten me back to where... With the breaking news initiative and online stories, things are more immediate. When a photographer gets back, it's, 'Let's get these in quick so an imager can build a slideshow and it'll be timely.' If it's three or more hours after it happens, it's not going to get the traffic it could if it's 30 minutes after it happens. We're certainly doing that with Preps. We're getting a lot of stuff up quick. But I do see us as going in the direction where Tribune went years ago, this experiment with breaking news, being more immediate on the web, getting videos up sooner, getting photos up sooner, shooting with the iPhone to get something on the web.

LYDEN When that was the push at Tribune, I feel like it took away from the level of photography in general. I don't think it's done that here.

LYONS No, you're right. The way we set it up here with Lyn [Alweis, now-retired Staff Videographer] doing video in the mornings. It's been great. Especially breaking news, we can't do both well. iPhone photos are still only for the web and the photographers are always given the opportunity to focus on the scene with their professional cameras. I think we are getting people into the rhythm of that now but I think it takes getting each photographer out there to understand that, too. Now that most of them have the D3s... I did that at my very first newspaper. I had a Canon XL1 and I had my Nikon gear and anything I was at, I would try to get stills and video both.

LYDEN It does help when you have dedicated videographers to go out and do breaking news.

LYONS Right. A lot of times in Orlando it was a matter of some of our guys shooting video and handing it off to people in online and never being hands-on with the product.

LYDEN How do you think we have fared in building an audience for photography online?

LYONS I mean, one of things I love telling people is how successful we have been with photo galleries, that the still photo is still greatly appreciated. It's not all video. The still photo can still drive a lot of traffic - way more than video. And I suspect that's the case at a lot of places but a lot of places don't build the number of galleries we do. I love the way here that we have repurposed... a lot of papers have done away with their imaging jobs. tim was great at finding a way to teach those people new skills and in a lot of ways making them a version of a photo editor, building galleries. Those things are generating traffic. You don't have them just toning pictures for a news hole that is shrinking. You have them building all these galleries. I think that the reason we have been so successful with that is that visual people have created MediaCenter. It's been created by people with photography backgrounds, photojournalism backgrounds. You can tell when you go to a paper's website, you can tell, if it's created by producers in online versus the photo staff. What you have done with the blog is amazing. That has built a huge audience. People come back for that. I was talking to Dean [Krakel, sports editor] and he's getting up to speed building some features galleries so I think we give readers a lot to look at, a lot of variety.

LYDEN What have you been tasked with concerning online since you've been here?

LYONS Well, I think I trying to get back in that rhythm, thinking of multimedia a little more, you know? I'm identifying what would make good multimedia and then throwing an email to alert people. Actually In Focus [a feature in the A section of the paper where short photo stories on national and international events and issues run] is a perfect example. At least since the beginning of this year, it's been very sporadic. I've had it preempted most of the time because we've needed that space for other things. I really do

wonder about the future of it. The space is tight. I think we are going to lose it here eventually. But we have developed a place for those stories online and we don't worry about space. I think we can show that on the biggest traffic days, the biggest draw has been photo projects. I think our department has gained a huge amount of credibility and now we're selling ads on MediaCenter, generating revenue. We can truly say we are helping generate ad revenue for the paper and the website. We need to get to the point where we support the entire department. I think that the beauty of what we've done here, and Tim is a huge part of this, is that we haven't waited for mandates from above about here's what we have to do. He has been proactive and thinking ahead. I think the papers that fail at it are the papers who have no say or they wait too long to be proactive. Tim doesn't give away responsibility. It's so important. We have talking to the photographers more about them being proactive. I do think there's one area where we haven't been as proactive and it's really because we just don't have that extra body to do it. I've always felt that we should have a photo editor for online literally choosing every picture on the website. Right now, online producers do it. I would love us to have more control over that.

LYDEN With the new content management system, I think we'll be more responsible for photos on the article pages.

LYONS I feel like we should have a photo editor deciding throughout the day what our main picture is on the website. The online producers will change anything we ask them to but we don't have someone to sit there and choose the picture whether it's with the story or not. Maybe we'll get there.

LYDEN What else do you think we should be doing better?

LYONS I think well get better at video. I wish the photographers did more enterprising for the paper and website. As a newspaper, I think we're still struggling to produce more human interest stories and that's hurting the photos badly.

LYDEN What are the things you think we do best online?

