LEE ESTER NEWS FELLOWSHIP

HOW AUDIENCE HABITS SHOULD INFLUENCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF RADIO STATION WEB SITES

A CASE STUDY OF WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have so many people who deserve thanks in helping me not only complete this Master’s project, but also guiding me in what it means to be a crack reporter, newsroom team player and good human being.

First, I’d like to thank Wisconsin Public Radio for providing me with the Lee Ester News Fellowship, which was such an incredible opportunity to learn the craft of radio reporting and storytelling. My editors, Brian Bull and Michael Leland, were so instrumental in helping me grow as a reporter. They guided me with kindness and humor and continue to inspire me in my career choices.

At Mizzou, I was fortunate enough to work with Bill Allen, an environmental science writer who has long been a mentor and a friend, ever since my sister introduced us at a conference at Washington University in 2002, when I was a nervous undergraduate who thought she hated to write. Bill has shown me the beauty and the power of words in the context of science, and how tremendously those phrases and ideas can influence everything from landscaping to legislation. More than anyone else at Mizzou, Bill helped me bring a little poetry to my reporting, and in the process, allowed me to rediscover the fact that I do, actually, enjoy writing.

Mark Horvit was instrumental in teaching me about investigative journalism, especially the idea that it’s not only OK but truly necessary to have “a sense of outrage” when it comes to doing whatever it takes to discover the truth and help one’s community. While I don’t imagine I will ever be a full-time
investigative reporter, the skills I learned with Mark will benefit me for a lifetime, no matter which path I choose.

During the long arc of my Master’s degree, I often lost direction, focus and hope that I would ever finish. Several people provided much needed motivation, without which I doubt I could have overcome my long absence from academia long enough to finish this degree.

My sister, Sara Hiles, now a professor in the Journalism School at Mizzou, actually staged an “intervention” with me, herself and two other Mizzou professors, all of whom together confronted me about finishing my degree. I needed that jolt to wake me up and give me the energy I needed to run the home stretch. Charles Davis, although he wasn’t part of that “intervention,” reminded me that it took him seven years to finish his Master’s, and that I shouldn’t feel so guilty.

But more than anyone else, I owe the completion of this degree to my former professor and boss and very good friend Jon Stemmle. For some reason, Jon has always believed in me, right from the moment he hired me to be the Smith-Patterson Fellow at Mizzou in 2009. Jon has never, ever let me give up on this Master’s degree, even going so far as to set up a weekly phone meeting to check in on my progress. He’s advocated on my behalf when I was away from campus, even going in person to talk to other professors if needed. His faith in my abilities is so far and away above what I have historically thought of myself that he has actually changed the way I think about what I am able to do. There is
no greater gift a teacher can give his student. For that reason, and for never
giving up on me, I dedicate this degree to my mentor and friend, Jon Stemmle.
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Chapter One: Introduction

For most of my journalism and writing career, I've focused on print. A passion for the written word, seeing my name published, the feel of newsprint in my hands - I couldn't imagine a greater thrill than these simple components of a writer's life. But after a few years on my own, struggling to make it as a freelancer and unable to get a staff position at a newspaper, it became clear that simply being a good writer was not enough. I needed more skills, the kinds of tools that would make me more marketable to a wider set of employers than just those in the dwindling newspaper industry. Dozens of informal interviews with journalists across the country confirmed my decision: It was time to go back to school.

The first class I took at the University of Missouri was in fundamentals of “convergence,” a term with which I’d soon become intimately familiar. The purpose of the course was to introduce students to all the basic components of a multi-media skill set. We were expected to become photographers, web site developers, videographers and, to my surprise, radio reporters. Although this “jack-of-all-trades-master-of-none” approach initially discouraged me, I quickly saw the benefit to this crash course. I learned important techniques for shooting both photo and video as well as how to use complicated editing software. I created a web site, something I never thought possible, and became somewhat adept at writing HTML code by the following summer, another skill I never anticipated.

But the best skill I gained in the convergence class was how to be a radio reporter. From the moment I hefted that boxy, black Marantz and started
recording, I was spellbound. Radio reporting required an artistry I’d never
experienced as a print journalist. Gathering natural sounds, capturing the
emotion and inflection in subjects’ voices and learning how to write pithy, punchy
segments to weave into the piece gave me the skills to be not only a better writer
but also a superb listener. Even my print stories have benefited as a result.

I took the opportunity the following semester to do an independent study
at KBIA radio, the local NPR affiliate station. During the next four months, I had
the chance to stretch my legs as a radio reporter, learning more about editing,
reporting and producing. I loved every minute. I produced short spot news stories
and daily wraps in addition to longer features, spanning topics as diverse as the
local children’s museum to Jefferson City elections to ruffed grouse conservation
efforts.

In addition to radio and convergence methods, I have tackled coursework
on investigative and data-driven stories. I took Computer-Assisted Reporting and
the Mapping Bootcamp with David Herzog and Investigative Reporting with Mark
Horvit. All three classes have proved invaluable to me as a journalist and
researcher. Thanks to Professor Herzog’s classes, I now know how to
manipulate and organize large amounts of data in Microsoft Access as well as
how to sift through the numbers to reveal interesting trends. I can also take that
data and map it visually using ArcView, a popular mapping software program that
few journalists know how to use but which many newsrooms find invaluable.
Thanks to Professor Horvit’s class, I can now file FOIA requests with ease, do
background checks and dig deeper for information than I ever knew was
possible. Professor Horvit’s class also taught me something less tangible but nonetheless priceless, a sense of confidence in my approach to reporting and a sense of outrage as an investigative journalist.

I believe that the skills I have acquired during my academic career at Mizzou have helped me accomplish my goal to be a more marketable, skilled reporter in today’s changing media landscape. In addition, I discovered a passion for a new kind of reporting, radio journalism, and am eager to see how I can combine that with my other interests, including data, mapping, investigative and science stories.

Because of this newfound love for radio and my improved data and investigative skills, I applied for (and received) the Lee Ester News Fellowship at Wisconsin Public Radio in Madison, Wis. My fellowship lasted from January 24 through October 23, 2011 and spanned a wide range of reporting beats. As a general assignment reporter, I covered topics as diverse as health, environment, business, education and politics. Working between 30 and 40 hours per week, I turned both daily news “spots” between 60 and 90 seconds in length as well as three and four minute feature pieces.

Within six weeks of arriving at WPR, the high profile protests over collective bargaining at the state capitol erupted, providing me with a once-in-a-lifetime chance to cut my teeth in a daily news environment. Each day, I traveled back and forth between WPR’s downtown studios and the state capitol building, where tens of thousands of citizens were marching, singing, shouting and demonstrating their support or condemnation of Governor Scott Walker’s
proposal to change collective bargaining regulations. Although I’d just started my training, I was already “synching tape” and providing short spots for the NPR news desk in addition to WPR’s thanks to the riotous protests happening just down the street from the studios.

The contentious issues didn’t stop with collective bargaining. In June, I reported on allegations of physical violence between two Wisconsin Supreme Court justices. These stories allowed me to flex my investigative muscles, giving me experience in FOIA requests, turning copy on tight deadlines, dealing with contentious personalities and many other reporting skills. It was the first time I’d ever broken a national story.

I believe Missouri scholars and students would appreciate the hands-on, baptism-by-fire training WPR provided in its fellowship. From day one, I was in the studios working with sound, fiddling with the Marantz’s and practicing writing tight copy. The capitol protests proved to be excellent training for my fellowship and likely resulted in me getting more story assignments more often. I often met with other WPR reporters and quizzed them about everything radio; they graciously endured my interviews and encouraged me to seek out every opportunity possible.

Brian Bull, WPR’s assistant news director and award-winning journalist, was my on-site mentor. Mr. Bull oversaw all the aspects of my fellowship at WPR, right down to the cubicle we shared. He helped me brainstorm story ideas, come up with a plan for how to tackle each individual story, guided me through the process of sound recording and editing and helped me post it online. I
attended morning story meetings each day where assignments were passed out and ideas generated. Before landing in Madison, WPR editors told me I should expect to produce four to five spot news stories per week on average, and maybe one or two feature stories a month. This would have amounted to 135 to 225 spot stories and nine to 18 feature stories over the course of the fellowship. The reality was far different from this overly optimistic estimate. I ended up producing close to 90 spot news stories and three feature stories for WPR, plus a few additional pieces for NPR and the Wisconsin Life Series. My two fellowship predecessors each produced between 90 and 100 spot and feature stories for WPR over the courses of their fellowships. So it turned out I was well within the “normal” range of story production, but I never stopped feeling like I should be producing more.

The stories I produces were broadcasted across the state of Wisconsin and were occasionally picked up by national programming (NPR). All of my stories are available in digital form either on WPR’s web site, the “Wisconsin Life” series site or the NPR site. Included with this project is an audio CD of some of my best work as well as a few stories that illustrate particular instances where I learned an important aspect of reporting, especially radio reporting.
Chapter Two: Field Notes

1/28/2011

Dear committee:

I've just completed my first week at Wisconsin Public Radio, and it's been edifying!

To date, I've completed my administrative tasks that included getting on payroll (hooray for a paying gig!), signing up for health care, filling out tax documents, etc. My first two or three days here consisted primarily of filling out forms, meeting WPR employees and learning the station's M.O. for operations and scheduling.

Every morning at WPR begins with an editorial meeting at about 9 a.m. All the reporters/editors in the Madison office gather in a conference room, and the other bureaus check in by phone. This is where people pitch ideas to Michael Leland (pretty much Janet's counterpart), the news director. He either "yeas" or "nays" their ideas and they proceed accordingly. It's a good chance to hear what everyone is working on and make sure we avoid any reporting redundancies.

WPR has bureaus (and therefore reporters) in Superior, Green Bay, Steven's Point, La Cross, Milwaukee and Eau Claire, as well as Madison. I'd estimate the total number of full-time WPR reporters to be about 15, not including myself.

Later this week, I worked on a "cut and copy" about the increased airport traffic due to Superbowl travelers. (I find it very appropriate that my first project here in Wisconsin included a cut about how the TSA is used to checking cheeseheads through security.) FYI, Bill and Yong, a "cut and copy" is a short
piece that usually includes one sound bite and is read by the news anchor, as opposed to the reporter herself. To make it, I made my first production studio phone calls where I recorded the sources right in the studio. I've done this before at KBIA, of course, but it's still exciting!

As a part of this first little project, I'm also learning how to use a piece of software called AudioVault. It’s the program reporters use to file the actual audio used in their stories. This is the "clearinghouse" where the anchor will go to find my specific cheeseheads cut. I don't find the software very intuitive or easy, but I'm sure that practice will make perfect! My boss said that when he first came to WPR, he'd only ever used razor blades to cut his audio tape. So if he can learn it, so can I!

I also met Anne Strainchamps, which was definitely one of the highlights this week. I tend to revere public radio personalities the way some teeny-boppers go ga-ga over Twilight celebrities. And Anne happens to host one of my all-time favorite public radio shows: "To the Best of Our Knowledge." She's also one of the producers for the relatively new "Wisconsin Life" show, which started about one year ago. The WL show features stories about Wisconsin, and they tend to be softer, more featurey-type stories. For an example, here's a link to a short story about caroling in caves that my predecessor, Kirk Carapezza, created: http://podcast.wpr.org/wlf/Caroling%20in%20the%20Cave.mp3

Anne invited me to pitch her ideas any time, and so I threw one her way today about going out to Frank Lloyd Wright's estate, Taliesin, about 45 minutes west of Madison. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the site. Anne gave
me the green light to begin digging into it, so I'm going to try to find someone who worked with Wright and hopefully get him/her to tell some good stories. This story wouldn't appear until April, in advance of when they open the house up for tours, so I've got a little time. (Any work I produce to WI Life has to be on my own time/dime, so I will make sure to keep an eye on it that it doesn't pull me away from my main responsibilities.)

Regarding the scholarly portion of my Masters project, I've set up a meeting Monday morning with Sarah Jacobs, the head of audience services, to talk about how she receives and deals with audience feedback concerning the web site. I also have two more employees to chase down and speak with: Lisa Bu and Allan Rieland, both of whom are knee-deep in the WPR.org redesign that's slated to launch next December. I expect to have meetings with those two lined up next week.

Also for next week, my boss Brian Bull said he plans to give me a few more cut and copies to work on so they can get a sense of my writing and reporting styles as well as familiarize me with the software and hardware I'll be using on a regular basis from now on. After this, he says, I can start doing longer and more autonomous spot news pieces.

So far, I love it here and I love the town. Though it's bitingly cold, the people really are warm. Any time ya'll want to come visit, you're welcome!

Best,

Teresa
Hello committee!

I'm so sorry for the delay. I ended up working Saturday so I wanted to include that bit as well in the update.

**Monday:** A big winter storm swept through southern Wisconsin today, Tuesday and Wednesday. That means I'm speaking a lot with the National Weather Service and updating more "cut and copy" stories for the morning and afternoon newscasts. It's helping me get more familiar with the recording equipment as well as practice tailoring my questions. I tend to be a little too "conversational" sometimes, which can get dangerous when a meteorologist might not have more than 2 minutes to speak with you. This experience is helping me single out the most important questions first.

I had a meeting with the manager of audience services, Sarah Jacobs. I also got two spread sheets of audience comments/complaints related to the web site, so this will give me some good foundation material for composing survey questions.

When asked if he thought WPR was perceived by the state to be liberal or conservative, my boss Brian responded, "Judging by the comments, I'd say we do an excellent job of offending both the left and the right factions."

**Tuesday:** More practice doing cuts from the NWS.

**Wednesday:** The blizzard kept everyone at home today except us die hards: me, my boss Michael and one other reporter who spent the night in a downtown hotel so he could be here to do the morning round-up. I busted out
four cuts for our afternoon and evening newscasts, and got a special shout-out
from Michael for my willingness to snowshoe to work and help out :) (The buses
weren't running that day.)

