

Public Abstract

First Name: Elizabeth

Middle Name: Meyers

Last Name: Hendrickson

Adviser's First Name: Stephanie

Adviser's Last Name: Craft

Graduation Term: SP 2008

Department: Journalism

Degree: PhD

Title: REFRESH: EXAMINING THE PRODUCTION OF CELEBRITY NEWS IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

This case study examines the newsgathering processes and production of an entertainment website, Fute, and asks how newsroom routines, organizational structure and culture of a virtual newsroom shape editorial content. Fute operates via a virtual newsroom, where communication is not conducted face-to-face, but primarily through instant messaging. This computer-mediated communication (CMC) reconfigures the standard place-based newsroom arrangements and significantly influences the group's organizational dynamics and culture. Because of the unique content and unconventional organizational structure of the site, no single theoretical perspective offers a way of understanding its organizational context and content. Therefore, this study employed a combination of organization theory, specifically Schein (2004) and newsroom sociology frameworks. This research found that four basic assumptions drive the organizational culture of Jezebel: 1) Our mission is true; 2) Working from home is the best way to go; 3) IM is the most effective way for us to communicate; and 4) The new page view bonus system does not really affect us. This study exemplifies the potential for new media researchers to adopt a cross-disciplinary approach to their research. As old models for understanding media cease to support the complex structures of new organizations, we must look to additional frameworks for supplementary guidance.