LYONS I think some of the projects we have spearheaded online have been better than what has gone in the paper. Our photo galleries are the best I've seen anywhere. I really do think we do them better than anybody. I think we do more of them and they are better quality. They are edited well and have great subject matter. We have a great photo blog. We found a way to create an audience for local photography but we've also created an audience for national and international photography which is what is getting cut in the paper.

DAN PETTY

**Social Media Editor, The Denver Post
Engagement Team, Digital First Media**

PETTY My name is Dan Petty and I am the social media editor at The Denver Post and that includes the responsibilities of keeping our social accounts, mostly on Facebook and Twitter but on a couple other accounts as well, up to date, filled with content, answering reader questions and turning around and teaching people how to use these tools to report on breaking news, develop an audience around their specific beat, whether it's the environment, Denver Nuggets basketball and how to use that to not only interact with readers but get story ideas and other feedback from them. So they are not only pushing out their content but they are trying to bring interest back in. So, it's not only overseeing that and teaching people how to run it on their own but it is managing and planning for bigger events like the XGames or the Oscars and other events.

LYDEN How long have you been doing this?

PETTY About a year and a half at The Post. Previously, I was a student at the university of Richmond and this is part of what i did as online editor of my college paper. That's where i got into it and when I came here they were looking for someone to focus on this a little more. There wasn't much in terms of a plan or organization or strategy. When I got her the Facebook page had about 200 fans and hadn't been updated in three months which is odd to think about it know that we have multiple pages and multiple Twitter accounts that are updated by many people throughout the agency. June 2009, I guess.

LYDEN What they were doing before was under the umbrella of the online department.

PETTY It was. It wasn't really a focus at all. They had one Facebook page to post a few photos and some photo galleries and stuff like that. We had a twitter account - just the main one. It had about 6,000 followers. We now have more than 38,000. WE had a lot of Twitter accounts but most of them were automated and there weren't a lot of people within the newsroom just doing it on their own. There were not many people using it. I understood that during the DNC in 2008, they had a lot of people tweeting but they were filtering it to one place so they were just under the denver post banner. Even at that time, Twitter was so new and it didn't have the traction that it does now. It still doesn't have the traction that Facebook has now. Facebook has about 600 million users, about half of which access the site every single day. That is clearly a much larger audience than what you'll find on Twitter. But I also think that Twitter has much more on an actionable audience. These are people that are hungry for content, news and information. So, both have their values.

LYDEN How do you think having an organized approach to social media has helped the newsroom?

PETTY I think the biggest value with it - well, several reasons - we get news tips on there. Increasingly more, just in the past six months, people say, 'We've got cop cars all over the place here.' Often, we don't know anything so we check it out. In other cases, it gives people a quick and easy way to... if they are on the scene of breaking news and they have a cell phone photo, often they are not the greatest in the world but it gives us something at least initially to use before we can get professional photographers and writers out there. It's also something that's really important for getting information faster than you would get it anywhere else. I use the Boulder fires as an example. I'm fairly certain I was getting information, with Dan Schneider who helps me with this, much faster than editors were from the public. The photographers on the ground were also important in getting the information but they can't be everywhere like a community of a thousands people tweeting about the Boulder fire. A thousand people will always know more than a handful of reporters and photographers.

LYDEN How do you think social media has played a part in increasing the photo audience online?

PETTY I think the photo department is the one department that has established itself as having a national and international audience for its content. Through social media, often, it's not my work that does it - certainly, that gets the ball rolling - but a lot of these major twitter accounts and social media accounts with thousands and thousands of followers... I can watch when a post that you do on your blog gets picked up and I know it's just going to take off because it's not so much that a lot of people are tweeting it but the right people are tweeting it. I think 90% of the tweets come from 10% of the users. So, it lends itself well to news organizations. You have users, like us, who are power users and have amassed these large audiences who are interested in this stuff and in the case of these twitter accounts like @amazingpics and few other ones, they have amassed this audience that is specifically people who are interested in really cool photos and really cool video and they appreciate that. You are going to have a far greater chance of drawing an audience and traffic by targeting those people instead of just relying on putting it on your own Twitter account. All of our content online is getting unbundled in the sense that people aren't just getting the Denver Post online as a wholesale product. They are getting it itemized into these little bits of content. People on social media can say, 'I only want to know about Denver Post photos and sports coverage.' So, by us focusing our efforts, through social media, on those audiences, we can get a much higher response rate. We have two photo Twitter accounts and a photo Facebook page. Those are always going to be more powerful than just blasting something out there. When we do photo galleries of ruins in Detroit, for instance. Those are cool photos, something people haven't seen. Or, something more general like weather. When they are well-edited and well-pulled together, well-presented, it really can do something. I think a lot of the success is just as much about the presentation as it is the content. The New York Times can put 30 photos in their tiny photo galleries and it won't do nearly as well as our galleries.