**Thursday:** Everyone's back in and the city is getting back to normal. It's
kind of a slow news day. Everything seems to be related to the Packers'
upcoming Superbowl game in Texas. I pitched five story ideas to my boss Brian
and got them all rejected, except perhaps for one. I'm having a tough time finding
just the right kinds of pitches. They have to be newsy, timely, and not covered by
another reporter. It's the last part that gives me the most trouble. If I had a dime
for every time my editor has responded, "That's really someone else's territory..."

**Friday:** No stories panned out for me today, which was frustrating, but at
least I'm plugging along, and getting practice making phone calls, dealing with
recording equipment, etc.

**Saturday:** Brought along a "Zoom" recorder to a candlelight snowshoe
event at a state park. It was my first time with this equipment and there was a
learning curve. I'm not even sure how much usable sound I have because I kept
fiddling with the buttons. Also, it was dark outside! So I'm not sure if I have the
sound I think I have... This would be for a Wisconsin Life piece, if it airs.

([wilife.tumblr.com](wilife.tumblr.com))

2/17/2011

Hey everybody!
Just a quick note that I've filed my first story with NPR, and you can hear it this evening! Tune in at the top of the hour (probably starting at 4 or 5 p.m.). Not sure of the exact time. You can also visit npr.org to hear it after it airs.

It's about student protests at the Capitol today, where thousands of students and teachers organized "walk-outs." People are sleeping in the Capitol building, banging on doors, etc. Now, the Democrats are M.I.A., stalling legislators from voting. (The bill is whipping folks into a frenzy because it would end collective bargaining rights.)

This is just one of the many neat opportunities of my WPR fellowship :)

2/26/2011

Hi committee:

Please excuse my recent communication delay! It's been an absolutely crazy couple of weeks here in Madison, WI. As I'm sure you're all aware, Wisconsin has been in the thick of political stew lately. Every day has been like a new episode of a soap opera, what with senators fleeing the state, Republicans thinking of every tactic to lure them back in, protests surrounding the Capitol every day, etc. etc.

I've been covering the events non-stop as a member of the WPR reporting team. The big news for me personally is, of course, that I got to file two stories with the national NPR desk, which means people all over the country heard my story on the radio! As my boss Michael Leland said, "It never stops being cool."
The opportunity isn't something that comes along often. I believe I'm the first WPR fellow to make it on the national airwaves.

I'm attaching those NPR spots for you to hear, as well as an audio postcard I did that'll give you a sense of the rally craziness. [Please reference multimedia CD.] There's a link at the bottom to my latest story on the WPR site. I can already tell that my voicing is improving, and I'm getting much faster at turning copy around. I'm learning a lot every day - it's hard to believe that I'm starting my 6th week here!

Because of the reporting madness, I haven't had any time to work on the scholarly research portion of my project. Starting next week, tho, I'm meeting with Lisa Bu and Alan Rieland, two WPR employees responsible for the web site redesign.

I'm also setting up phone interviews with NPR web folks (names yet to be determined) to interview them about their methodology. I recently learned that Lisa and Alan may have already sent out audience surveys regarding web site redesign. If this is the case, I'll ask for access to the results, which I can study and use as part of my final paper.

Hope this finds you all well!

-Teresa

My latest story, about teacher layoffs (#2 on the news page):

http://wpr.org/news/newsstories.cfm#PRELIMLAYOFFS
3-4-2011

Hi committee:

This marks the end of week #3 of the Capitol protests, and things have settled down in the newsroom a bit. I've done some stories focusing on layoffs and several cut-and-copy's that get general reactions from around the state to the Guv's proposed budget (not the budget repair bill, which is what all the protests are about).

Here's a link to the 9 spot pieces I've produced so far for WPR. This doesn't count my NPR spots, or the cut-and-copy's. I've spent some time looking at my predecessors' work in the WPR archives. They each produced a total of close to 100 stories (spots and features combined) during their nine months at WPR. I've got about 30 weeks remaining in the fellowship, with 90 stories to produce before I'm up to their mark. That means I should be averaging about 3 stories a week. Right now my major hurdle is story ideas. Michael and Brian assure me that this talent will develop naturally as I get a feel for the news here in Wisconsin, but right now it sure is hard!

This week, I met with three WPR employees who have all been involved with the website redesign in some fashion: Alan Rieland, Stephanie Elkin and Lisa Bu. These were preliminary, informational meetings. I have further meetings set up next week with Alan and Lisa. Lisa in particular has been helpful. She's the director of new media technology at WPR. She finished her PhD dissertation last year on audience habits in new media, particularly web sites, including a bit on uses and gratifications. She sent me her dissertation today. Included in that is
a WPR audience survey she performed last year that got a 30% response rate (1000 out of 3000), and I intend to use that as a secondary data source if you're all OK with that plan.

In fact, I found out about two other surveys that were done, both in the last year, that could also serve as secondary data sources. That way, I might not be reinventing the wheel and could study their results about what the audience says regarding the web site. I also have data from Audience Services about website-specific comments. I'm seeking your input now, particularly Yong's, on whether it would be OK to do a qualitative study of this survey data rather than formulate and send out my own survey.

Officially, I'll be graduating in August if all goes according to plan, so I have a little more time than originally thought to do the survey work, if we decide to go that route.

I'll be working on my first feature story next week, about rising employment in Wisconsin. Stay tuned!

Hope you all are well,

-Teresa

4/1/2011

Hey Committee:

Snowing again here in Wisconsin. I'm beginning to think "spring" is just a concept the tourist board devised to lure visitors. Then they get addicted to beer and cheese and forget about leaving. Anyway, good week on stories, slow week on project. I've done a story every day this week - by far my highest turnaround
rate. It's becoming a lot easier to turn stories quickly, and even a little easier thinking of story ideas. I learned that none of the other reporters really track education or automobile/manufacturing stories, and those areas have yielded a few items for me lately. As always, you can check in with my progress here: http://wpr.org/news/newsstories.cfm?Message=&search_FromStoryDate=01%2F24%2F11&search_tostorydate=04%2F01%2F11&search_text=shipley&search_topic=#ReturnPage#

I've got another meeting scheduled next week with the Audience Services staff about listener logs and learning from them how to track website-related complaints/comments. No interviews related to my project this week.

Thanks all,

Teresa

5/10/2011

Hi Bill, Janet and Yong,

Yes, it's been a while since I've checked in with you. Work got busy and the hours have been long here at Wisconsin Public Radio with all the political intrigue that's been happening since February. I'd love for you to check out what I've been doing!

I didn't hear back from anyone after my last email, but I'm hoping that we can set up a time to meet and for me to defend. As you know, the date got pushed to an August graduation (we hope). That means I'd need to defend, have book bindery receipt, etc., by July 21.

Let's start talking about dates. I'm hoping for late June, which would give me enough time to make any necessary revisions. I realize this might be difficult given your summer schedules. And, I realize that I am the late one here, not you guys, and so I have no unreasonable expectations about getting together. I'm just keeping my fingers crossed! I am here at WPR until mid-November (I think that's why I've been taking my sweet time).

So, what do your schedules look like in late June. Let's say for a Friday or a Monday?

All the best,

Teresa Shipley

5/18/2011

Hi Committee!

As I'm sure you're aware, I slacked off on my weekly memos for quite a while. Though I'm assured this happens all the time, I don't feel any less guilty about it, and I'd like to catch you up on what I've been doing at Wisconsin Public Radio and the lessons I've learned.

My last weekly memo was in early April and talked about my upcoming meeting with Audience Services and the high volume of stories I've been turning out.
Here's what's happened in the last 6 weeks:

- I learned more than I ever thought possible about civil processes and local government. This is thanks to the countless hours I've spent either at the Capitol or tracking Capitol politics. In the newsroom, we refer to the saga as "a soap opera," because it seems every day some shocking new development comes to light. Most recently, it's possible voter fraud in the state Supreme Court elections.

- I learned that even if you have a really good argument, you're not going to win against your boss/editor. I recently covered a bill that would allow concealed gun carry in Wisconsin. The pro-gun people told me guns make crime go down. The anti-gun people told me guns make crime go up. So I spent an entire 8-hour day researching this, gathering data, looking at FBI crime statistics and Dept. of Justice numbers... And I found out that there seems to be no correlation one way or the other. So I put this in my story, thinking it was relevant to give some perspective. But my boss made me take it out; he felt it sounded "jarring" to the listener and that it didn't flow with the rest of the story.

- I learned creative ways to dig for story ideas. Search the WPR archives to see if an old story can be advanced; set up RSS feeds from a multitude of diverse sources; search small town newspapers for local stories that might have a statewide impact; troll the PR
newswires; cold-call legislative offices about potential bills in the works; eavesdrop on others’ conversations (which means no iPod listening)...

- I learned the difference between "jibe" and "jive." In a story, I reported that X does not "jive" with Y. I listened for the story to play on the radio that night, but it never aired. The next morning, my boss informed me that he'd pulled it because the word I should have used was "jibe." And it wasn't news by the next day, so my story died right there. Obviously, I've learned to be more careful about choosing my words and question what assumptions I'm making about their definitions and/or connotations.

- I learned that working ahead on stories now breeds more stories later. One of the most frustrating things that can happen to a reporter is a story-less day. So on those days, I work ahead on big feature stories, do FOIA requests, make notes for the next incoming Fellow about WPR life, send out calls to PR folks to "ping" for news, etc. Ironically, I didn't apply this advice to my Masters project - until now!

So there's just a short update of what I've been up to. You can see some of my stories here:

Thank you all for your patience and helping see this through. Please stay tuned for another memo in a couple days, where I'll have more specific things to say about the Project and some questions I have.

Best,

Teresa

11/05/2011

Hi Bill:

I'm checking in after being AWOL for a long time. I've just finished the Fellowship at Wisconsin Public Radio. It was a wild ride! I learned so much about reporting, especially radio reporting. I'd love to tell you more about it if you have the time.

I'm writing because I would really love to finish up my degree. I know I've taken my sweet time, and I apologize for the long delay. I found it too difficult to work full time and finish my school work -- just as you predicted I would. But now I'm free from full time work for a while, and I'd love to take the opportunity to dig in and finish everything.

By my count, here's what I still need to do:

1. Final paper for Communications Law class (I'm working with Charles Davis on this.)

2. Final paper for my independent study with you. This was a 1-credit class. We talked about doing a story on food deserts, or possibly something on Aldo Leopold. But I wonder if you also might take a look at
my work for WPR and we could see if I might tease something out of that. Ideas?

3. Final project draft + meeting with you and the other committee members (Janet Saidi and Yong Volz).

My goal is to finish one paper per month. So by the end of January, I would be free to finish my final project. Hopefully, I could come to Mizzou to defend by March. What do you think?

Thank you for your constant support of me during my fellowship and for being so willing to give me time to finish my final project. I really hope to bring this thing on home! Gotta get that piece of paper!

All my best to you, and hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

-Teresa Shipley
Chapter Three: Project Evaluation and Lessons Learned

Being WPR’s Lee Ester News Fellow was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I think I managed to squeeze just about every drop I could from it during my nine months in Madison. I was so fortunate to work with very talented reporters and editors who were also incredibly generous with their time and knowledge. For the most part, the other reporters weren’t territorial about their beats and happily let me shadow them, partner with them, and even independently produce my own stories in their topic areas from time to time.

I also had the opportunity to mentor two undergraduate newsroom interns. This experience helped me solidify the lessons I was learning from my superiors. I was able to help guide the interns through the reporting process, much the same way other graduate students helped me when I worked for a semester at KBIA radio. By mentoring them in areas like story development, recording, interviewing techniques, script writing and voicing, I became a better reporter.

Just a few of the lessons I learned are itemized here:

• I learned more than I ever thought possible about civil processes and local government. This is thanks to the countless hours I spent either at the Capitol or tracking Capitol politics. In the newsroom, we referred to the saga as "a soap opera," because it seemed every day some shocking new development came to light: Just one example included possible voter fraud in the state Supreme Court elections.
• I learned the value of arguing with an editor. Even if I don’t win the argument, the process is extremely useful for establishing perspective, which ultimately enhances not only the story being discussed, but also my skills as a reporter. For example, I once covered a bill that would have allowed concealed gun carry in Wisconsin. The pro-gun people told me guns make crime go down. The anti-gun people told me guns make crime go up. So I spent an entire eight hour day researching this, gathering data, looking at FBI crime statistics and Dept. of Justice numbers... And I found out that there seems to be no correlation one way or the other. So I put this in my story, thinking it was relevant to give some perspective. But my boss made me take it out; he felt it sounded "jarring" to the listener and that it didn't flow with the rest of the story.

• I learned creative ways to dig for story ideas. For example, I searched the WPR archives to see if an old story could be advanced; set up RSS feeds from a multitude of diverse sources; searched small town newspapers for local stories that might have a statewide impact; trolled the PR newswires; cold-called legislative offices about potential bills in the works; eavesdropped on others' conversations (which meant no iPod listening)...

• I learned the difference between "jibe" and "jive." In a story, I reported that X does not "jive" with Y. I listened for the story to play on the radio that night, but it never aired. The next morning, my
boss informed me that he’d pulled it because the word I should have used was "jibe." And it wasn't news by the next day, so my story died right there. Obviously, I've learned to be more careful about choosing my words and question what assumptions I'm making about their definitions and/or connotations.

- I learned that working ahead on stories now breeds more stories later. One of the most frustrating things that can happen to a reporter is a story-less day. So on those days, I worked ahead on big feature stories, made FOIA requests, make notes for the next incoming Fellow about WPR life, sent out calls to PR folks to "ping" for news, etc.

From June through September of 2011, I had the incredible opportunity to break a national story about allegations of physical violence between two Wisconsin Supreme Court justices. I go in to great detail about this experience in Appendices 3 and 4, but a few of the lessons I learned as that story unfolded include:

- I got a lot more experience filing records requests, including not taking no for an answer (tracking down Tubbs in person at the Capitol is one example). One of my FOIA requests eventually yielded 117 pages of the Dane County Sheriff's office investigation into the altercation.
• I experienced being hampered by WPR’s horrible online system and lack of a good website. It kept us from being the first ones to officially report the story, even though the story was technically mine. This was further proof for my professional analysis that WPR needed a better web presence.