LYDEN We never used social media buttons on MediaCenter before you came here. How do you think those have helped us?

PETTY It is taking advantage of the networking effect of Facebook and Twitter. By using those quick share buttons in prominent places, you make it an easy thing to just have a single click to share content with a network, immediately. 42% of people check into Facebook everyday. Each of those people has a network and if just ten people share a gallery, you are magically increasing your potential audience by hundreds. And if just one of those people shares it with their friends, the audience grows. We are trying to take advantage of the fact that people are going to share this content. It's important because the idea of authority in the press has been diminished in the past decade. People trust recommendations by their friends more than by us because we can assume that our friends have similar interests, similar backgrounds. So that is a much more powerful recommendation engine. I think the future of new content consumption will be driven by recommendation. If I'm a photographer and I've got a whole bunch of photography friends, they will trust my recommendation more than someone who has different interests.

LYDEN What do you think we do right on the website for our photo audience?

PETTY I think the effort to branch out and have a photo blog was the right thing to do. I don't think many people were doing that when we started. I think people have copied the format. I think we take advantage of the fact that people have much higher resolution screens than in the past. I think increasingly in what I'm seeing is that responding to what is happening globally and then creating content to fill that interest. We also put effort into search engine optimization. It's not only creating things that we think are important. We have to respond to what the audience thinks is important as well. You're not only focusing on personal projects and things we cover here but you are responding to national and global demand for content on the internet because we have that information now. We didn't have that before Google. We can watch and see what is hot and trending and create responses to that. News start-ups, like the Huffington Post, have adopted the same model in creating content based in part on user demand.

LYDEN So what you are saying is that you have taught the imagers how to check Google trends and then pull together content while putting the correct SEO terms and keywords on the post?

PETTY Later today, they'll create a photo gallery from what Helen photographs at the Burlington murder scene. That is important to our local audience. That is the number one trending story locally. People are clicking on that. We are going there to cover it because it's important but we are also focused on the global side as well.

LYDEN What do you think we could do better on our website to build a bigger photo audience?

PETTY This has been met with skepticism, but I think that clearly we know that the photography business has changed tremendously in the last ten years, not only with digital but with the cost of the gear. There is this tremendous interest with people with prosumer equipment, there is a hunger for people to know how to be better photographers. I think one potential avenue is for having a venue for photographers to explain their work. Say, you take Craig Walker's TSA groping image, what if you were to explain in some sort of blog post, 'This is the approach I took. This is where I was standing. This is what I was looking for,' and explain that Denver International Airport was the perfect to take that image because it is very open. That would have drawn a lot of interest. You look at fireworks on the fourth of July. Okay, Karl goes and takes those but how do you do that? You explain how you got images. I think that is something that would be popular and it expands beyond your local audience. You have experts in your field. You have expert photo editors and expert photographers. There is a push in the industry to explain our process a little bit more. How did you go about putting the paper together. I think when you explain your approach, it makes you more human and puts a face on a black and white byline. It adds more. That's the challenge, though, that everyone is so crunched for time.

LYDEN I think some of the pushback is that, for years, photographers, at least here, have been taught that the photograph is about who you are photographing and not about you so I think they are a little reluctant.

PETTY I agree. But there is a balance. I would just like them to explain the backstory of the photos and keep it about their subjects.

LYDEN Is there anything else we should be doing on the website.

PETTY It is hard now because we are working with a MacGyver, duck tape, bubblegum website version. Our online system was developed by our parent company, MediaNews Group, in 2003. To put some context to that, that is before Facebook debuted and well before Wordpress, now the world's most popular blogging software came into existence. Now, it's been updated and stuff, thankfully, and what we're finding... Well, we're talking a lot about photography but let's talk a little about video. In the last month, month and a half, we've made a push to present video better and package it better as one thing. Previously, we'd have tiny links on photo stories to click here. That's not inviting. The web is a visual media. If I have a photo, show the photo. If I have a video, show a thumbnail of the video. I think packaging things... If you could package a photo gallery with a story, which we can't do with our website system, instead of telling people to click off somewhere else, you could package it together.

LYDEN What do you think the next steps are with social media and photography on the website?

PETTY I think we just need to grow the audience. We've had some proven techniques on how to grow Facebook pages - advertising, cross-pollination. I think Facebook is powerful to grow an audience. You can still present photos on Facebook unlike Twitter. I think Facebook is a huge opportunity for growth.

MATEO LEYBA

Rich Media Technology Manager, Digital First Media

LYDEN When did you start working at The Denver Post?

LEYBA I started here in November of 1991. I was a darkroom lab technician. I processed film, kept all the chemicals topped off. So really what I did was everything the photographers didn't want to do anymore. It used to be that photographers would do their own film and make prints but I came in at the right time where they would just show up and leave it and not be involved until they had to write a caption for what they picked. We did lots of transparency film and the editor would look at their take, clip out a frame, show it on a little TV monitor that we had - the editors would come back at like 4pm and they'd do a little show and they would show all the stuff we had for that day. They would pick and if it was a negative or transparency, that would decide what I had to do to get it ready for print.

LYDEN When did it start to change?

LEYBA in the middle of that, we had a computer show up, a Mac, that just showed up, with a Leaf scanner made by AP. It was this giant tabletop thing that you could put a negative in and scan it into Photoshop 1.5, or something like that. You would take that image and save it and somehow you would put it into the Leaf desk and it was a Picture Desk. It wasn't an archive at all. There was a giant box in the room, like a server, because the satellite feed would come in and the pictures would show up. you could protect things but if you protected too many things, pictures would start disappearing. It had x amount of space and people would start filling it up and then everything would just flush out of it. That was one of my duties to come in on Saturday and purge it. That was all connected to our back shop imaging stuff. So all that same first couple years I was here, we could start scanning stuff. We could also transmit stuff. We had a small case, like a scanner, but it was really slow. It would take like 20 minutes to scan something and then you could send it. It was kind of like a fancy fax. It was basically like a scanner and fax on one end and it went into the Leaf desk thing for it to show up. So then we started thinking, we have a Mac laptop and you could buy a portable scanner and a high end modem. You could scan on this first color Mac laptop. It had ten MBs of RAM. It was a \$10,000 laptop. So, instead of hauling around the AP Leaf stuff, because it was heavy, we could take those. We could start shooting and set a lab up in a bathroom in a hotel or, like at a football, AP would process film in a studio at the event or we would take it to a one-hour photo lab and then go scan. So we did that for a couple years and then in like '94 or '96 the first digital cameras started showing up. They were probably more like scientific cameras. So we started working with Mike's Camera because they were getting all this new stuff and they would let us borrow all this stuff. They were like \$20,000 cameras and so we started messing around with that. The first time we used them on deadline was when the Nuggets

went to the playoffs against the Seattle SuperSonics. You had to have lights because the camera only went to 400 ISO. John [Leyba, Staff Photographer] could shoot for six minutes. He shot eight pictures. I had to take the camera and drive back to the AP bureau because there were no phone lines to use. I went back there and plugged it in and got a picture off the camera onto the Mac and sent it back to the office. That was our first thing we ever did digital. It was one picture. We had twenty minute from tipoff to make a picture and get it back to the office for the paper in color.

LYDEN When did you first start putting pictures online?

LEYBA So, they had a steady website in the late '90s. I wasn't involved with the website at all for a long time. I don't even know how they did it. When Larry [Price, former Director of Photography] got here and around 2003 or 2004, we started trying to do stories online. I went to a Poynter Workshop. We were trying to do video. That was the big thing. And maybe audio slideshows. There were no mechanisms to do anything online. Everyone said, 'You have to know how to program Flash.' We didn't have the ability to go in and publish anything on the web. So we would do something, we'd give it to the web people and they'd put it up and it would never be how we wanted it done. I had all these questions because it wasn't like it is now where you can go on the internet and figure out how to do all this stuff. So, I went to a workshop at Poynter. It was a multimedia workshop. And from that workshop on, I learned about Soundslides because Joe Weiss was there. I learned about SlideShoePro. We learned about XML and Flash stuff. You had a lot of people that could help you through it. When I got back we started going after it. It was just me doing stuff on my own, building them in Flash and taking them to online and they would just stick this Flash thing on the page. We started doing photo galleries in Flash and SlideShowPro. Back then it was all XML lists and files on the server. Then how did we start MediaCenter?...