• Don’t let someone steal your story. Keep your cards close to your chest, and be careful about who tell information to, no matter how tempting. Demand to be kept in the loop.

• Don’t lose track of the story in the quiet weeks where nothing is happening. Strike up a conversation with a retired judge and have him comment on the “what-if’s.” Even if that isn’t a story at that moment, it’s sure worthwhile when something breaks because it informs your perspective.

• Never turn your phone off. You never know when the chief of police is going to call!
Chapter Four: Abundant Physical Evidence

I am including a multimedia disk containing a robust selection of my radio stories produced during my time at WPR, which reflect the growth I experienced as a reporter and broadcaster. The materials on the disk are itemized and explained in Appendix 3.

All 90 of the stories I produced for WPR from January through November, 2011 are also listed online here: http://bit.ly/x1M6Ia. Full scripts of these stories are not available since WPR does not currently post its news scripts online.

Among these 90, two projects I was involved in at WPR won awards, one through the Milwaukee Press Club and one through the Wisconsin Broadcaster’s Association. These award-winning stories are also listed in Appendix 3 and the titles highlighted in bold. The first award-winning project was a series our newsroom did on the economic recovery called “Two Years Later.” As part of that, I did a feature on the resurgence in small businesses, an idea I cultivated and researched entirely on my own. This won the 2011 Milwaukee Press Club’s Gold award for “Best documentary, investigative or public affairs story or series.”

The second award-winning project was our team’s coverage of the Wisconsin Supreme Court and the allegations of a physical altercation between two justices. I was the initial reporter to become aware of this story, and subsequently worked with three other reporters to produce a series of stories on our web site and the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism’s site. WPR
won 2nd place in the Wisconsin Broadcaster Association’s 2011 awards for “Continuing Coverage” of the Supreme Court altercation.

I am also including on the CD two stories I produced for WPR’s “Wisconsin Life” series, one a backstage pass to Frank Lloyd Wright’s house, Taliesin, and the other an ode to nighttime snowshoeing. These stories will also be listed in Appendix 3.

In Appendix 4, I include the scripts of every story I wrote on the subject of the Wisconsin Supreme Court altercation over a three-month period. They are listed in order of the most recent story first.
Chapter Five: Analysis

How Audience Habits Should Influence the Development of Radio Station Web Sites

A Case Study of Wisconsin Public Radio

Media outlets have faced a lot of change in the past decade: the increasing dominance of the Internet, the transition to digital formats and shrinking newsrooms, to name a few. But the root challenges taxing newsrooms aren’t new: Media outlets are still facing the same twin hurdles of figuring out what content consumers want, and how to get them to pay for it. They just have to fight their battles on a new playing field, one that’s much “flatter” thanks to the Internet. (Friedman)

Online sites represent an organization’s window to the world, allowing a news outfit the broadest possible reach. Young audiences are habituated to consuming news online, rather than watching it via TV, reading it, or listening to the radio. Radio stations would therefore benefit greatly from analytical study of web sites, particularly through the lens of audience uses and gratifications. A recent study by Dr. Lisa Bu on media consumption habits also sheds very useful light on how radio stations might want to think about tailoring their web sites for new and existing audiences. This analysis explores what Wisconsin Public Radio could do to better serve its online audience.
Wisconsin Public Radio is one of the nation’s oldest and most venerable public broadcasting institutions. As such, it’s no stranger to evolution. Its beginning was humble: In 1914, a University of Wisconsin electrical engineering professor set up a personal wireless transmitter, later receiving his own call sign from the Department of Commerce. Just two years later, station 9XM broadcasted its first bulletin of a Wisconsin state weather forecast by Morse code. Soon after, the station incorporated music. In 1919, after the Army had time to fiddle with the controls, the first documented broadcast of human speech occurred, quickly followed by relicensure by the U.S. Commerce Department as “WHA,” making the station one of the oldest in the United States, and one of the first educational institutions (along with WLB at the University of Minnesota) to be granted a license in the new "limited commercial" category for broadcasting. (Rieland & Davidson)

The university-owned station WHA has a history of innovation, both in terms of programming offered and also in its quick response to changing technology. Randall Davidson describes how the station became a tangible example of ‘the Wisconsin Idea,’ bringing the educational riches of the university to all the state’s residents. From the beginning, those involved with the radio station felt it should ‘provide a service for the practical use of Wisconsin citizens.’ (Davidson, 2007)

Its “Chapter A Day” program, which debuted in the 1920s, is one of the longest running radio shows in history, involving nothing more than dramatic
readings of book chapters yet remaining extremely popular today. In 1932, network stations pioneered “the use of radio for political discussion by candidates” with the "Political Education Forum." (Rieland & Davidson) The WHA network was also constantly improving its technological capacities and audience reach by building new towers and stations across Wisconsin. In 1947, years before the "FM" band became more popular than "AM", the state constructed an FM network in Madison. Those stations became the backbone of the network now known as Wisconsin Public Radio. In 1984, the WPR network became one of only 22 sites in the U.S. with a National Public Radio satellite uplink. (ibid) The station began replacing all of its analog equipment in 1994, and the very next year published its first web site pages online at WPR.org. As of 2005, that site contained the equivalent of 10,000 pages of information and received more than 1,600,000 page views each month. (ibid)

Yet while WPR has remained at the forefront of technology and innovation for most of its history, in recent years the radio station has lagged behind its counterparts when it comes to a polished, interactive web site. The current WPR site looks much as it did in 1995, according to WPR News Director Michael Leland. The site aesthetics have not kept pace with evolving audience preferences. It continues to be text dense, difficult to navigate and lack many basic interactive functions such as online comment sections (Image 1). An employee in WPR’s Audience Services department, whose job is to interact with and satisfy the listener audience through answering phones, emails and web comments, said of the site’s lack of functionality, “I’ve been here three years and
I still find things on the web site I didn’t know were there. I’d say that happens at least once a week.” (Personal interview, WPR Staff)

It’s clear that this lack of a robust online presence hurts WPR. As news consumers migrate online, media organizations have seen their advertising revenue plummet. “In 2011, losses in print advertising dollars outpaced gains in digital revenue by a factor of roughly 10 to 1, a ratio even worse than in 2010,” according to the Pew Research Center. (Pew, 2009) But “the news industry does not know -- and has done less than it could to learn -- how to convert this more active online audience into revenue.” (Pew, 2012)

Image 1: The current WPR.org site.

Even though public radio follows a non-profit model and has a different revenue stream than its commercial counterparts, it is still losing audience to online news sites. (Bu, 2010) That translates to a lot of potential lost donations,
especially since radio fund drives occur via broadcast. If public broadcasting is to remain a viable, competitive model in the current news landscape, it must devote more energy and resources toward recapturing its online audience as well as retaining its offline, listening audience. It must also realize that the demographics of its listening audience are different from those of its online audience. To that end, understanding the content users want, need and expect from a news website is critical to a radio station’s online success.

WPR is by no means alone in its lack of attention to the importance of a sleek, useful web site. Radio as a whole has been slow to respond to increasing its online presence. NPR, the nation’s largest public radio network, didn’t launch its website redesign until mid-2009. (Brand, 2009)

According to the Pew Research Center for Excellence in Journalism, two trends have emerged in 2012 that reinforce “the sense that the gap between the news and technology industries is widening.

First, the explosion of new mobile platforms and social media channels represents another layer of technology with which news organizations must keep pace. Second, in the last year a small number of technology giants began rapidly moving to consolidate their power by becoming makers of “everything” in our digital lives. Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple and a few others are maneuvering to make the hardware people use, the operating systems that run those devices, the browsers on which people navigate, the e-mail services on which they communicate, the social networks on which they share and the web platforms on which they
shop and play… A year ago, we wrote here: “The news industry, late to adapt and culturally more tied to content creation than engineering, finds itself more a follower than leader shaping its business.” In 2012, that phenomenon has grown. (Pew, 2012)

It turns out that one of the biggest barriers to success for radio stations - indeed, any public broadcasting outlet - is the very law which signed them into existence, the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. Dr. Lisa Bu, who wrote her dissertation on radio audience media habits in digital platforms, writes a comprehensive overview of the current public broadcasting model:

Created by the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, America’s public broadcasting system is a network of nearly 1,300 independent member stations, of which 365 are public television stations and 900 public radio stations. Even though the Act created the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) to oversee the development of public telecommunication system, the law prohibits CPB from owning or operating any television or radio stations, or producing or disseminating programs to the public. The main function of CPB is to distribute federal funding as grants to member stations and special projects. All member stations are locally owned, locally controlled, and locally supported with three major revenue streams -- federal and local government grants, corporate sponsorship, and public donations. Each station also makes independent decision about its production structures and workflows. (Bu)
This fragmented system reinforces the “silo” mentality that has become detrimental to public broadcasting’s success. Bu writes,

Radio and television programs often have a fixed broadcast schedule. Their production usually follows a set of work routines carefully developed by media organizations to coordinate the work of a staff and to meet rigid deadlines. Some of those deeply entrenched routines or organizational habits may become obstacles as an organization tries to adapt to the digital age. A successful adaptor usually has changed its organizational habits from working in medium silos (radio vs. television vs. online) to working in an integrated media environment. (ibid)

The CPB is required to distribute two-thirds of federal funding to local television stations, 22 percent to radio stations, and six percent for “system support,” for areas like research, planning and professional development. This formula has never been updated (to include an online component, for example), making it extremely difficult for stations to break out of the silo structure. (ibid)

One of the main uses of the WPR web site identified by audience listener services was to access news stories, either previously heard on-air or not yet read or heard. (Personal interview, WPR staff) Other identified primary audience uses of the WPR site were related to archives and live streaming. (ibid) This silo mentality is very prominent at WPR, with the radio, TV and online staff having little interaction or content sharing.
Because some of the main reasons audience members called in related directly to the news portion of the WPR site, WPR administrators made the decision to roll out a re-design in stages rather than all at once, with the news site appearing first. In late 2011, the WPR news department’s new site appeared, news.wpr.org, and followed a template designed and distributed by NPR (Image 2). The new News site allows the online audience to listen to the aired broadcast directly from the story landing page. It also contains clear and easily accessible links to podcasts and RSS feeds, as well as updated station schedules. As attractive as this new site is, however, it is still not fully integrated with the “parent” WPR.org site. From the News site, clicking on “Support” leads a user directly back to the old purple and red WPR.org site with its dense text, user-unfriendly designs and antiquated styling. While the new site is much more visually appealing, having two WPR sites can create a sense of confusion and fragmentation for listeners who go online. Audience services employees bemoaned the difficulties they have with callers who can’t navigate the WPR sites, “People don’t know the difference between NPR and WPR. They get really confused.” (ibid)
Uses and Gratifications through the lens of “habit”

The “Uses and Gratifications” theory sees the media audience as active communicators rather than passive consumers. (Bu) In terms of U&G specific to radio, Mendelsohn identified several reasons for radio listening: companionship, filling a void created by daily routine, altering mood, relieving boredom, providing news and information, allowing active participation in events such as sports and overcoming social isolation. (Mendelsohn) But listening to radio is an inherently passive activity. By migrating online, radio listeners transition from passive to active content consumers. Bu’s research shows that individuals’ media habits have strong influences on the decision on which content to use. As younger
audiences are more habituated to consuming news online than their elderly counterparts, one could argue that devoting more resources toward developing original online content will become a necessity for radio station web sites.

During a personal interview with Dr. Bu, it became apparent that her data was less about which specific stories and treatments received the most traffic on WPR’s web site and more about the audience uses, gratifications and media habits that informed their likeliness to use the site at all, and their willingness to pay for content. Bu’s research on media habits as a motivator distinct from U&G adds significantly to the field of research on radio station web sites. And by analyzing Bu’s data from the angle of U&G theory, one can discover not only how and why audience members visit a radio station’s web site, therefore revealing to journalists and editors more about how they might want to produce and air a story, but also the underlying passive habits associated with accessing those stories on the web site, giving online editors useful data in terms of whom they should be targeting, ads, story placement on the web site, etc. As such, this survey data can allow WPR to once again return to its tradition of innovation and being at the forefront of technology by incorporating many of the elements revealed in Bu’s study. This analysis is therefore based on results from Bu’s dissertation.