LYDEN When I got here there there was no MediaCenter. You built a mechanism to display slideshows but there was no place to collect those slideshows. You had the player on an article page and you would link from the story to another article page that housed the player. Then, you and I were working on audio slideshows and we thought, well, once the story is published the multimedia goes away, so we wanted to create a place where they could live longer and that's when we created a list of content on a page.

LEYBA I was trying to think of what else I was doing in all that time here. There was a lot of time where we were basically switching over to all digital cameras and training people because for a while we were still processing film but we had removed the darkrooms so we had a foot in both worlds. When Tim got here, we started being involved with getting content up. You and I made ways that we could publish ourselves. The philosophy was more... we were still trying to do things that we thought people would be as interested in as we were. We were focused on storytelling and making these big multimedia projects. We weren't focused on the day-to-day and creating simple photo galleries. That really

didn't happen until four years ago. We were always looking for local stuff. Until the last two years, we didn't have the focus that anything was fair game in the world.

LYDEN How do you think we got from nothing a couple years ago to the audience we have now?

LEYBA I think it all had to do with the platform that we use. We made our content visible to search engines and to the world. That is the biggest thing. We were never worried about that before. We were worried about putting links from denverpost.com to our content. It was also technological. We were doing what we knew how to do because you have to invest time in figuring out how to do it. We had no one giving us tools to publish so we had to build our own tools and that involved learning how and that takes up a lot of time. As our knowledge got better about how the internet worked, our viewers increased because they were more internet-friendly.

LYDEN So, talk about how we use the tools and platforms now.

LEYBA We built a MediaCenter that was Flash, which gave us no SEO, but it gave us some sort-of backend usability. The next step up was putting it into a basic website CMS, which we had never done. So, by doing that, it made it easier for anyone in the department to be a web publisher. We weren't dependent on anyone. We have all the tools we need to publish content. And by having it as a CMS, we were able to build tools we could repurpose. We're not manually building an HTML page. We could spend more time worrying about the content. It used to be that you had to be technical to pull something off. You had to understand the whole entire process. Now, it's very minimal what people need to know. You just have to be able to identify ideas and produce good stories. That made the biggest gain. Now, take that to today. What I'm doing now is the same thing for all the other properties in our group who are where we were five years ago. They don't have tools to do what we were doing. It's a much quicker path because they can learn from all the mistakes we made and we've been the Guinea pigs. It's easy now to teach someone the correct way to do it. It's easier to teach these people that have been waiting for a tool. Just like here, they now have more content producers because it's easier for them to do it. They were always producing content but had no way to publish. Now they can.

LYDEN Now that we have a decent audience, how do we increase it?

LEYBA I don't know. Well, doing what we're doing now, things are still increasing. Now, I think the push is to have people come look at your content and basically be able to know all about them. So, the most obvious way to do that is to have people log into your site or share your content. You see how now, you can log into things with your Facebook account. I don't think it's malicious. It's more just to harvest information. The more information you have, the more you can charge advertisers. That seems to be the big push

right now - more engagement with your content. The other thing, I think, is to focus on local stuff. Our company is establishing groups to worry about the world and national events and sending it out everywhere so that everyone in their local area can focus on their area. You can get the national stuff anywhere you want. Taking that out of the hands of the local people lets them work on more local content.

DON PAVLIN
Digital Photo Editor, The Denver Post

PAVLIN My biggest responsibility at the paper is slideshow production and then imaging. We coordinate galleries for big events and special sections in the paper.

LYDEN How long have you been here?

PAVLIN I have been at The Denver Post for seven years.

LYDEN What did you do when you first started working here?

PAVLIN Imaging. Just imaging. We had seven imaging tech compared to the four we have now.

LYDEN How has your job changed?

PAVLIN As soon as Tim got here, the job totally morphed more towards the digital side and editing. I don't do much editing because I'm here during the day but the other imagers do some editing for the paper. Imaging is the least important thing we do now compared to when I started and it was the only thing.

LYDEN Why were your jobs changed when Tim came in?

PAVLIN Tim had the foresight to see that the website was going to be more important than print someday and that was seven years ago before everyone started talking about digital first. He implemented slideshows and made that a big deal and we took the ball on that and ran with it.

LYDEN When did you start doing slideshows?

PAVLIN We started on a small scale almost four years ago. Matt had some sort of mechanism for showing photos on the website but there was no place to showcase photography.

LYDEN I think when we built the first version of the MediaCenter, you guys started to really focus on the slideshows. Do you remember that?

PAVLIN I think that was four or five years ago. Tim got here six years ago and we started soon after that but we didn't have a place to put anything until you created MediaCenter.

LYDEN How have you seen the photography department change?

PAVLIN The department has been refocused. When I first started here, there was no focus. Tim got here and it got more structured. We knew what the priorities were. We started focusing on Preps. Big events became more prominent - the Olympics that Helen [Richardson, Staff Photographer] went to in China, the DNC in 2008. We became a more organized, bigger, better focused department. We were more focused on quality as well. The photographers are more focused on photographing assignments with building slideshows as a priority. when I first got here, they were submitting two or three photos. Now, they are submitting at least 6-8 from an assignment but more like 20-30 images on a regular basis. I think the quality has gone up because they know they are providing content for the website.

LYDEN How has social media played a role in what you do?

PAVLIN Oh, it's huge. In the last sixth months, we've started focusing more and more on social media. We had maybe 200 fans on Facebook and we've started to build that audience to a couple thousand fans. We tweet all kinds of slideshows, which increases the unique visitors to the site.

LYDEN How do you think the online audience that we've built has changed?

PAVLIN When I first started concentrating on slideshows, I was lucky to get 30-40,000 a day. Now, we're hitting 30-40,000 in less than an hour. Last month, we averaged 500,000 a day and that's even on weekends. That a huge percentage change.

LYDEN Talk about the more technical aspects. When you first started, how did you know what would be a good gallery and how did you attract attention to those galleries?

PAVLIN It's pretty similar to how I do it now but some things have changed. I get here early enough that I go through every image in Merlin [the photo Content Management System including local, and wire feeds] and pick out anything I see that can be made into a gallery. It is pretty much the same thing now - I start out with Entertainment. I pick out any events that happened late the night before and make slideshows out of those. Then, I go through every image that was created that day in Merlin and put together galleries out of those. I also try to get an idea of the local stories that will be photographed that day so I know what to look out for. We generate about twenty galleries a day.

LYDEN Talk about the emphasis you now put on SEO and online trends.

PAVLIN It has made a huge difference. We didn't really make a big jump until we started using the SEO packs a little more than a year ago. Once we started using the SEO packs, we saw a huge jump where we might see 1 million hits in a day. Our galleries are easier

to find. We started following Google trends so we know what people are searching for online and we seek out and create galleries for those topics. There is a huge emphasis now on keywords, headlines and descriptions.

LYDEN Where do you think this job will go in the future?

PAVLIN My hope is that it will all switch to digital. We are stuck in two worlds right now, creating slideshows and imaging for the print product. What we do with national and world galleries can be shared with other properties of Digital First and MediaNews Group. If it goes the way of Thunderdome, [Digital First Media's idea to create a central place for a handful of editors to package national and international news stories for all 75 of Digital First's properties. The packages would be chosen, edited, packaged with headlines, photos and graphics and offered to the properties. This eliminates the need for copyeditors, wire editors and wire photo editors at every property. The slideshow and photo editing portion of Thunderdome would be housed at The Denver Post because we already have a slideshow production system and trained editors who are already doing the job.] 100% of my efforts would be focused on slideshows. We're talking about having producers working around the clock to populate the content stream. We would be doing the same thing but everyone else would be able to use it. I think it will offer job security because once you start producing slideshows for 75 different properties, you are more valuable to the organization.

LYDEN How many national/international slideshows do you do compared to local?

PAVLIN That ratio seems to always stay the same. As we've done more national and international galleries, we've done more local ones as well. It is probably 50/50. I do more national and international because of the work schedule I have - more of the local photo come in later in the day - but the ratio stays the same.

II. ORIGINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

I. PROFESSIONAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

A. INTRODUCTION

I propose to explore how multimedia projects, specifically the combination of audio and still photographs, are produced and published online in four newspapers of various phases of convergence. While examining these changing workflows in the newsrooms, I hope to focus on how the role of the photo editor might be affected. In addition, I will attempt to complete my project at a major metropolitan newspaper with an existing online counterpart and produce monthly multimedia projects from existing long-term projects being undertaken by the staff photographers. The intent would be to establish or further develop the practice of identifying projects that would greatly benefit from the inclusion of audio and web publication.

B. INTEGRATED ESSAY

As a student extremely drawn to the profession of picture editing, it is difficult to ignore that the profession and skills required to perform the job are changing.