The survey targeted the WPR listening audience, aged 18 and older, who tuned in either by radio or on the Internet including program downloading. WPR’s on-air broadcast covers all Wisconsin and parts of neighboring states such as Minnesota and Illinois, and the online downloads can be accessed from
anywhere in the world via the internet. There was no complete list of WPR listeners, but the station does keep a database of about 30,000 listeners who have contacted WPR to donate, to subscribe to the newsletter, or for other purposes. That database was the sample frame, and a random sample of people was selected from the database to complete a survey. The survey was anonymous. On March 14, 2010, the questionnaire was sent to 10,829 randomly selected listeners from the database. When the survey was closed on April 14, the study had collected 1,513 completed questionnaires with the response rate of 13.9 percent. (Bu, pg. 61)

The survey data asked online audience members specifically about their gratification motivations for using the WPR web site, including options such as social utility (using news to facilitate social interaction), personal utility (using news for problem solving), surveillance (using news to acquire information), parasocial relationship (using news for perceived interaction with media personalities, i.e., to follow the work of certain journalists), diversion (using news to escape). (Bu, pg. 81)

The survey also asked respondents how often they listened to news or other programs online rather than on-air, as well as questions about their perceived usability of the web site (“In general I can find what I want on WPR’s website,” “In general it’s easy to play audio on WPR’s website,” and “In general it’s easy to download audio from WPR’s website”). (ibid, pg. 78)

The survey also asked about respondents’ willingness to pay for news online: “If my favorite news website begins charging a fee, I think I will pay to
continue using it on my computer.” (ibid, pg. 82) It turns out that it depends on the media form whether or not people are willing to pay for content. The association is negative for TV, but positive for online content. (ibid, pg. 97)

The demographics of the respondents reflected an audience that was primarily female (61 percent), with the largest age range in the 35-64 group (63.5 percent). Out of the three traditional media channel related habits (watching TV, listening to radio, and accessing content online), only the habit of listening to radio has significant negative effect on WPR digital news use. (ibid, pg. 92) Basically, people who tend to listen to radio more often also tend to consume WPR’s web content less frequently. Furthermore, the data also show that listeners who are younger, who consider WPR’s website useful, and who are likely to access news online are more likely to use WPR’s website. Those same respondents who consider the website useful and who are more likely to use the site are also less likely to be radio listeners. WPR should prepare itself for the possibility that as its young audience ages, its preference for the online medium may diminish or even stop their habit of using radio. (ibid, pg. 116)

According to the data, the habit of checking national and international news was associated with more use of digital media, while the habits of reading the newspaper and listening to radio were associated with less use of digital media. WPR should therefore consider placing more national and international content on its website to encourage development of new habits among its digital audience. (ibid, pg. 111)
When it came to willingness to pay for content, middle-aged adults, who both listened to radio and watched TV regularly were less likely to say they were willing to pay for content. But those who preferred online news sources were more likely to pay. Elderly adults who preferred the online medium were also more likely to be willing to pay for content. For young respondents (33 and younger), there was no correlation between the content medium and their willingness to pay; in general, they were unwilling. Bu speculates that these generational differences may reflect the fact that young people tend to have less disposable income, and therefore are less willing to pay for online news when they can get news so many other places for free. Also, Bu states, “Young people grew up during the time when online news usually was free, while older people were used to paying for traditional news. Each group’s past experience with paying for news may have influenced their present attitude at paying for online news. (ibid, pg. 112)

This has broad and potentially disturbing implications for WPR. Unless younger generations develop a habit of listening to radio, Bu’s data suggest that their typical gratifications won’t be enough to overcome their innate unwillingness to pay for content. They may not even be listening to radio at all, unless their immediate social networks inspire them to do so or they otherwise develop the habit on their own. In other words, the sooner WPR can cultivate a listening habit among its younger audiences, the more likely those listeners will be to donate to the organization.
Bu’s evidence challenges an important assumption of Uses and Gratifications theory that media consumers are always an active audience. She therefore opens new territory for audience research by distinguishing habits from gratifications. (ibid, pg. 115)

WPR has many options for building upon its new “News” web site and for rolling out an updated version of its parent site. Based on Bu’s research and other literature in the field of U&G, it is clear that WPR needs to work toward engaging young audiences, who in particular are hungry for customizable content on the web. In the case of a radio news Web site, this content could take the form of region- or city-specific tab options rather than one catch-all statewide option. According to the survey data, content also needs to include more national and international content. Radio station web sites also need to include more space for audience participation, which might come in the form of creative ways to engage citizens with their local government officials, politicians, scientists, etc., or in the form of surveys and questionnaires. The web site should also branch into the realm of interactivity by including a blog and a discussion forum, or even citizen journalism opportunities for students such as publishing student-produced content. At a university-based station like the WPR flagship in Madison, this last opportunity is very feasible. One thing the station cannot afford to do is wait. As audiences become increasingly habituated to navigating to other online content that gratifies them, they’ll become less and less likely to return to a site like WPR.org.
More broadly, these findings can benefit other radio station web sites by encouraging administrators to think about online audiences not only in terms of audience uses and gratifications but also their passive consumption habits. The survey data show important distinctions between audience ages and the willingness to pay for online content, and also highlight some potentially disturbing trends for radio stations: Younger audiences may be less likely to listen to the radio at all, preferring instead to get all their news content online. Radio stations should explore more customizable online content and include more national and international news on their sites to draw in news consumers and ingrain the habit of checking their web sites. Also, having staff devoted to compiling audience feedback, such as WPR’s Listener Services department, is crucial to keeping a finger on the ever-changing pulse of news consumption.
References


Personal interview with WPR Audience Services staff, 4-06-11.

Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2009, p. 1 of Introduction

Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2012, Overview


Appendix 1: Changes to my original project proposal

My original project plan proposed to conduct an online audience survey to examine the reasons and motivations behind their use of WPR.org. However, soon after arriving at WPR for my fellowship, I learned that my colleague Lisa Bu had already conducted an extensive survey for her dissertation on a very similar subject. After receiving permission from my Master’s committee, I determined to use Ms. Bu’s survey data to analyze audience motivations according to the “Uses and Gratifications” theory. I think it worthy to note, however, that Ms. Bu found “media habits” have a substantial effect on audience uses of radio, beyond expected gratifications:

Guided by habit research in psychology, sociology and communications, this study conducted an online survey of Wisconsin Public Radio listeners and found that, first, certain content and channel related media habits are distinct from gratifications and exert independent influences on digital media use above and beyond the influence of gratifications. Second, certain media habits are also distinct from attention to news and exert independent influence on civic participation above and beyond the influence of attention. But the influence varies for different generational groups. Third, certain media habits have significant effects on one’s willingness to pay for online news, but the effects do not exist for young people. Fourth, the habit of using radio has negative effects on digital media use. The cross-channel effects are both direct and indirect by
influencing the perception of the usefulness and ease of use of digital media. Finally, consumers’ social networks have positive effects on their digital channel habits even after accounting for the influence of gratifications.

During a personal interview with Dr. Bu, it became apparent that her data was less about which specific stories and treatments received the most traffic on WPR’s web site and more about the audience uses, gratifications and media habits that informed their likeliness to use the site at all, and their willingness to pay for content. As Bu’s research on media habits as a motivator distinct from U&G adds significantly to the field of research on radio station web sites, I found her data incredibly useful from the perspective that it allows WPR to understand at more basic levels to whom it should be targeting its material, ads, story placement on the web site, etc. As such, this survey data can allow WPR to once again return to its tradition of innovation and being at the forefront of technology by incorporating many of the elements revealed in Bu’s study.
Appendix 2: Narrative of My Wisconsin Supreme Court Coverage

The following narrative details my time covering the Wisconsin Supreme Court during a three month period in 2011. This narrative outlines key reporting techniques I learned as a result of this fellowship at WPR, including experience with FOIA requests, reporting on contentious issues, interviewing combustible personalities and working on very tight deadlines. This story even garnered me a letter of thanks from the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin at Madison for my involvement in bringing the story to light.

This story eventually made national headlines, and I was the reporter who broke it. Reporting this story stretched my investigative muscles and helped me build new ones. The ups and downs of this reporting experience taught me a wealth of hard-earned truisms, which I think can only be gained in a real-world setting and over a long period. I can’t think of a better way to demonstrate to my Master’s Committee all that I learned during my time at WPR than to share this narrative from my experience during the Supreme Court “saga.” I’ve written this narrative in diary form, beginning with how I found out about the story.

For the actual radio scripts produced during this time period, please see Appendix 4.
Supreme Court Narrative

Tuesday, June 21

A woman stops by my office today. She looks tentative, like she wants to say something. I ask if she’s looking for my boss, Brian, who shares the office with me but isn’t there at the moment. She says “Maybe,” then tells me that she’s got something to say but that it’s very sensitive.

I invite her in and she tells me what she knows about an incident between two Wisconsin Supreme Court justices, David Prosser and Ann Walsh Bradley. She thinks it occurred the week prior on Monday or Tuesday (the 13 or 14) but she’s not sure. She thinks the police chief at the Capitol was notified. She says Prosser grabbed Bradley by the neck in a strangle hold. She’s really upset about it; it comes out that she’s friends with Bradley because they both live in Wausau. This woman tells me she’s on the Judicial Commission - the body in charge of investigating judicial misconduct. Other than concern for her friend, I can’t see that she would have any axe to grind.

I tell my boss and one other reporter, Gil Halsted. My boss downplayed it a lot at first, but Gil and I thought something might be there. I said I’d file a records request with the Capitol Police. I also called the Capitol Police Chief Charles Tubbs to see if he’d just tell me over the phone whether an incident occurred. At this point, we were not sure whether an actual incident report had been filed with them. Our source made it sound like one had, but she wasn’t sure.
I filed the records request with Tubbs, asking for any communication, including emails, phone records and other reports - including incident reports - between his office and the Supreme Court from the week of June 13.

**Wednesday, July 22**

Tubbs hadn’t returned my phone call by Wednesday so I went up to the Capitol to find him in person. He was very courteous but pointedly said, “I can’t say anything about it,” and later, “I can’t say anything about that.” The way he said “it” and “that” really made me feel like something had indeed occurred, and that was really exciting and motivating to me because I had thought up to this point that it might all be nothing. Tubbs encouraged me to go through the Dept. of Administration to get permission to talk to him. (He’s not “allowed” to talk to reporters without the DOA say-so.)

Meanwhile, Gil had called Bill Leuders at the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism and brought him on board. Initially, I wasn’t too happy about this because I was worried about our source’s identity remaining hidden. (Lesson: sometimes you can’t even trust your colleagues.) Also, Gil never consulted with me before bringing Bill on board, so he basically shared everything I had told him our source said without even letting me know. That made me really nervous, since I didn’t know who this new guy was.
Thursday, July 23

By Thursday, I still hadn’t received any records request info. All I could do was keep calling the Dept. of Administration and make sure they had my request, were clear about what I was asking for, etc.

Bill Leuders from WCIJ and Gil were both getting really restless. We decided to see if we could find some more sources. Bill called the Supreme Court spokeswoman, and she actually told him quite a bit and verified many things our original source had said. But of course it was upon condition of not being named. One reason why she talked to Bill is because he’s been an investigative journalist in Madison for 25 years - so he knows everyone.

Because of his long career, Bill also happened to have Prosser’s cell phone number. So he called Prosser, after he’d gotten the story verified that second time by the spokeswoman. I was in the room and heard the whole conversation. Bill recounted the alleged story to Prosser. Prosser kept repeating, “I can’t say anything about it.” Bill gave Prosser several opportunities to confirm or deny any part of the story, which Prosser did not do. (I was kind of amazed at Bill’s ability to remain calm during this conversation; my heart was pounding.)

Meanwhile, Gil was working on getting Bradley. He had known her for more than 10 years. They both used to live in Wausau and have a rapport. We agreed that if she’d talk to anyone, it’d be Gil. He ended up talking to her three or four different times between Thursday afternoon (23rd) and Friday evening (24th). Each time, she opened up a bit more. It was obvious she was antsy and wanted to say something - just not be quoted on the record about it.
Friday June 24

By Friday morning, Bill wanted to run a story. But I said we didn’t have enough sources. Bradley still hadn’t verified anything to Gil. We only had our original source, who was not a witness, and the spokeswoman, who was also not a witness. I did not feel comfortable running a story at that point. Neither did our two editors, Andy Hall and Michael Leland. They agreed we needed more.

Luckily, Bradley called Gil back on Friday night. She finally verified a few key aspects of the story. Since she was a witness, we felt good about running the story. We had three “knowledgeable” sources, one of whom was the alleged victim. We had several key aspects of the story verified independently by each source.

In a phone conference with our editors late Friday night, we decided to break the story at 8 a.m. Saturday. We decided Bill’s story would appear first on the WCIJ website and that they would send an email blast to news organizations around the state/country letting them know of the development. WPR could not get the story on air until Sunday because of the strange way radio works on the weekends. (Since weekend airtime is mostly preprogrammed and mostly full of national shows, we don’t usually have any airtime slotted for local news on Saturday and Sunday.)

Saturday, June 25

As agreed, Bill’s version of the story appeared on the WCIJ website at 8 a.m. It was partially written by Gil and myself and fact-checked by Kate Golden.

You can see it here

By 9 a.m., the story had hit the lefty blogosphere. By 10 a.m., some major newspapers were carrying Bill’s version online, including the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel (MJS) and the AP. (ex: http://www.jsonline.com/blogs/news/124537284.html)

[SIDENOTE: After that, it seems we were locked in a story war with the MJS. Their reporters jumped right on it - Patrick Marley is an amazing political reporter!]

That day, we called Prosser and Bradley and several of the other justices to try to get them to comment. No one answered their phones.

That’s why we at WPR/WCIJ were surprised to see that by Saturday evening, the MJS had their own version of the story that offered a conflicting account. Their sources said it was Bradley who rushed at Prosser, and his hands ended up on her neck “in self-defense.” They also got a statement from Prosser’s office that the other allegations would be proven false.

The interesting thing about Saturday was the nature of the breaking news: It was constant. I happened to be out to dinner with Kate Golden Saturday evening when Capitol Police chief Charles Tubbs finally returned my phone call. He told me that he’d be issuing a press release Monday morning. OK, I thought. That’s one piece of information we have that the MJS doesn’t.
I’d already been in to the studio and written/voiced one piece, set to air Sunday morning. I knew I had to go back in to include the statement from Tubbs. It’s 10 p.m. by this time.

Then, after I get home, I check my email once more and find out the MJS has posted another story - this time with a comment from Bradley. She’s gone on the record and told them that Prosser put his hands on her neck “in anger in a chokehold.” We were a bit miffed that she hadn’t returned any of our calls but spoke instead to the MJS.

So I wrote a final script for the story to air Sunday morning and sent it to Gil, who hadn’t been to the office Saturday and said he’d go in to read it live, on the air, Sunday morning. I was bummed that I wouldn’t get a chance to voice the script but I also sounded too exhausted for radio - and the quality of your voice matters a lot in this business. Sunday was also the day the Governor signed the controversial budget bill. Ironically, it was this very bill that the justices were arguing about when the alleged incident occurred. Perfect timing.

**Week of June 27**

Highlights:

-- Gov. Scott Walker spoke to WPR and commented on the allegations, calling them “very serious.”

-- The Judicial Commission and the Dane County Sheriff’s Office both announce they are investigating what happened. I am almost bowled over by the
knowledge that the DCSO’s investigation almost certainly would not have happened without our story. Pretty damn cool.

-- The majority Senate speaker, Jeff Fitzgerald, commented that the Supreme Court was “crazier than the legislature.” And that’s saying something.