Traditionally picture editors perform many duties in the newsroom – articulating the importance of content in an image to non-visual members of the newsroom, acting as a liaison between photographers and management, scheduling assignments, troubleshooting conflicts, encouraging photographers, and finally, serving as the first viewer of the photographer’s images to determine which ones most fully convey a message to an audience. However, with the exploding importance of the Internet in

modern society and the push to develop multimedia reporting, photo editors may be forced to adopt new skills to most effectively deliver the news to their viewers.

When I began classes at the Missouri School of Journalism, I was interested in making images and becoming a photographer. In September of 2004, I volunteered as a member of the Missouri Photo Workshop crew. By spending the week with the faculty of the workshop, most of them editors, I came to understand where my interest in photography was based. I was enthralled with the process of examining pictures and, like a big puzzle, organizing them to find the perfect fit to communicate a message to the viewer.

It was not until completing the Electronic Photojournalism class that I became interested in doing this digitally. I have been an avid consumer of news and photojournalism for most of my adult life. I have also been raised in a multimedia society, one that has embraced the use of many different channels to communicate. This method of learning and exploring is intuitive to me, as a consumer, and fits the manner in which I want to communicate as a news producer.

As a member of the newsroom at *The Columbia Missourian* through Staff Photojournalism and Picture Editing classes, I have gained experience in the practice of visual reporting but have sought to find more avenues to explore new media. Being a newsroom focused on teaching, the *Missourian* is slow to embrace the full capacity of the Internet for multimedia reporting. Their first concern is to teach reporters the basics of journalism and with the constant changing of newsroom staff, not many reporters are

given a chance to progress beyond these basics. With this project I hope to explore those areas of multimedia that I have not had the chance to experience in a classroom setting.

II. RESEARCH PROPOSAL

A. INTRODUCTION

I propose to explore how multimedia projects, specifically the combination of audio and still photographs, are produced and published online in four newspapers of various phases of convergence. By researching how certain newspapers are implementing multimedia visual reporting, the industry might gain some insight into how papers are handling the push for convergence. There are no standard approaches to multimedia implementation by photography departments in today's newsrooms. Different newspapers have different methods of getting their multimedia projects online. Some transitions have been more difficult than others and by studying these transitions, we can hope to learn what succeeds and what fails in the quest to reach audiences with quality journalism. In addition, it might shed some light on what new skills are required of photo editors in converged newsrooms, helping students and new editors to be better prepared for the workplace.

B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory guiding this research is Dahlgren's notion of "media logic" described in "Media Logics in Cyberspace: Repositioning Journalism and its Publics" (1996). Dahlgren explains the logic of multimedia journalism as the "institutional, organizational,

technological, and cultural factors influencing how news work gets done in a convergent setting” (Dueze, 2004, p.139).

In their *Handbook of New Media: Social Shaping and the Consequences of ICTs*, Lievrouw and Livingstone (2002) also discuss the theory observing that journalists simultaneously shape and are being shaped by the various contexts involved in multimedia news work.

In “What is Multimedia Journalism?”, Dueze explores and expounds on Dahlgren’s theory. Both Dahlgren and Dueze hypothesize there is a “convergence continuum” assuming that “sooner or later all media organizations move towards a stage where integration of different parts of the news-making process (including audio, video, text, images, graphics; but also marketing, cross-promotion, sales, redistribution and interactivity with publics) is achieved” (Dueze, p. 140).

Dahlgren and Dueze posit that the successful implementation of multimedia reporting in the newsroom has a direct relationship and affect on the sociology of the newsroom.

“Participation, collaboration, sharing of knowledge and resources, collective production of stories including elements of multiple media formats and interactivity – these are not only institutional, organizational, and technological challenges...These are all issues fundamentally impacting upon a professional journalist’s sense of self. If we only look at technology, or newsroom culture, or management or users, we will not be able to acknowledge this legitimate and seemingly unavoidable tension in today’s and tomorrow’s work floor in the news media industry” (Dueze, p. 149).

Since the use of multimedia reporting has a direct effect on visual journalists, interviewing these participants about their experiences might reveal how to better avoid the obstacles to its implementation.

III. METHOD: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Research will be conducted using four news agencies of various sizes that publish both daily hard copy and online newspapers. I will conduct semi-structured interviews with managers, editors, photographers and multimedia producers to determine how departments and visual journalists develop online multimedia products. Examining four different papers will be helpful in attaining a cross sample of information. The size of the news organization and the level of convergence in the newsroom will likely influence the manner by which departments communicate and work with one another. Semi-structured interviews offer the opportunity to establish a dialogue with working professionals in visual departments within a newsroom, while at the same time, offering interviewees the chance to express themselves by answering open-ended questions.