-- Two Senators (one D, one R) introduce legislation to switch the Supreme Court to appointment-based positions, rather than elected ones. This would require a constitutional amendment, which means it’d have to be ratified by two consecutive legislative sessions as well as win a majority of the vote in a general ballot.

-- Gil Halsted and Bill Leuders appear on TV (Wisconsin Eye, a public access channel) with Andy Hall of WCIJ to talk about how we broke the story. I wasn’t invited. My boss made the decision to use Gil. Still don’t know why. Probably something to do with experience.

http://www.wiseye.org/Programming/VideoArchive/EventDetail.aspx?evhid=4454

-- MJS got emails from Prosser’s office from the week of June 13, including an email from Bradley to the rest of the Supreme Court on June 14 asking for a meeting with Chief Tubbs to talk about “security concerns” she has. You can see the MJS article here:


This made me feel like an idiot for not requesting directly from the justices themselves. Why didn’t I think of that? (Lesson: Widen the source net.)


One interesting thing is how very polarizing the story seemed to be. I read through hundreds of comments on dozens of stories and I’ve rarely seen people be that mean to each other. I suspect part of the reason for that is because the whole debate over collective bargaining devolved into a fight between working class and upper class, between Republican and Democrat, between urban and rural, between blue collar and white collar. I haven’t lived in Wisconsin long, but it’s starting to feel like it’s losing its middle ground.

**Week of July 4**

I left for Idaho on July 1 for vacation and did not return until July 13. (Part of the reason I was gone so long was that I got stuck in the Denver airport for two days because of thunderstorms. Unfortunately I just missed Scott Walker, who also got stuck!)

I partially monitored the story from Idaho but I also had intermittent internet access. One major development that did come through was my records request. I received it on July 6.
The response to my records request has almost nothing to it. On the cover sheet, they claim they cannot release materials they feel are sensitive to the ongoing investigation. BUT - they also say that because I submitted my request in writing, I can legally challenge their ruling. I told my bosses we should do this, but I don’t think they’re on board (reminder: past and present tense confusing).

The only other interesting part of the request is the very last page, where the Supreme Court Marshal references an email Bradley sent to the group that she’s had security concerns. The Marshal is basically saying to Tubbs, “See? I told you so.”

But that’s not much to go on.

**Week of July 11**

Return to work from Idaho on July 13. I put several calls in to our original source (on the Judicial Commission, which is investigating the incident) but she doesn’t return them. I wanted to find out from her if she knew any kind of a timeline as far as when the investigation might be finished.

Bill Leuders contacted the DCSO. They said they should be wrapping up “by the end of next week.” This report from local TV news outlet Channel 3000 surfaced:

“*Editorial: A Response On The Investigation Sheriff Mahoney says it's?? going well.*
By Neil Heinen
Editorial Director
07/12/11

*Dane County Sheriff Dave Mahoney heard our editorial yesterday questioning the progress being made on the investigation into the allegations of a physical conflict between members of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. And to Mahoney’s credit, he was on the phone to us first thing this morning.*
He defended his department's work on the investigation, but most important he answered our questions. While not leading the investigation himself, he said he had top people on the job and that overtime was not spared. He said investigators were respectful of scheduling difficulties for some Justices and staff, and that he was satisfied with the pace of investigation. And he said, it would be wrapped up soon and all reports would be available through open records requests.

So, we asked, and the Sheriff responded. We look forward to the conclusion of this ugly episode, but we respect the Sheriff for taking our concerns seriously.” The next day, the press person for the DCSO said it wouldn’t be wrapped up for at least another week.

Also, I received a letter from the Chancellor of UW-Colleges and Extension, thanking me for my reporting on the incident and investigation. Pretty cool, and certainly a first for me!

Week of July 18

Still no word on the investigations. I’ve got calls in to our original source and to Jim Alexander, the director of the Judicial Commission. Neither is returning calls. One question I have: if one of the Justice’s resigns, how is it decided who will step forward?

I learn from OneWisconsinNow’s Twitter feed (liberal advocacy group) that Prosser’s most recent campaign finance reports show he paid a UW-Madison political science professor more than $6,000 in “general consulting” fees on June 27 (two days after our story airs). Wonder what he was consulting his about!

Ken Mayer, the professor, has consulted for Dems and Republicans alike. I haven’t called him to ask him about this because I’m pretty sure he wouldn’t tell me anything.
Beyond

The story scripts begin to flow at this point, even as the actual information about what, if anything, happened slows down. The Dane County D.A. recuses himself because he was involved in the lawsuit over which the justices were arguing when the altercation occurred, and he passes the investigative file off to a special prosecutor. The new prosecutor, Patricia Barrett, eventually decides she won’t pursue charges. She says it would have been too difficult to prove anything with all those conflicting accounts.

After the announcement that there wouldn’t be any criminal charges against either judge, both Prosser and Bradley released statements. Prosser, predictably, tells the media that his assertions were true all along that he acted in self-defense while Bradley, predictably, tells the media that what happened was still very serious, and that the Supreme Court needs to work on its office dynamics.

Since then, the Supreme Court has been trying (and failing) to regain lost ground. The news (as of late autumn 2011) is that the Chief Judge Shirley Abrahamson has been trying to introduce new operating procedures for the court. Some have been radical (opening judicial conferences to the public), some almost comical (bringing in an expert in small group dynamics to counsel the justices), and some practically meaningless (having the justices adopt a resolution they’ll be more “collegial”). As of October 2011, the court has only adopted the latter measure.
Appendix 3: List of Stories Produced and Aired by Teresa Shipley at Wisconsin Public Radio and NPR

I. Wisconsin Public Radio News

The following 90 stories represent the total of my reporting at WPR from January through October, 2011. They are listed in order of the most recent story first and show the date the story aired, its title and a link to the online version.

Rather than include all 90 of these stories on the multimedia CD, I am choosing those which have won awards or special recognition and those which demonstrated a significant learning opportunity for me. Stories included on the multimedia CD have been bolded and given a short description. I have also marked with an asterisk the stories for which I and WPR were recognized for coverage.

10/21/11
League of Women Voters of Wisconsin files suit against the new voter ID law
[link]

10/21/11
Outlook on flu season in Wisconsin
[link]

10/20/11
Bill would change requirements for teaching sex ed
[link]

10/18/11
Conservative group testifies that UW-Madison is racially biased
[link]

10/04/11
Congressional debate over funding federal government could cut low-income heating aid in Wisconsin
[link]
09/29/11
US Census Bureau reduces estimated number of same sex couples, both nationally and in Wisconsin
link

09/28/11
Wisconsin DPI heading multi-state project aimed at helping students learning to speak English
link

09/27/11
August home sales up 30 percent from last year
link

09/23/11
Wisconsin education officials ready to make changes to No Child Left Behind Law
link

09/22/11
UW-Parkside professor helps discover new species of raptor dinosaur
link

09/19/11
**Supreme Court considering hiring a group dynamics expert**  The Wisconsin Supreme Court is considering whether to hire an expert in small group dynamics to work with the justices. But a political science professor says something more is needed.
link

09/15/11
Jobs web site underutilized
link

09/15/11
**Most Supreme Court justices disagree with Chief Justice's proposed changes**
Most members of the state Supreme Court say they don't want to make their deliberations more open to the public. The Chief Justice recommended that move to restore public confidence in the court after a high profile altercation between two of the justices this summer.
link
09/13/11  
Early frost forecast for this week  
link  

09/12/11  
Leaf-peepers mean tourism dollars for Wisconsin  
link  

09/09/11  
Wisconsin charter schools receive boost from federal grants  
link  

09/08/11  
UW Regents grant campuses more autonomy  
link  

09/07/11  
Wisconsin tax collections down  
link  

09/07/11  
Young people most likely to be victims of identity theft.  
link  

09/06/11  
Farmers continue to send hay to Oklahoma  
link  

09/01/11  
Labor day travel numbers remain high, despite economy  
link  

08/31/11  
No-call list doesn't stop all unwanted calls  
link  

08/31/11  
Families of fallen police and firefighters may still receive health insurance  
link  

08/27/11  
Report released on justices' altercation  
Today Dane County police released 70 pages of transcripts and attachments of their investigation into the physical altercation in the state Supreme Court. Witnesses agreed on a few key details.  
link
08/26/11
No charges filed in supreme court justices' altercation
A special prosecutor says she won’t file criminal charges against either of the supreme court justices involved in an altercation in June.
[link]

08/25/11
Wisconsin sees lower marriage & divorce rates than nation as a whole
[link]

08/24/11
Some areas of manufacturing add jobs
[link]

08/23/11
Wisconsin hay sent to Oklahoma after severe drought
[link]

08/23/11
July home sales up in Wisconsin
[link]

08/19/11
End-of-summer campaign underway to prevent drunk driving
[link]

08/17/11
Wisconsin ranks high in volunteer hours
[link]

08/09/11
UW system to consider changes
[link]

08/09/11
Wisconsin will seek waiver of "No Child" law.
[link]

08/02/11
Numbers confirm Wisconsin saw exodus of Minnesota campers in July
[link]
08/01/11
Dane County DA recuses self from high court investigation
The Dane County district attorney says he's turning over the case involving allegations of a physical altercation on the Wisconsin Supreme Court to a special prosecutor.
link

07/29/11
Proposal would have DOT provide more information on free voter IDs
link

07/29/11
Walker approves up to $500,000 to private law firm to defend his budget bill
link

07/28/11
More charter schools opening in Wisconsin
More charter schools will be opening this school year in Wisconsin than ever before, largely thanks to federal grants.
link

07/27/11
Report says contaminants decreasing in Great Lakes fish
A new report says levels of mercury and other contaminants in walleye and bass are decreasing overall in the Great Lakes region. The report studied decades of fish data from the 1970s to 2009, with largely encouraging results.
link

07/26/11
Venture capitalist investments in Wisconsin fall
Investments from venture capital firms have fallen by nearly 60 percent in Wisconsin compared to this time last year. But that doesn't mean the picture is bleak.
link

07/25/11
Demand for utility assistance outpaces service
link

07/21/11
Heat wave adversely affecting dairy cattle, operations
link

07/19/11
Utilities postpone work on power grid, lines, during hot spell
link
07/15/11
Poll says most Wisconsinites unhappy with state decisions
link

07/15/11
UW tuition increase passes with some opposition
link

07/01/11
Holiday travel numbers may reflect a better economy
link

* 07/01/11
**Two Years Later Pt. V: Small businesses**
Big business gets a lot of attention when it comes to counting jobs, but it turns out that small firms also have a large effect on Wisconsin's economy. And, they may have helped prevent the recession from being worse than it was. Teresa Shipley looks at the big potential of small business, in this last segment of our post-recession series, "Two Years Later".
*(This series won “Gold” in the 2011 Milwaukee Press Club Awards category: “Best documentary, investigative or public affairs story or series.”)*
link

07/01/11
Many new contracts for teachers begin today
link

07/01/11
Gas prices increasing for Wisconsin motorists
link

* 06/27/11
**Alleged incident in Justice Bradley's office under two investigations**
Two investigations have begun into allegations that a physical altercation took place between Wisconsin Supreme Court justices David Prosser and Ann Walsh Bradley.
*(This story is the beginning of the coverage for which WPR won won 2nd place in the Wisconsin Broadcaster Association’s 2011 awards for “Continuing Coverage.”)*
link

06/24/11
Wisconsin DPI signs a program package contract with Google
link
06/23/11
DWD: New jobs still growing
link

06/23/11
More farmers using animals over machines for operations
Planting is well under way in Wisconsin, but in some areas, the loud chug of tractor engines is being replaced by the soft, clodding steps of horses. Nationwide, more and more farmers are turning to animal-powered farming to work their land. Teresa Shipley visited several Wisconsin farmers who are part of this trend and has this story.
link

06/22/11
Metal detectors come down at Capitol
link

06/14/11
Martin to leave UW-Madison to head Amherst College
link

06/14/11
Texting while driving ban called effective, despite few citations
Very few Wisconsin drivers are being cited for texting while driving, despite the statewide ban that went into effect last December. But officials say the ban is doing its job.
link

06/10/11
Undocumented UW students soon no longer eligible for in-state tuition
A spokesman for the UW System says universities won't earmark funding to help undocumented students with tuition. The Joint Finance Committee ruled to repeal a program that lets undocumented students pay in-state tuition at UW schools.
link

06/08/11
Bill to move back Wisconsin primary dates advances
link

06/07/11
Pro-bike activists push for keeping Wisconsin bike project funds
link

06/03/11
Homeland security funding may drop sharply
link
06/02/11
Wisconsin's primary election dates might change
link

05/31/11
Today marks deadline to sign up for state's no-call list
link

05/30/11
Ginseng growers anticipate tough times
The Ginseng Board of Wisconsin warns that lean years are ahead for ginseng exports, despite a successful 2010. Teresa Shipley has more about the difficulties facing ginseng farmers.
link

05/19/11
Democrats upset about Republicans’ proposed changes to Medicare
link

05/16/11
Lyme disease on rise in Wisconsin
Wisconsin weather is finally warming, and that means bugs are on the way. Ticks can be a particular problem in the state since they carry Lyme disease. As Teresa Shipley reports, cases of the disease are on the rise.
link

05/06/11
GOP lawmakers introduce concealed weapon legislation
link

05/05/11
Feds plan to reduce properties
link

05/04/11
Study: government aid helped keep people out of poverty
State and federal government assistance programs have helped keep more people out of poverty during the most recent recession, according to a Wisconsin research group.
link

04/30/11
Homebuilder permits down in first quarter of 2011
link
04/27/11
Urban Alliance urges Joint Finance Committee to reevaluate proposed budget
[link]

04/26/11
**Ukrainian man recalls his experience with Chernobyl incident**
Today marks the 25th anniversary of the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl. Teresa Shipley spoke with a Ukrainian man and Wisconsin resident who helped with the cleanup.
[link]

04/20/11
Wisconsin exports to the Middle East expected to continue
[link]

04/11/11
Wisconsin auto sales increase
[link]

04/08/11
Most UW system chancellors still hope to keep Madison campus in the fold
[link]

04/04/11
Anniversary of King's assassination occasion for march for workers, civil rights
[link]

03/30/11
Report suggests big economic effect from UW-Madison
[link]

03/30/11
Agriculture job losses stabilize
[link]

03/29/11
Higher-than-usual voter turnout projected for spring elections
[link]

03/23/11
State Treasurer proposes removal of own office
[link]
03/21/11
Light job fair attendance may signify rebounding economy
The latest jobs report for Wisconsin suggests things are looking up. The Department of Workforce Development says the state netted more than six-thousand jobs in January, and employment could grow by up to two-percent by next year. Teresa Shipley visited a job fair in Janesville and has this report about the market for workers.

link

03/16/11
Recent disasters could hurt Wisconsin companies' ties with Japan

link

03/03/11
Scholar suggests privatization has pluses and minuses

link

03/01/11
School districts release early lay-off notices

link

02/28/11
State teachers await release of layoff notices

link

02/25/11
Preliminary lay-off notices shake school districts

link

02/17/11
University students walkout, protest statewide
Thousands of protesters continue to flood the Capitol area today, demonstrating against Governor Scott Walker's budget repair bill that would cut back collective bargaining for public employees. While the Governor defends his measure as necessary to avoid layoffs and take hikes, critics say it's a direct assault on unions. In this fourth day of protests, many UW system colleges saw student walk-outs. We check out several around the state with Wisconsin Public Radio news reporters, beginning with Teresa Shipley in Madison.

link

02/16/11
Capitol protesters speak out against budget repair bill
Throughout the week, waves of protesters have surrounded the capitol building in Madison, to demonstrate against Governor Scott Walker's budget repair bill. Walker wants to scale back collective bargaining for public employees, which he says will prevent massive job layoffs and tax hikes, as well as help fix the state's
budget issues. But that case hasn’t sat well with many of those who have filled the streets, sidewalks, and hallways of the capitol itself. Wisconsin Public Radio's Teresa Shipley stopped by today’s rally and has this audio postcard.