In the 1920's, The Chicago School, a group of sociological researchers, incorporated interviews into their community studies (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Within the broad idea of interviewing as a research methodology, three main types exist – structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). In a structured interview, an interviewer asks a participant a series of predetermined questions. The questions are always asked in the same order and the interviewer waits for a response to all the questions. The participant is given limited choices for responses. Most often, the

interviewer is not allowed to explore different areas in the dialogue and sticks to the planned question, without regard to the answers given.

In contrast, an unstructured interview offers little direction for the respondent and uses open-ended questions to explore a general, and most often, broad topic. Questions can be, but are often not, determined before the interview. Topics of conversation are the only consistent elements in each of the interviews with the respondents.

With semi-structured interviews, all participants are asked the same questions. However, the questions can be arranged in different order. The pace and depth of the interview can shift with each respondent. Questions can be explored in greater depth if the interviewer feels inclined to explore the respondent's answers or observations. In addition, the respondent is free to steer the conversation and answer certain questions in greater detail than others.

Semi-structured interviews seem the most efficient manner by which to explore the workflow and roles of picture editors in the newsroom. These interviews will allow the respondents to answer freely and steer the dialogue towards issues of importance in their own newsrooms. By analyzing four different newsrooms, I anticipate certain question will not be applicable to some of the respondents. Allowing the interview to flow freely will increase the time focused on questions most important and pertinent to each respondent.

A. TENTATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I am interested in exploring the following topics in my interviews with photo editors:

- What is your job title, job responsibilities, and background (how long have you been a visual journalist, where have you worked, etc.)?
- How are decisions made concerning the online publishing of photographs?
- Who is involved in these decisions?
- How many photographs are used in the hard copy edition of the newspaper as opposed to the online version?
- Where is the online department located? Is it in the newsroom?
- Who is responsible for communicating with the photography department concerning online publication of photography?
- Who collects audio for inclusion in multimedia packages with still images?
- What part do the photo editors have in multimedia production?
- Does the online department include photographers or photo editors?
- At what stage of a long-term photo project are online producers included in the planning for a multimedia piece?
- How would you classify the relationships between the photography department and the online department?
- What obstacles are there in publishing photographs online?

IV. PROFESSIONAL COMPONENT PROPOSAL

A. INTRODUCTION

The professional component of the project will be picture editing at a major metropolitan newspaper. It will also include collecting audio for long-term stories being completed by the staff of the newspaper. The audio will then be combined with the still images to produce audio slideshows for the multimedia section of the online newspaper.

With the trend towards multimedia newspaper products, some newspapers find themselves in the difficult position of finding multimedia producers who have knowledge of solid picture editing. In an attempt to attract younger audiences, newspapers are turning to the Internet. “A recent study released by the The Media Study indicates that people are not solitary consumers of media. They multitask” (Birge, 2004, p. 11).

I hope to develop relationships with online managers to ease the online publication of audio slideshows. I also plan to establish a process for the department to

follow to continue production of the shows when the project has been completed. I hope to complete the project at a newspaper that values long-term projects and encourages staff photographers to pursue them. This will offer material to use when producing the slideshows. In addition to the production, I assume I will need to continue learning how to use Macromedia Flash software and audio editing programs. Except for a basic class in Electronic Photojournalism, my Flash skills have been self-taught. I plan to seek out producers in the newsroom who can offer advice in continuing to develop these skills.

By interviewing working photo editors concerning convergence, Birge (2004) examined what skills new photo editors should be learning. “What’s interesting is that those in the industry who say convergence skills aren’t important really do want students who can do more than one thing,” Birge noted. “Though convergence was a skill less valued, in their comments the photo editors begged for students who’ve been exposed to areas other than photography” (p. 12). By developing picture editing skills in conjunction with skills collecting audio and designing and producing multimedia slideshows, I can become better equipped to fit into the changing environment of the newsroom.

B. TENTATIVE TIMELINE

Summer 2006

- Participate in daily photo editing in the photography department
- Begin to develop relationships with editors in online and design departments
- Familiarize myself with ongoing staff long-term photo stories
- Conduct interviews with photo editors in various newsrooms
- Complete monthly audio and still image slide shows for online publication

Fall 2006

- Continue editing daily assignments and producing multimedia slideshows
- Write up research component of project

November 2006

- Send rough draft of project to committee for review
- Make revisions

December 2006

- Defend project in Columbia