02/11/11
Official work to prevent wildlife airplane collisions
The Federal Aviation Administration's Wildlife Strike Database says nationally, deer strikes make up about 10 percent of serious collisions with planes since 1990. But that number jumps to 54 percent in Wisconsin. Teresa Shipley has more about the hazards of flying near wildlife.

02/09/11
UW researchers announce new development in stem cell research

02/08/11
WEAC proposes to break up school district

II. Wisconsin Public Radio: Wisconsin Life series

Taliesin: Minerva Montooth
June 10, 2011
Today, we’re celebrating the 100th anniversary of one of Frank Lloyd Wright’s architectural masterpieces, his sprawling estate at Taliesin near Spring Green. Producer Teresa Shipley spoke with long-time Taliesin resident Minerva Montooth, about her memories and what it’s like to reside in a living monument. Minerva Montooth has lived at Taliesin since the 1960s, when she was an assistant to Mrs. Wright. Today she works with the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture.

http://wilife.tumblr.com/tagged/audio/page/25

Farewell Winter
April 1, 2011
Don’t let this weekend’s snow flurries fool you. Winter is finally beginning to release its grip on Wisconsin. Today, producer Teresa Shipley says goodbye to winter with a visit to one of the season’s last candlelight ski and snowshoe events.

http://wilife.tumblr.com/tagged/audio/page/27
A group of Democratic lawmakers in Wisconsin blocked passage of a sweeping anti-union bill Thursday by ignoring orders to attend a vote. Instead, they left the state to force Republicans to negotiate over the proposal.

As ever-growing throngs of protesters filled the Capitol for a third day, the 14 Democrats disappeared from the grounds. They were not in their offices, and aides said they did not know where any of them had gone. A state police search is under way.

Hours later, one Democrat told The Associated Press that the group had left Wisconsin.

Sen. Jon Erpenbach said Democrats fled to delay consideration of the bill in the hopes that Republican Gov. Scott Walker and Republican lawmakers would discuss changes.

"The plan is to try and slow this down, because it's an extreme piece of legislation that's tearing this state apart," Erpenbach told AP in a telephone interview.

He refused to say where he was. Other Democratic lawmakers sent messages over Twitter and issued written statements, but did not say where they were.

Walker, who took office last month, has made the bill a top priority. He urged the group to return and called the boycott a "stunt."

"It's more about theatrics than anything else," Walker said, predicting that the group would come back in a day or two, after realizing "they're elected to do a job."

Walker said Democrats could still offer amendments to change the bill, but he vowed not to concede on his plan to end most collective bargaining rights.

Republicans hold a 19-14 majority in the state Senate, but they need at least one Democrat to be present before taking a vote on the bill.
Republican Sen. Glenn Grothman called it an extreme move, both by his Democratic colleagues and the teachers supporting them.

"I feel sorry for the parents who have to pay for an additional day of day care by surprise," he said. "And I also feel sorry for the children that the parents are being bad role models today."

As Republicans tried to begin Senate business Thursday, observers in the gallery screamed "Freedom! Democracy! Unions!" Opponents of the bill cheered when a legislative leader announced that there were not enough senators present to proceed.

Authorities said an estimated 25,000 people participated in Thursday's protest; nine demonstrators were arrested.

The proposal marks a dramatic shift for Wisconsin, which passed a comprehensive collective bargaining law in 1959 and was the birthplace of the national union representing all nonfederal public employees.

In addition to eliminating collective bargaining rights, the legislation also would make public workers pay half the costs of their pensions and at least 12.6 percent of their health care coverage, increases Walker calls "modest" compared with those in the private sector.

Meanwhile, thousands of University of Wisconsin students walked out of class to protest Walker's budget repair bill.

Students marched from campus toward the Capitol, where they joined the throngs of other demonstrators from around the state. Police blocked off side streets for the six-block procession.

The students carried homemade signs, boom boxes and foam fingers, and wore the university's red and white colors. Organizers called out chants on megaphones.

Maxwell Love, a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, says that no matter what happens in the Legislature, the protest has been a success.

"We had elementary, we had middle school and high school showing solidarity and learning about the civic engagement process," he said. "You know, I learned so much spending this much time at the Capitol. I can't imagine how this is affecting our young generation."

Wisconsin Public Radio's Shawn Johnson and Teresa Shipley contributed to this report, which includes material from The Associates Press
Carter Hooper had a problem. The 51-year-old from New Orleans had spent years lugging around his collection of 900 CDs.

"Those things survived Katrina, actually," he says. "I was in Katrina; I was in Biloxi, Miss., in a building that almost got blown away, but I had stacked those precious things up in the closet."

Then, Hooper discovered Murfie, a business in Madison, Wis., where he could ship all of his CDs for free and still retain ownership of them.

Murfie is a lot of things to a lot of people. But to Hooper, it was a dream come true: Murfie will burn your old discs to a digital file, recycle the cases and even resell the album online. It's part garage sale, part iTunes.

Murfie digitized Hooper's entire collection, and now he can access all of his CDs online through Murfie's website.

The site also lets members have their own personal store where they can sell or trade albums from their collections. Murfie takes a 30 percent cut from a sale, but trades are free. Hooper says he's already netted about $50.

Co-founder Preston Austin admits it's not easy to describe Murfie.

"It's like well, 'It's sort of like eBay or Swap.com combined with iTunes or an Amazon music locker,'" he says.

But unlike iTunes, Murfie still deals in real, physical CDs. You just never see them. Their warehouse houses tens of thousands of CDs ordered for easy access.

Despite those big numbers, the warehouse is actually smaller than most living rooms. It's the central space in Murfie's office suite on the eighth floor of a downtown bank building. Inside the warehouse are two silver utility shelves. Each one is packed top to bottom with hundreds of open-top white boxes, like shoe boxes. Inside each box are dozens of individual CDs and their jackets, barcoded and nested inside plain white envelopes.
The plastic cases are nowhere to be seen. That's because they're valuable. Murfie recycles them, making $1,500 a ton, and Austin estimates they'll recycle 100 tons of cases in the next year.

All those CDs come from members like Hooper. Some are using Murfie to sell or trade their CD collections. Others have Murfie rip their music, which costs a dollar per album to download. And some are just storing their CD collections for $12 a year.

"In the background we've got all these CDs that are sort of shifting ownership in our warehouse," says Murfie co-founder Matt Younkle. "Everything comes back to ownership of real, physical property. We just make it really easy to preserve that ownership without having a box of plastic discs in your closet. You put them in Murfie's warehouse instead."

According to the CD-recycling Center of America, a lot of people struggle with their CDs. It says every month about 100,000 pounds of discs become obsolete, and millions get tossed each year. Austin estimates in the U.S. alone, there are about 15 billion used CDs just sitting around in basements and bargain bins.

But no longer in Hooper's basement. He was one of Murfie's first customers and says he's now hooked on the convenience.

"It's like an old-school record store, you know, digitized," Hooper says. "It's just an idea waiting to happen. And it's perfect for me. It's exactly how I wanted to separate myself from my CDs."

Digital record store, online CD library, remote garage sale — Murfie may be hard to define, but that won't stop it from expanding. Right now, it just accepts CDs, but it might soon take vinyl. And Murfie hopes to someday branch out to comics, magazines, even books, and become the one-stop shop for your online media library.
Appendix 4: Scripts of My Radio Coverage of the Wisconsin Supreme Court

I wrote these scripts during a three month period at WPR while covering the state Supreme Court. I did not always voice each script; sometimes my colleague Gil Halsted broadcast the on-air version. Each script shows who wrote it at the top by the “call sign” and who voiced at the bottom with the “sign out.” The scripts are written in the typical radio script format, with the “slug” or headline at the top, followed by the date, my “call sign,” which is “TSH,” and then TRT or the Total Running Time on air. The “Intro” section refers to the short sentence or two read by the on-air anchor, who then cues up my pre-recorded story to play directly after that introduction. I also wrote the intros. The “sign out” at the bottom of each script contains who voiced the on-air version of the story.

----------------------------------------------
SUPCODEVELOP
09/14/11
TSH
TRT: 1:32

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The Wisconsin Supreme Court is considering whether to hire an expert in small group dynamics to work with the justices. But a political science professor says something more is needed.

Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson says other organizations bring in experts to help with group dynamics, so why not the court?; "Any time you have a group of people working together, there are bound to be stresses, there are bound to be tensions."
Tensions did arise during last Thursday’s open administrative conference. At one point, Justice Patience Roggensack accused the chief of trying to pick a fight. And Roggensack and Justice Michael Gableman later said the chief needed to evaluate her leadership style.

Chief Justice Abrahamson said she made the proposals in order to restore public confidence in the Supreme Court after a high-profile altercation took place between two justices this summer.

But UW-Green Bay political science professor Tim Dale says he doesn't think public confidence will be restored simply by bringing in a group dynamics expert, "I think for it to be effective, there has to be a long term commitment on the part of the justices to have more of the even tempered exchanges even where they disagree, and I think only if that happens, whatever brings about that change, will the image of the court improve."

Dale says he thinks the justices should go on tour with each other and speak at public forums, answering questions about state law, the constitution and how they reach their decisions, "I think things like that would help to improve the image, where people see them having disagreements with each other, without those disagreements escalating to the level of personal attack."

The justices will likely vote on whether to hire the expert at their next open conference at the end of the month.

Teresa Shipley, WPR

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Intro: Most members of the state Supreme Court say they don't want to make their deliberations more open to the public. The Chief Justice recommended that move to restore public confidence in the court after a high profile altercation between two of the justices this summer. Teresa Shipley reports.

Five of the seven Justices disagreed with most or all of Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson's proposals to make the court proceedings more transparent. Abrahamson had suggested making all court conferences open, possibly even videotaping them. This prompted Justice Annette Ziegler to wonder...

(0:08) "... if this is going to be like a reality TV show, where all of a sudden we all have cameras watching us when we walk into our office."

Other justices, including Patrick Crooks, said they feared the move would be stifling.

(0:17) "I would be very concerned about feeling somewhat restricted in terms of what I was going to say if we had open deliberations on cases, because I might not be totally certain of my opinion. It's a tentative opinion."

But Justice Anne Walsh Bradley was sometimes passionate in her advocacy for some kind of change.
(0:12) "I would do it on a... for three months or four months and for us to assess it. But I think we can't do business as usual. We need some bold ideas."

Bradley and Chief Justice Abrahamson were the only justices to vote for any of the measures. A similar proposal to open the high court conferences to the public was made in 2007. Chief Justice Abrahamson was against it then, and said she changed her mind now because she's had more time to experience open administrative conferences like this one.

The Supreme Court decided to wait to vote on another proposal to hire an expert in small group dynamics who would work with the justices on conflict resolution. They'll take up that matter at their next administrative conference in two weeks.

Teresa Shipley, WPR.

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INVESTIGATION
08/26/11
TSH
TRT: 1:07

Intro: Today Dane County police released 117 pages of transcripts and attachments of their investigation in to the physical altercation in the state Supreme Court. Witnesses agreed on a few key details. Teresa Shipley has more...

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There were six witnesses to the incident in Justice Ann Walsh Bradley's office on the evening of June 13. Five of them agree that Justice David Prosser's
hands were on Bradley's neck. Justice Annette Ziegler says she didn't have a clear view, and couldn't say for sure what happened.

The justices told investigators they had come to Bradley's office to talk about issuing a press release about their ruling on the collective bargaining law.

That's when they say an argument broke out, during which Prosser told Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson that he'd lost confidence in her leadership.

That's when things got heated, and that's when accounts begin to differ.

Prosser said Bradley charged at him with her fists raised.

Bradley said she walked toward Prosser and got face-to-face with him, demanding he leave her office and pointing towards the exit when he grabbed her neck in anger.

Prosser admits his hands did touch her neck, but says it was a reflexive reaction and that he was stunned when he realized he was touching her. He told investigators he thinks his reaction was reasonable under the circumstances.

Justice Patience Roggensack separated the two, though accounts differ as to how. Roggensack told police both Bradley and Prosser get an "F" in her book for their behavior.

Justice Michael Gableman and Justice Roggensack back up Prosser's account that Bradley rushed at him and shook her fist in his face. But Chief Justice Abrahamson says it happened like Bradley said, and that Prosser was the aggressor. Justice Ziegler summed it up this way: she told investigators the whole thing was just bizarre.

Teresa Shipley, WPR.
Intro: A special prosecutor says she won't file criminal charges against either of the Supreme Court justices involved in an altercation in June. Teresa Shipley reports.

Sauk County District Attorney Patricia Barrett says that no criminal charges will be filed against either Justice David Prosser or Justice Anne Walsh Bradley.

(0:06) "Based on the review of all the facts that I had I did not believe I could meet my ethical obligations for criminal charges."

On June 13, Prosser and Bradley had an argument in her chambers, just prior to the release of the court's ruling on the collective bargaining law. Bradley later accused Prosser of putting his hands on her neck in anger in a chokehold. But other sources say Bradley was the aggressor.

Barrett was asked to take the case after the Dane County D.A. recused himself. She reviewed 70 pages of police reports as well as photos and an audio interview with Justice Prosser. She says accounts varied as to what happened.

(0:09) "There were six people in the room. As to every detail, of course they varied. As to what they have specifically to say, the records will speak for themselves."
Justice Prosser said in a statement that Bradley sensationalized the incident. He said he always maintained he'd be cleared once the facts of the incident were examined.

Justice Bradley said in a statement that the decision not to file charges does not fix the issue. Badley said she will continue to seek cooperation from other justices to resolve what she calls a progressive workplace safety issue.

The state Judicial Commission is still investigating the matter.

Teresa Shipley, Wisconsin Public Radio.

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OZANNE
08/01/11
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TRT: 1:07

Intro: The Dane County district attorney says he’s turning over the case involving allegations of a physical altercation on the Wisconsin Supreme Court to a special prosecutor. Teresa Shipley has more.

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Dane County district attorney Ismael [ISH-mill] Ozanne [Oh-ZAN] says he received the investigative file from the Dane County Sheriff's Office last Thursday.

But Ozanne [Oh-ZAN] says he's turning over the case to a special prosecutor. He says that's to avoid the appearance of partisanship because of his office's involvement in a lawsuit over Governor Walker’s collective bargaining bill.
"At this time I'd say that there's an appearance or potentially there could be an appearance that some would like to say is due to political motivation because of the involvement of this office in the litigation that is connected to the incident. And for that reason, we're just going to step back because we'd like somebody to look at it on the merits."

The Wisconsin Supreme Court's decision on that lawsuit was allegedly the reason behind the altercation in Justice Anne Walsh Bradley's office on June 13. Sources say Justice David Prosser put his hands on Justice Bradley's neck, but accounts differ as to why.

Ozanne declined to give any details about the what the Sheriff's Department investigation revealed.

He says he will ask Dane County Chief Judge William Foust [FOWST] to appoint the special prosecutor.

Teresa Shipley, WPR.

Intro: Two investigations have begun into allegations that a physical altercation took place between Wisconsin Supreme Court justices David Prosser and Ann Walsh Bradley. Teresa Shipley reports.
The Dane County Sheriff's Office says it'll investigate a possible physical confrontation between Justice Prosser and Justice Bradley that allegedly happened earlier this month.

The Sheriff's office said in a statement today that detectives would start working immediately and that no further information was available about the case. The department says it took on the investigation at the request of the Capitol Police.

Capitol Police Chief Charles Tubbs would not comment further but said in a release that he consulted with the Supreme Court before turning over the investigation.

The Wisconsin Judicial Commission also says that it will look into the matter. The Commission is the body in charge of investigating judicial misconduct.

Wisconsin Public Radio and the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism reported allegations that Prosser grabbed Bradley around the neck with both hands during an argument prior to the release of the state's new law on collective bargaining.

Bradley confirmed that story in a statement to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, but Prosser said in his statement to the paper that the claims, once investigated, would be proven false.

The paper also quoted another source who says Bradley attacked Prosser.

Neither Bradley nor Prosser returned phone calls.
Intro: Supreme Court justices Ann Walsh Bradley and David Prosser have both issued conflicting statements about an alleged physical altercation between them earlier this month. Gilman Halsted reports.

Reports surfaced late last week from knowledgeable sources about an altercation between the two justices in Justice Bradley's office during the week of June 12th. The incident involved Prosser grabbing Bradley around the neck after she told him to leave her office.

The sources who spoke with reporters from WPR and the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism asked not to be named to protect their professional relationships. State Senate President Scott Fitzgerald said yesterday he was surprised and suspicious about the accuracy of the reports.

"Wow! The Supreme Court's crazier than the legislature apparently. It's hard to believe it actually went down the way it was described. And I think with the justices not really making many comments publicly it's hard for me to believe that that really happened, but from the way it's being reported it appears that certainly something happened over there."
Justice Prosser released a statement Saturday saying that once the facts are reviewed the anonymous claims will be proven False. Later that night Bradley told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Prosser did grab her by the neck and she disputed another source who said she was the aggressor and that Prosser was just defending himself.

Other sources say other justices were present during the incident, which happened during an argument about when to release the ruling on the new collective bargaining law. Capitol Police Chief Charles Tubbs says he will issue a statement this morning that may shed light on what did or did not happen.

Gilman Halsted, WPR.

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Supreme Court Justice Ann Walsh Bradley is accusing fellow Justice David Prosser of grabbing her neck during a heated argument in her chambers earlier this month. Gilman Halsted reports.

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According to a statement Justice Bradley released to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Prosser put his hands around her neck - quote - in anger in a chokehold.

Bradley's release came hours after one issued by Prosser Saturday. In HIS statement to the Journal Sentinel, Prosser denied allegations he choked
Bradley, saying - quote - the anonymous claims made to the media will be proven false.

Three knowledgeable sources told Wisconsin Public Radio and the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism that the justices had a physical altercation just prior to the release of a ruling on the state's new law restricting collective bargaining.

The sources spoke on condition of not being named, citing a need to preserve professional relationships. They say the argument took place in Justice Bradley's office with several other justices present. Sources say Bradley asked Prosser to leave her office, at which point Prosser allegedly grabbed Bradley around the neck with both hands.

The Journal Sentinel says another source has told the paper a different story. That source is quoted as saying there was an altercation between the justices, but it was Bradley who rushed at Prosser with her fists raised, and his hands came into contact with her neck when he raised them in self-defense.

Justice Bradley has denied this version of the story.

Sources have said Capitol Police are investigating. Capitol Police Chief Charles Tubbs declined to comment yesterday, but told WPR that he'd release a statement on Monday.

Gilman Halsted, WPR.
Appendix 5: Original Project Proposal

Teresa Shipley
06 December 2010
Professional Project Proposal Final
Professor George Kennedy

Lee Ester News Fellowship at Wisconsin Public Radio

Committee Members:

1. Prof. William Allen (chair)
2. Prof. Janet Saidi
3. Prof. Yong Volz

Introduction

For most of my journalism and writing career, I’ve focused on print. A passion for the written word, seeing my name published, the feel of newsprint in my hands - I couldn’t imagine a greater thrill than these simple components of a writer’s life. But after a few years on my own, struggling to make it as a freelancer and unable to get a staff position at a newspaper, it became clear that simply being a good writer was not enough. I needed more skills, the kinds of tools that would make me more marketable to a wider set of employers than just those in the dwindling newspaper industry. Dozens of informal interviews with journalists across the country confirmed my decision: It was time to go back to school.

The first class I took at the University of Missouri was in fundamentals of “convergence,” a term with which I’d soon become intimately familiar. The purpose of the course was to introduce students to all the basic components of a
multi-media skill set. We were expected to become photographers, web site developers, videographers and, to my surprise, radio reporters. Although this “jack-of-all-trades-master-of-none” approach initially discouraged me, I quickly saw the benefit to this crash course. I learned important techniques for shooting both photo and video as well as how to use complicated editing software. I created a web site, something I never thought possible, and became somewhat adept at writing HTML code by the following summer, another skill I never anticipated.

But the best skill I gained in the convergence class was how to be a radio reporter. From the moment I hefted that boxy, black Marantz and started recording, I was spellbound. Radio reporting required an artistry I’d never experienced as a print journalist. Gathering natural sounds, capturing the emotion and inflection in subjects’ voices and learning how to write pithy, punchy segments to weave into the piece gave me the skills to be not only a better writer but also a superb listener. Even my print stories have benefited as a result.

I took the opportunity the following semester to do an independent study at KBIA radio, the local NPR affiliate station. During the next four months, I had the opportunity to stretch my legs as a radio reporter, learning more about editing, reporting and producing. I loved every minute. I produced short spot news stories and daily wraps in addition to longer features, spanning topics as diverse as the local children’s museum to Jefferson City elections to ruffed grouse conservation efforts.
In addition to radio and convergence methods, I have tackled coursework on investigative and data-driven stories. I took Computer-Assisted Reporting and the Mapping Bootcamp with David Herzog and Investigative Reporting with Mark Horvit. All three classes have proved invaluable to me as a journalist and researcher. Thanks to Professor Herzog’s classes, I now know how to manipulate and organize large amounts of data in Microsoft Access as well as how to sift through the numbers to reveal interesting trends. I can also take that data and map it visually using ArcView, a popular mapping software program that few journalists know how to use but which many newsrooms find invaluable.

Thanks to Professor Horvit’s class, I can now file FOIA requests with ease, do background checks and dig deeper for information than I ever knew was possible. Professor Horvit’s class also taught me something less tangible but nonetheless priceless, a sense of confidence in my approach to reporting and a sense of outrage as an investigative journalist.

I believe that the skills I have acquired during my academic career at Mizzou have helped me accomplish my goal to be a more marketable, skilled reporter in today’s changing media landscape. In addition, I discovered a passion for a new kind of reporting, radio journalism, and am eager to see how I can combine that with my other interests, including data, mapping, investigative and science stories.

Because of this newfound love for radio and my improved data and investigative skills, I applied for (and received) the Lee Ester News Fellowship at Wisconsin Public Radio in Madison, Wis. I will begin reporting January 24, 2011,
through October 23, 2011 and working approximately 30 hours per week for the
duration of the 9-month fellowship. I will use the first three months of my
fellowship to accomplish my professional analysis and plan to return to defend
my project in April and graduate in May. After my defense, I will return to
Madison and complete the remainder of my fellowship. According to WPR’s web
site, the fellowship “will provide qualified candidates the opportunity to learn
hands-on reporting, editing, and broadcast journalism in a seasoned,
professional setting.”

Bryan Bull, WPR’s assistant news director and award-winning journalist,
will be my on-site mentor. Mr. Bull will oversee all the aspects of my fellowship at
WPR, right down to the cubicle we’ll share. He will help me brainstorm story
ideas, come up with a plan for how to tackle each individual story, guide me
through the process of sound recording and editing and help me post it online. I
will attend morning story meetings each day where assignments will be passed
out and ideas generated. According to Michael Leland, WPR’s news director, I
should expect to turn four to five spot news stories per week on average. If the
stories are longer features, I’ll turn in fewer per week. In general, I will produce
between 15 and 25 radio stories per month. The stories I produce will be
broadcast across the state of Wisconsin with the opportunity to be picked up
occasionally by national programming. I will keep copies of every story in a digital
format as well as on my personal web site. An audio CD of my best work will be
included with the final project.
I will also complete weekly memos and send them via email to my committee members, updating them on my progress and voicing any concerns, frustrations and/or successes I’ve had that week. Occasionally I will include short digital files of my radio reporting when appropriate. After three months’ employment, Mr. Bull and the head news director, Michael Leland, will write an evaluation of my progress thus far. Mr. Bull has also agreed to send that evaluation to my committee chair and provide other evaluations as needed.

Please see the attached employment verification form and position description from WPR at the end of this project proposal. I have also included Brian Bull’s biography, pulled from the WPR web site, for my committee’s consideration.

WPR is broadcast across the state and, as such, focuses on state-wide news rather than news specific to Madison. My work will reflect this. As a general assignment reporter, I expect to cover capitol politics, business, education, healthcare and science, among other beats. WPR has also expressed an interest in letting me develop my own beat. Although the station already has two dedicated science and environment reporters, they said they’re always looking for enterprise reporting. They have also told me that my data and mapping skills could be an excellent addition to the web site.

**Analysis**

A recent informal interview with KBIA’s news director Janet Saidi revealed that although radio reporters “tend to be great generalists,” they aren’t great at
producing data-driven and investigative stories. Radio still has a big gap to fill, Saidi said.

Another tool that radio stations typically lag in using is an interactive, polished web site. Much of the literature I’ve reviewed over the past year states that one of the primary ways audiences get news is through the internet, and yet radio as a whole has been slow to respond to increasing its online presence. NPR, the nation’s largest public radio network, didn’t launch its website redesign until mid-2009 (The Redesign and Other Changes, 2009). Other NPR-affiliate stations, such as Columbia’s own KBIA, have been even slower to build new or redesign existing web sites.

I theorize that this lack of web presence is hurting radio’s audience potential. To study this more closely, I’ll first need to build the case that audiences depend upon web sites for information, even when that information is sent primarily through broadcast media. I want to analyze how audiences seek out information online and why - what are they hoping to find on radio web sites? Although much literature exists regarding the Uses and Gratifications Theory as it pertains to the internet, significantly less has been done studying radio, and little to none has been published on radio web sites. My research would therefore add significantly to existing scholarly literature and might offer radio stations a useful lens through which to look at expanding their online presence.

The fellowship at Wisconsin Public Radio will offer a great opportunity to study how a radio station’s web site either draws or fails to draw in audiences. Currently, the WPR web site is extremely clunky and non-intuitive. I wonder how
they’re planning to increase their online presence or, if they aren’t, why not. My main research question is: *What stories or treatments and/or links got the most audience attention and participation on the WPR web site and why?*

**Theoretical Framework: Uses and Gratifications**

The main theory that lends itself to my intended methods (questionnaire, interview and content analysis) is the Uses and Gratifications Theory. The U&G theory basically says that people use different media/stories for different reasons and that what some find gratifying is, well, different from others. This theory stresses the active audience rather than the person sending the information, i.e. the broadcaster, and has become increasingly popular as a form of study the more people turn to alternate methods of getting the news such as phones, personal computers, podcasts, etc.

A relative newcomer to the field of journalism theory, U&G has become more popular as the types of media forms have proliferated. Foulkes and Katz (1962) said that audiences used media primarily as an escape. In terms of U&G specific to radio, Mendelsohn (1964) identified several reasons for radio listening: companionship, filling a void created by daily routine, altering mood, relieving boredom, providing news and information, allowing active participation in events such as sports and overcoming social isolation.

Ruggiero (2000) updates the uses and gratifications theory to include the internet and argues for a more holistic, qualitative, and interpersonal approach to research methods. The author runs through the history of research on the
subject, beginning with the period of the 1920s through the 1940s, when researchers identified “moral panic” as a primary use of the news.

Ruggiero asserts that the old U&G theories were too individualistic and make it difficult to imagine broad, societal implications of the media. He introduces three new words which he calls data attributes not commonly associated with traditional (non-digital) media: interactivity, demassification, and asynchronicity. *Interactivity* describes the extent to which consumers have control over and can exchange roles in their mutual discourse. *Demassification* refers to the ability of the consumer to control which medium displays the content, as if selecting from a technology menu. *Asynchronicity* is the concept that digital messages are “staggered in time,” meaning that consumers can access them with no time constraints.

One of the core components of applying the U&G theory would be to discover how and why audience members visit a radio station’s web site, therefore revealing to journalists and editors more about how they might want to produce and air a story.

When exploring potential media platforms in the literature, one medium emerged the clear winner in terms of providing the broadest access and highest satisfaction for consumers, the internet. Dimmick, Yan, and Zhan (2004) outlined an important, though not surprising, trend in news consumption: The internet has replaced traditional media, with TV and newspapers feeling the effects the most. Their results suggest that the internet provides the best and broadest niche for
consumers in terms of the Uses and Gratifications theory, indicating that the internet satisfies consumer demands better than traditional news sources.

A study by Huang (2009) suggests youths in particular are hungry for customizable content on the web. In the case of a radio news Web site, this content could take the form of region- or city-specific tab options rather than one catch-all statewide option. Or, it could include more space for audience participation, which might come in the form of creative ways to engage citizens with their local government officials, politicians, scientists, etc., or in the form of surveys and questionnaires. I theorize that the web site could also branch into the realm of interactivity by including a blog and a discussion forum, or even citizen journalism opportunities for students such as publishing student-produced content.

An important element to consider at this point is which of these media audience members have the most access to. Rogers (2001) describes a phenomenon called “the digital gap,” defining it as “the gap that exists between individuals advantaged by the internet and those individuals relatively disadvantaged by the internet.” His study looks at socioeconomic reasons for the distinction between users and non-users of the internet, the assumption being that those who are financially richer have better access to internet information and therefore increase their knowledge more rapidly than do poorer people.

The divide could be access, such as not having a phone or computer, or it could be lingual, since about 70 percent of all Web sites are in English. Less than one-quarter of Hispanics surveyed in 2000 had access to the internet, for
example, compared with nearly two-thirds of Caucasians. The author offers suggestions for bridging the divide, such as offering bilingual pages and by making content more relevant to specific audiences. Write at a lower reading level, Rogers suggests.

According to Albarran et. al. (2007), one-fifth of Americans 12 and older own an mp3 player and slightly more listen to streamed music or audio, while 28 percent report being aware of or listening to podcasts. “Young people are able to choose their content from a vast menu that is as diverse as the motivations driving their selections. These motivations may include sensation seeking, need for information, withdrawal and theme of the content, among other types of uses” (pp. 93). This suggests that audience participation could be heightened even further by publishing mp3 downloads and podcasts on a radio station’s website.

**Literature Review**

New research is just beginning to emerge in the field of radio web sites, but it is still a relatively unexplored area based on my research.

Albarran et. al. (2007) argue that radio shifted to more music programming in the mid-20th century as television began to pick up more programming. In the 60s and 70s, they said, stereo FM began to come into prominence, forcing AM radio to develop a niche of more talk programming. Now, with the introduction of internet and streaming radio and other digital audio formats available for download, radio is facing another challenge in terms of evolving to suit its audience (Albarran et. al., 2007).
Demassification, as described by Ruggiero (2000) and Albarran et. Al., (2007) is defined as the ability of the media user to select from a wide menu. The authors also describe asynchronicity as the concept that messages may be staggered in time. In terms of audio, Albarran et. al. say this means the ability to choose when to listen to audio, such as being able to download a podcast to listen to it later (2007). As the internet has emerged as a clear winner in terms of audience uses and gratifications, demassification and asynchronicity have similarly become important considerations for web site redesigners when thinking about audience needs (Dimmick, Yan and Zhan, 2004).

Other studies have tried to pinpoint more specifically why audiences visit a radio web site and what they use them for. Moody, Greer and Linn (2003) took a sample of 348 users of Web sites for 10 NPR affiliate stations. The participants reported coming to the sites to find information about programs, read station and community news and listen to live broadcasts. They cited information as the primary reason for visiting the sites. Interestingly, though, information seeking was negatively related to listening online. The authors suggest this finding reveals two distinct site users: those who come to listen and be entertained, and those who come to read news and be informed. Albarran et. al. (2007) said that most studies on radio uses and gratifications have shown similar findings, that users want entertainment as well as information and that their gratifications range from relaxation and passing time to seeking specific information. The authors identify a current lack of research on how new audio technologies affect “terrestrial radio” from a U&G perspective.
A 2008 study by Chung and Yoo examined audience uses of three types of interactivity, user motivations for visiting an online newspaper, and the relationship between user motivations and use of the different types of interactive features. The authors’ main method for determining audience uses and gratifications was using an online survey, in which they polled 542 participants with a survey completion rate of 77 percent. They describe their method thus:

Participants were recruited via online advertisements on an online newspaper in a medium-sized Midwestern city in the United States. Participants were able to access the survey from a link provided on the home page of the online newspaper. The average weekly circulation for the participating newspaper is 42,672 (Saturday circulation of 37,121 and Sunday circulation of 51,836). The online version of the paper has approximately 23,500 unique visitor sessions per day. In an attempt to increase response rate, the initial window after the link was clicked informed participants that upon completion of the survey they would be automatically entered into a drawing for a prize. The link then led the potential survey participants to the Informed Consent form, which then made the link to the actual survey available at the bottom of the page. The survey was posted in mid-July until early August for 3 weeks. To avoid duplicate submissions, we collected Internet protocol and e-mail address information and screened the data. (Chung & Yoo, 2008)

This survey provides an excellent framework on which to structure my own online survey on WPR’s web site. Though I intend to recruit only through WPR’s web site rather than through online ads, I’ll still provide a link and possibly offer some sort of prize (arranged through WPR). I will need to confirm with WPR’s legal department about whether or not participants will need to sign a consent form, a potential roadblock I hadn’t foreseen. Chung’s and Yoo’s survey also asked for demographic information such as race, age and income. I may want to include this information in my survey to determine how closely aligned the survey
takers’ profiles are aligned with the online visitors’ profiles. A more detailed outline of the survey indicates how I might consider organizing my questions:

Part 1 included questions about general news consumption practices—online and offline (i.e., frequency of site visit, location of site access, primary source of news, frequency of news consumption etc). Part 2 asked the respondents about their motivations for online newspaper consumption. Part 3 asked questions regarding uses of various interactive features on the newspaper. The detailed measures for motivations for online newspaper consumption and frequencies of using various interactive features are found in the next section. The last part of the online survey asked respondents about demographic information (i.e., age, gender, income, education, etc.) and Internet efficacy (ibid).

Radio web site users tend to be younger rather than older, unless it was specifically a talk radio web site (Moody et. al., 2003). The authors note several studies in which the majority of surveyed audience members responded that they were not satisfied by what was currently offered on the radio station’s web site; namely, they wanted more downloadable audio content. Nearly 70 percent said they wanted more community information, while only about one-quarter of the station web sites offered it. The authors cite another study where a large majority (over 80 percent) of college participants said that live audio streaming was the most valued feature of a radio web site.

Towers (1987) discussed his previous research from 1985 as well as an addition to the motivations for radio listenership, finding that entertainment, immediacy of news and localness of news was important to radio listeners. He also found that radio listening is “ritualistic” in nature.

Thoman and Jolls (2004) examine how media literacy is changing as new digital media techniques arise. Their research advocates acquainting elementary
school students with the vast array of multimedia communications that exist not only so they know the best available tools for research, etc., but also so they are aware of the pitfalls caused by having to navigate so many avenues of communication. It also stresses making education more relevant to students by focusing on problem solving, decision making, and critical thinking skills.

The authors suggest creating this more relevant educational system by using techniques other than text, namely video, verbal and audio. This fits in with my capstone project because, as I have already hypothesized, radio stations will need to incorporate video, podcasts, interactive features, etc., to draw and retain audiences. These additions will enrich the learning experience and increase participants’ retention as well as their media literacy by exposing them to new media techniques.

Similarly, Maier and Fisher (2007) outline a very persuasive plug for the video medium as an effective tool for addressing learning challenges in disadvantaged communities and schools. Video is presented as a way to engage lower-level learners in decision making and critical thinking exercises, namely because the medium does not require them to read long chunks of text.

Although the bulk of this article defines different methods for actually teaching video production to kids, the most useful parts occurred where they outlined how successful video was as an educational tool when presented in conjunction with print and aural methods. This method of breaking up print sections and interspersing them with video is a logical way for radio stations to think about designing their web sites.
In terms of other web site components, a study by Randolph (1998) suggested that there was no effect of the use of hypermedia or graphics on subjects’ immediate retention of information, but it did show that those elements have a significant effect on later recall.

This suggests for the station’s purposes that it would be wise to incorporate such techniques, including Flash, video players, visual learning aids, etc., into its web site. Other readings, however, caution about going overboard with such elements because they can sometimes cause viewers to perceive the web site as untrustworthy.

In terms of using content analysis to review what already exists on WPR’s web site, McMillan’s study suggests the internet is perfect for the content analysis method (2000). The primary advantages are that it’s unobtrusive, it accepts unstructured material, it is context-sensitive and therefore able to accommodate symbolic forms and it can cope with large volumes of data. The article suggests that my primary challenge might be defining a unit of content and its codex sheet, and area where I don’t have a great deal of experience. My sampling frame would be the web site itself, and possibly NPR’s web site for comparison purposes. I intend the analysis method to be simple here: comparing and contrasting what exists on NPR’s web site versus what exists on WPR’s web site, and then compare their web analytics in terms of page visits, traffic counts, etc. It is more of a quantitative approach to a qualitative analysis.
Methods

NPR has positioned itself as a model on web design development. Its team even Tweeted its progress as it transitioned through the web redesign last year. According to NPR’s web site, the technology team’s first goal in redesigning NPR.org was to allow greater freedom in how editorial staff could present content. “Previously, any major efforts to display anything differently required application development. The second was about aesthetics and usability, while the third was reducing repetitive tasks and improving tools for our editorial group” (The Redesign and Other Changes, 2009).

Because it’s now the default gold standard of public radio station web sites, my first plan of attack will be to interview members of the technology team who were integral in implementing the redesign. The main purpose of conducting interviews with NPR’s redesign team would be to gather background information on what audience uses and gratifications it found during its redesign research process. This knowledge will help me structure my audience survey for WPR.

Based on NPR’s web site, I can find two people who appear suitable to interview. These interviews would ideally last between 45 and 60 minutes and be semi-structured. Some sample questions might include:

• What specifically about the previous web site did you want to change and why: editorially, aesthetically and in terms of usability?

• What feedback did you receive from audience members about the previous web site in terms of what needed to change?
• How did you research what new technology you’d implement based on audience response?

• How do you measure audience participation? (i.e., through web analytics, surveys, comments, etc.)

• How has audience participation changed since the redesign?

• How important do you think it is for radio stations to develop web sites with greater functionality and why?

Because some of these questions involve framing-related issues, a short section in the literature review and theoretical framework will be devoted to this.

A second component of my methods will be to post an audience questionnaire on the radio station’s web site. This would be a simple task and could be done using a free program such as Survey Monkey. Participation would, of course, be voluntary. I would not offer any compensation unless my response rates were very low. At that point I would consider advertising the survey on the radio web site with a tag line about winning a “prize” the radio station was willing to donate, such as a coffee mug or other item that might typically be given away during a fund drive. I would plan to keep the survey up for three to four weeks, if deemed appropriate. A link about the survey would also be sent out to everyone on the station’s mailing list. Another link could also be posted on the web site’s home page. WPR’s program director could also help me gain audience access.

The purpose of the questionnaire is of course to determine why the audience members visit the web site, what they want to get from the web site and how they use it (their uses and gratifications). My survey questions will follow a
few general categories based on research from the literature review, including a
uses category and a social functions category. I will have a maximum of 20
questions and a minimum of 10. Some examples of survey questions might
include:

• How many times a week do you visit WPR.org?
• What do you do on the web site? (Check as many as apply.)
• (Read story transcripts, download a story, download a podcast, find a program
  or program schedule, find contact information, etc.)
• Would you visit the site more often if it had X (for example, videos)?
• What would you like to see on WPR’s web site?
• What is the worst thing about the web site?
• What is the best thing about the web site?

If my response rates on the questionnaire are too low, I will do audience
interviews instead with 10 to 15 members selected randomly. A separate email
would be sent out to the radio station’s mailing list asking for volunteers to
participate in a short phone interview to help WPR better design its web site. The
interviews would last about 10 minutes and would follow the same questions
outlined above.

I hope to publish my professional analysis in a radio trade journal such as
Radio Ink. According to Radio Ink’s web site, the magazine “is a radio-industry
trade publication that is published bi-weekly for the radio management sector of
the radio broadcasting industry. Its mission is to provide relevant management
information, tips, and ideas for those operating radio stations.”
References


